

# How to Become a Perfumer

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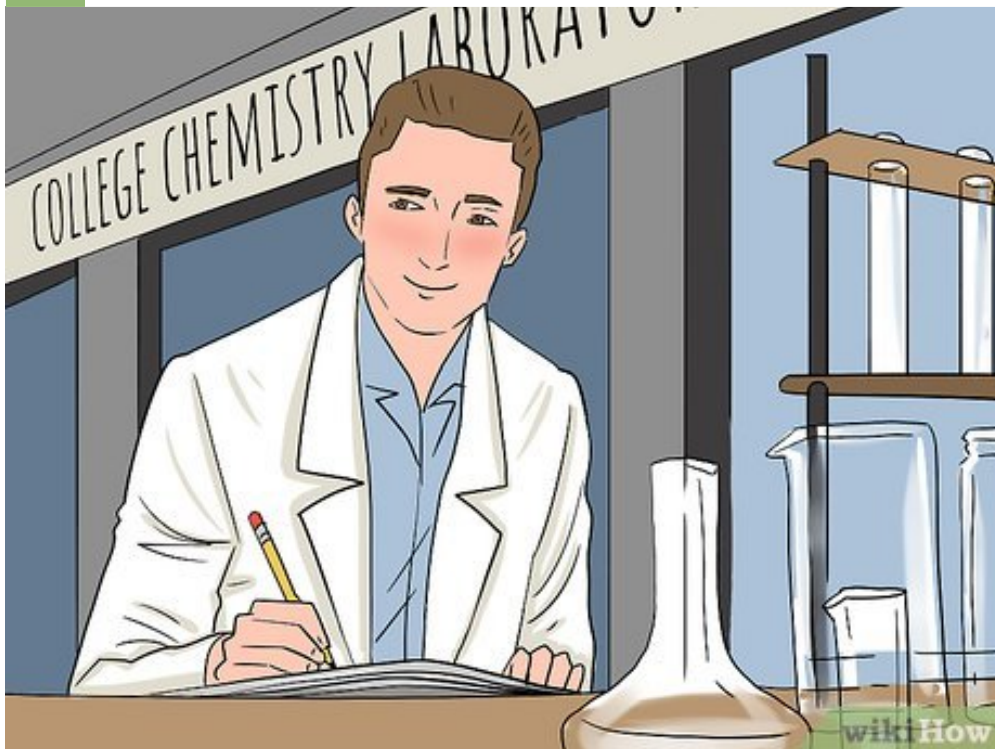
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Becoming a perfumer takes years to accomplish because it requires a vast knowledge of chemicals and scents, as well as a creative ability to come up with unique and appealing new fragrances. However, there are several avenues to get you there. You can get a college degree in chemistry, complete a graduate degree in perfumery, or you can work your way up through a cosmetic or perfume company. Whatever path you choose to take, you will need a combination of hard work, skill, and creativity to become a master perfumer.

## Method 1

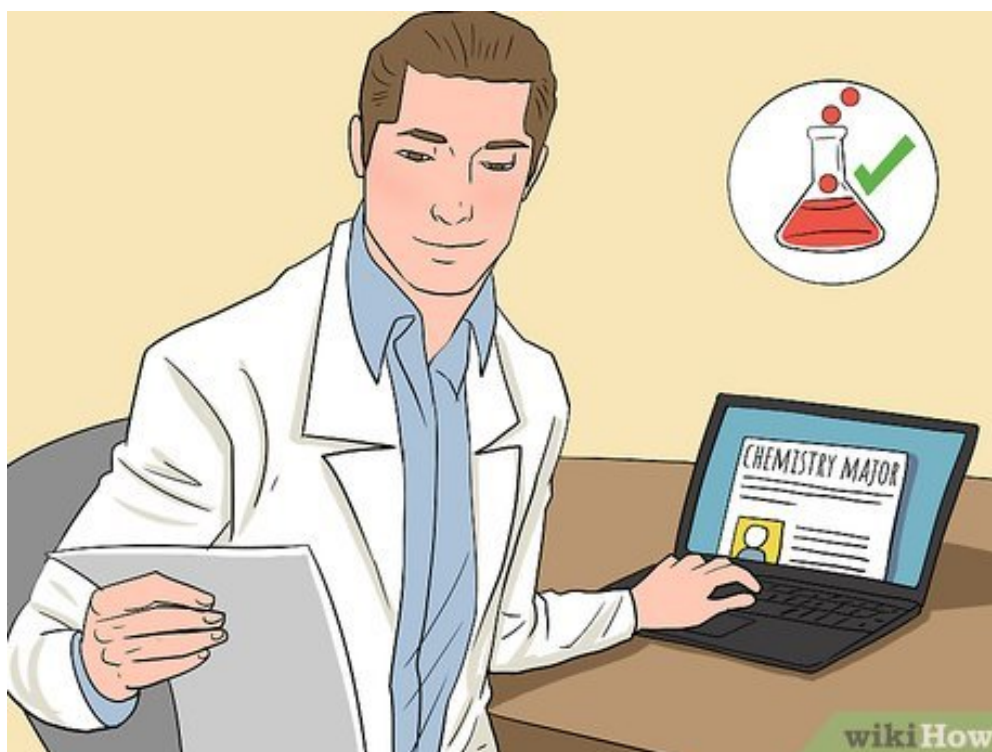
### Method 1 of 3: Getting a Chemistry Degree



**1** **Enroll in a college with a chemistry program.** Most professional perfumers have an educational background in chemistry. Research schools in your area or in an area you would like to relocate to that have a [bachelor's degree](#) program in this field.<sup>[1]</sup>

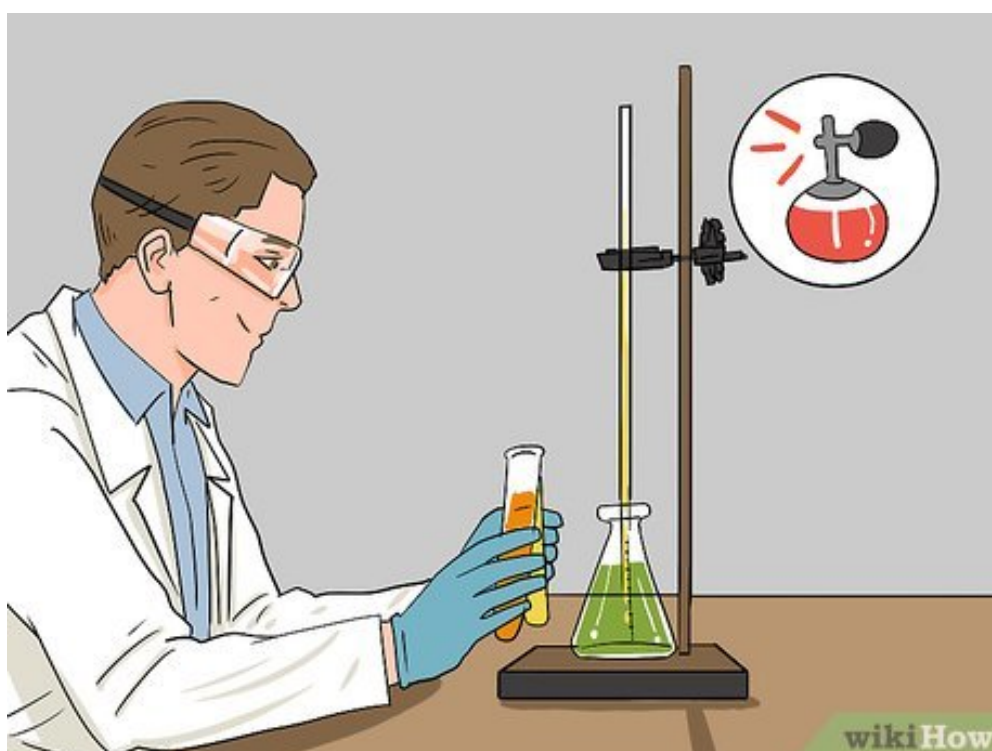
- This kind of education will help you to understand how chemicals interact with each other to form scents and how they can be used safely in cosmetics.

**Tip:** While a general science degree will help your basic understanding of chemistry, and thus perfumery, it's more ideal to get a focused education in chemistry.



**2 Major in chemistry.** In some cases, you will need to apply to major in chemistry after you have completed specific prerequisites. This application is typically submitted during your sophomore year in college and can involve writing a statement about why you want to declare a chemistry major and a review of your grades up to that point.<sup>[2]</sup>

- However, some schools simply require you to log into your school online account and declare your major.



**3 Focus your studies on the chemistry of perfume and cosmetics, if possible.** Some colleges will have advanced classes that will give you focused information about the science behind cosmetics and scents. If these classes are available, take them. Having specialized knowledge about the field you want to go into will make you a more attractive employee to perfume and cosmetic companies.<sup>[3]</sup>



**4** Apply for **internships** and entry-level positions in the perfume industry. During your schooling and right after you earn your degree you should apply for a variety of jobs in your chosen field, including entry-level positions and even unpaid internships. This type of position will give you real world experience in the perfume industry. Your knowledge of chemistry will make you a strong applicant for these jobs.

- There are a wide variety of entry-level positions in cosmetics and perfume companies that can get you on the path towards becoming a master perfumer. These include being a scent evaluator, a lab tech, or a quality control worker.<sup>[4]</sup>



**5 Work your way up to become a perfumer.** Once you are working for a perfume company, you will likely have opportunities to advance your career towards becoming a perfumer. Ask for and apply for promotions at work. Express your interest in becoming a perfumer to your supervisors. Do all you can to show that you are a great employee that would be talented at designing scents.

- Don't expect to get a promotion right away. It can take several years just to get a position as a student perfumer under the mentorship of a master perfumer.



## Method 2 of 3: Going to Perfumery School



**1 Apply to a perfumery school after completing a degree in chemistry.** There are a few specialized programs worldwide that are designed to teach you the ins and outs of designing perfumes. These are highly competitive programs, so you will need a bachelor's degree and you will need to show in your application that you are an excellent student with a strong drive to become a perfumer.

- The most prestigious perfumery schools are in France. They include Institut Supérieur International Du Parfum (ISIPCA) and Givaudan. These schools typically only accept between 12 and 20 students a year.

**Tip:** These schools can cost quite a bit to attend. Be prepared to spend at least 10,000 Euros (11,000 USD) a year to attend a prestigious perfumery school.



**2 Complete your required courses.** Perfumery degrees require 2 to 4 years of coursework. These classes will include learning basic and classic formulations, understanding raw materials, the science and technology of perfumery, and fragrance analysis.[5]

- The exact classes you take will vary depending on the school you go to. Contact each potential school to get a list of their exact class requirements.



**3 Apprentice at a fragrance company while in school.** Part of your 2 to 4 years of education will be an apprenticeship at a fragrance house. During this apprenticeship you will be mentored by a senior perfumer and you will learn about working with a creative team to develop new fragrances.[6]

- It will be required that you complete an apprenticeship to finish your degree. However, you will have to apply for these apprenticeships.



**4 Apply for jobs once you complete school.** Once you have completed your perfumery degree, you can apply for student perfumer positions. These are paid jobs where you will be mentored by a master perfumer and will learn in greater detail about designing your own fragrances. These positions are designed to lead someone directly to becoming a master perfumer.

- The prestigious perfumery schools have very high rates of job placement for their graduates. For instance, most graduates of ISIPCA and Givaudan go on to have careers at large cosmetics and perfume companies.

### Method 3 of 3: Training on the Job



**1 Apply for an entry-level job with a cosmetics or perfume company.** Not all perfumers have a college degree in science. Some start from jobs at the bottom of a company and work their way up by developing their skills on the job. Get your foot in the door by getting a job in a cosmetics or perfume company as a lab technician, a tester, or an office worker.

- Search for jobs in the perfume industry on online job search engines. You can also look for openings on the websites of specific cosmetics companies.
- Update your profile on resume and job search websites so that potential employers will see that you are a qualified job candidate.
- From there, you can build a reputation and learn skills that will make you an attractive candidate for better positions.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Tip:** If you don't have a college degree in science, you may need to start in a job that is less prestigious or skilled than someone with a background in science.





**2 Complete an on-the-job training program, if one is available.** Many large cosmetic and perfume companies, such as International Flavors & Fragrances, Inc in New York, have internal programs that teach people about scent design and development. If you are already working for a company that offers one of these programs, apply for it. These programs are basically internships that allow you to learn directly from master perfumers in your company.<sup>[8]</sup>

- These programs typically require that you work for the company for a specific number of years once you finish the program. This helps them guarantee that you will not go to work for another company right away after learning on your current company's dime.



**3 Work your way up to perfumer.** As jobs that are closer to a perfumer become available in your company, apply for them. **Working your way up** through the company will give you a broad understanding of the industry and you will learn important skills along the way.

- This can take many years to accomplish. You will need to learn a lot about the industry, the science, and the craft of perfume design before becoming a perfumer.[9]

## References

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