WHAT IS A CHEMICAL TECHNICIAN?

Chemical technicians play a vital role in a variety of industries by working with chemists and chemical engineers to develop, test, and manufacture chemical products. These technicians are highly skilled scientific professionals who are critical members of scientific teams that conduct much of the hands-on work that is required. Some technicians assist senior researchers in the laboratory, but many work independently to collect valuable information for review.

Chemical technicians work in laboratories, making sure that processes are carried out safely, cost-effectively, and according to the highest professional standards. Chemical technicians work in every aspect of the chemical process industry—from basic research to hazardous waste management.

TYPES OF CHEMICAL TECHNICIANS

Laboratory technician — operates standard laboratory equipment and conducts laboratory procedures ranging from routine process control to complex research projects.
Process technician — performs chemical tests and experiments for quality, performance, or composition.

TYPICAL WORK DUTIES

- Set up apparatus for chemical reactions
- Help devise and troubleshoot syntheses and analytical procedures
- Manage databases
- Ensure that packaging of hazardous materials complies with regulations
- Work in pilot plants, assisting engineers with running experiments in a miniature version of a manufacturing process

EDUCATION

The best preparation is a two-year associate degree in an applied science (AAS) program designed to prepare students for a career in chemical technology. Kalamazoo Valley Community College offers an associate of applied science for chemical technology. This degree requires completion of a minimum of 62 credit hours. Kalamazoo Valley prepares students with skills necessary to go immediately into the workforce.

TRANSFER PROGRAMS

It is possible to obtain two different associate of science degrees at Kalamazoo Valley. The AA in biology is designed for students planning to major in bio-medical science. The AA in science will satisfy the general education and entry-level science course requirements for any science related major in chemistry, biochemistry, and/or physics. Both degrees prepare students to transfer to other colleges and universities for completion of a bachelor's degree.

Further information can be found at the American Chemical Society's website.