

Food Technologist

Food Technologists make sure food products are produced safely, legally and are of the quality claimed. They can be involved in developing the manufacturing processes and recipes of food and drink products, and may work on modifying existing and newly discovered ingredients to invent new recipes and concepts.

Some Food Technologists are involved in conducting experiments and producing sample products, as well as designing the processes and machinery for making products with a consistent flavour, colour and texture in large quantities. This must be done within a strict and ever-changing regulatory framework around the treatment of foodstuffs. For this reason, technologists are responsible for keeping up-to-date with relevant legislation.

Typical responsibilities can include:

- Modifying existing products and processes and developing new ones
- Checking and improving safety and quality control procedures in your own and suppliers' factories, from the raw material stage through to the finished product
- Researching current consumer markets and latest technologies to develop new product concepts
- Selecting raw materials and other ingredients from suppliers
- Preparing product costings based on raw materials and manufacturing costs to ensure profitable products
- Auditing suppliers or managing internal audits
- Coordinating launches of new products or running trials alongside with product development
- Dealing with any customer complaint investigations or product issues
- Compiling, checking and approving product specifications and labelling
- Undertaking long-term projects with other departments, e.g. reducing waste by improving efficiency
- Working on packaging innovation and technology
- Liaising with technical and commercial colleagues in procurement, sales and technical services, and marketing and distribution, plus with official food inspection and hygiene agencies
- Working with engineering / production to develop solutions to production issues whilst maintaining food safety.

Much the same as being a New Product Development Technologist, you'll need to have an interest in the chemistry of foods and the science of food preparation plus its application to the food development process. Attention to detail, great communication skills (both written and verbal) and the ability to present ideas to customers are all vital. You will also need to have a finger on the pulse of food industry trends as well as the latest industry legislation.

The role as standard will be Monday to Friday with your time split between the development department and also the factory where you'll be checking the production processes and helping with trials. There will also be some travel involved to see both customers and suppliers.

Depending on your qualifications your starting salary is likely to be somewhere between £20,000 and £25,000. There are good prospects for promotion as your experience increases, which will also give you nice pay rises too! It is most likely that you will need a food related degree.

