

## What is the Occupational Outlook Handbook?

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is source of career information that is updated yearly by the federal government. Produced yearly by the US Bureau of Labor, the *OOH* describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects for many occupations.

The main page for the handbook can be found here:

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Occupational Outlook Handbook website. At the top, the address bar displays "http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm". The header features the U.S. Department of Labor logo and the text "U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook". Below this is the website URL "www.bls.gov" and a navigation menu with links for "OOH Search/A-Z Index", "BLS Home", "Programs & Surveys", "Get Detailed Statistics", "Glossary", "What's New", and "Find It! In DOI".

The main content area is titled "Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2002-03 Edition". It includes a "New look" section and a link to a "Printer-friendly version (HTML)". The text states: "You have **three ways** to find career information by occupation on this site:"

- To find out about a *specific* occupation, click on the "OOH Search/A-Z Index" link located in the **upper right** corner of the page and then enter the occupation's name in the "Search OOH" box. [Search tips.](#)
- To find out about *multiple* occupations, browse through listings using the occupational cluster links to the **right**.
- For a listing of *all* occupations in alphabetical order, click on the "OOH Search/A-Z Index" link and select a letter.

At the bottom, it notes: "The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is a nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work".

On the right side, there is a vertical navigation menu with the following categories: "Occupational Outlook Handbook 2002-03 Edition", "Management and Related Service", "Sales", "Administrative Support", "Farming and Related Construction", "Installation and Related Production", "Transportation Job", "Opportunities in the Armed Forces", "Tomorrow's Jobs", and "Other OOH".

The OOH is best used as a reference; it's too huge to read from A to Z.

Because each occupational description in the OOH follows a standard format, it's easy to compare occupations. This resource can help you make informed career decisions.

Using the **OOH Search** Function in the upper right corner of the page, you can search for jobs related to your interests.

It is important to realize that **information in the OOH is organized by job title, not by major.** However, usually if you put in a broad keyword (“math” or “biology,” for example) you can find a variety of potential career options.

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#### **44 Documents Matched Your Query on "biology"**

Result Page: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

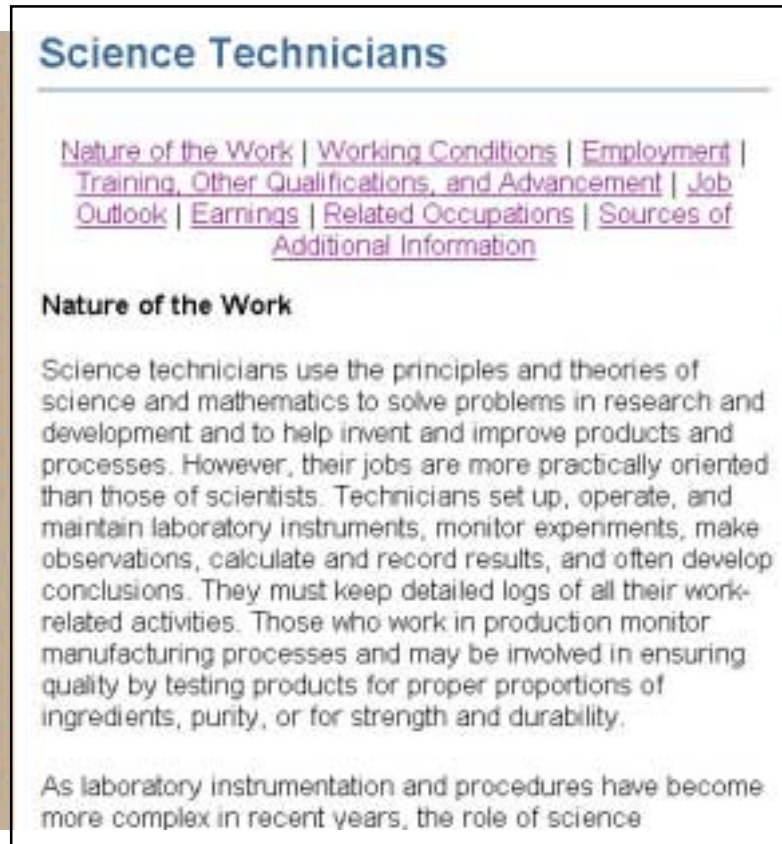
1. [Biological and Medical Scientists](#)
2. [Biomedical Engineers](#)
3. [Environmental Engineers](#)
4. [Dietitians and Nutritionists](#)
5. [Physical Therapists](#)
6. [Animal Care and Service Workers](#)
7. [Agricultural and Food Scientists](#)
8. [Veterinarians](#)
9. [Statisticians](#)
10. [Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians](#)
11. [Dental Assistants](#)
12. [Occupational Therapist Assistants and Aides](#)
13. [Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides](#)
14. [Dental Hygienists](#)
15. [Medical Records and Health Information Technicians](#)
16. [Surgical Technologists](#)
17. [Farmers, Ranchers, and Agricultural Managers](#)
18. [Medical Assistants](#)
19. [Environmental Scientists and Geoscientists](#)
20. [Dentists](#)

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Suppose you are considering biology as a major—a search on “biology” will turn up “Science Technicians” as one type of potential employment.

Each entry in the *OOH* has eight sections. (These sections are explained in detail at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco2001.htm>.)



**Science Technicians**

[Nature of the Work](#) | [Working Conditions](#) | [Employment](#) | [Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement](#) | [Job Outlook](#) | [Earnings](#) | [Related Occupations](#) | [Sources of Additional Information](#)

**Nature of the Work**

Science technicians use the principles and theories of science and mathematics to solve problems in research and development and to help invent and improve products and processes. However, their jobs are more practically oriented than those of scientists. Technicians set up, operate, and maintain laboratory instruments, monitor experiments, make observations, calculate and record results, and often develop conclusions. They must keep detailed logs of all their work-related activities. Those who work in production monitor manufacturing processes and may be involved in ensuring quality by testing products for proper proportions of ingredients, purity, or for strength and durability.

As laboratory instrumentation and procedures have become more complex in recent years, the role of science

The eight sections of the job heading.

“**Nature of the work**” and “**Working conditions**” describe what sorts of duties people in these jobs usually have, typical hours worked, and the workplace environment.

“**Training**” describes what education and practical experience, if any, you need to enter this profession, including the training preferred by employers, the typical length of training, and advancement possibilities.

“**Related occupations**” links to additional job descriptions in the *OOH* that you might find of interest.

“**Employment**” and “**Job Outlook**” describe the numbers of people currently employed, and factors that may result in growth or decline in the number of jobs of this type in the near future.

“**Earnings**” shows you the typical range of salary for a particular job category.

**Earnings**

Median hourly earnings of science technicians in 2000 were as follows:

Nuclear technicians	\$28.44
Forensic science technicians	18.04
Geological and petroleum technicians	17.55
Chemical technicians	17.05
Environmental science and protection technicians, including health	16.26
Biological technicians	15.16
Forest and conservation technicians	14.22
Agricultural and food science technicians	13.02

In the Federal Government in 2001, science technicians started at \$17,483, \$19,453, or \$22,251, depending on education and experience. Beginning salaries were slightly higher in selected areas of the country where the prevailing local pay level was higher. The average annual salary for biological science technicians in nonsupervisory, supervisory, and managerial positions employed by the Federal Government in 2001 was \$32,753; for physical science technicians, \$42,657; for geodetic technicians, \$53,143; for hydrologic technicians, \$39,518; and for meteorologic technicians, \$48,630.

**An example of earnings data. Note that typical starting salary information is given!**

The last section of the listing has links to professional or trade organizations that can provide additional career information.

Happy Surfing!