

UK Salary Guide

MATERIAL SCIENCE: CHEMISTRY

ADLIB



WHAT IS THE AVERAGE MATERIAL SCIENCE CHEMIST SALARY IN THE UK?

The purpose of this guide is to provide a snapshot of what working in the field of Chemistry within Material Science can look like as well as salary bandings for different roles in this industry.

How do we benchmark salaries?

The following is based on information collated through working in this industry day in, day out, client briefs taken and placements made by ADLIB.

Although we do our best to remain close to market trends, there are always a number of factors to consider when assigning a salary to a role, such as the skill demand, level of responsibility, and other benefits.

Things to consider before assigning a salary to a role

The following rates are predominantly based on our work with businesses across the UK.

Material Science is the study of properties, structure and performance of materials and aims to understand how they behave and how they can be optimized for various applications.

HOW IS CHEMISTRY APPLIED WITHIN MATERIAL SCIENCE?

The applications of Material Science typically focus on creating sustainable alternatives to conventional environmentally damaging materials mostly within the textile, built environment, packaging and quantum space.

The **textile industry** must transform its production, usage, and disposal methods to meet climate targets, as it contributes 10% of global emissions and significant water usage. Initiatives like the Textiles 2030 Action Plan focus on sustainable textiles, reducing synthetic fibre use, and embracing innovations. Start-ups are also shifting toward plant-based alternatives like vegan leather and fur.

The **packaging industry**, contributing over 2% of global emissions, aims for net zero by 2030 through renewable materials, circular economy models, and waste-derived bioplastics.

The **building sector**, responsible for 37% of global emissions, is transitioning to low-carbon, regenerative materials such as bamboo, timber, and bio-based insulation.

Other growth areas include **energy storage** with solid-state and bio-based batteries and advancements in quantum materials for computing, sensors, and communication technologies.

SALARY BENCHMARKS

Within Material Science there are many different job types and titles. Below is benchmarking for Scientists focused on Chemistry, Chemist, R&D and Biology applications within Material Science such as product development, lab-scale work and material optimisation.

Entry level Chemistry Material Scientist

Entry level Material Scientist positions with a bachelor's or master's degree can expect up to **£30,000** whilst PhD graduates can expect up to **£40,000** (depends on location and area of focus).

Chemistry Material Scientist with bachelor's or master's degree

Material Scientist roles for those who have a bachelor's or master's degree with 1-2 years industry experience can expect up to **£35,000**, whilst 3-4 years in industry up to **£43,000**. For PhD graduates those with a postdoc can expect up to **£45,000** whilst those with 1-2 industry experience can expect up to **£48,000** whilst 3-4 years up to **£53,000**.

Senior Chemistry Material Scientist

Senior Material Scientist roles with those with extensive industry would be looking for **£50,000 - £60,000** but if responsible for being a team leader they can be looking more for **£60,000 - £70,000**.

Head of/Director of Chemistry

Head of/Director level roles are those who will be involved in leading departments, managing budgets, or making strategic decisions can earn salaries from **£70,000 - £100,000+**.

CSO

CSO-level roles are those who will be involved in strategic decisions on the c-suite can earn salaries from **£100,000 - £160,000+**.

MATERIAL SCIENCE JOBS

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