

POLYMER PROCESSING TECHNICIAN

ALSO KNOWN AS: **PLASTIC EXTRUSION TECHNICIAN** **PLASTIC COMPOUNDING AND RECLAMATION TECHNICIAN**
PLASTICS PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN **REINFORCED PLASTIC AND COMPOSITE PRODUCTION WORKER**

MOULD YOUR FUTURE IN POLYMER MANUFACTURING AS A POLYMER PROCESSING TECHNICIAN.

In this dynamic role, you'll be the driving force behind a wide range of plastic and rubber products that shape our world. From extruding innovative designs to compounding sustainable solutions, your expertise will be the catalyst for transforming raw materials into everyday essentials.

KEY SKILLS

Skills which may benefit anyone considering a job as a polymer processing technician include:

- ✔ Analytical skills
- ✔ Communication skills
- ✔ Problem solving
- ✔ Safety conscious
- ✔ Technical proficiency

CAREER PROGRESSION

In this role, you may have the opportunity to progress to other positions. Career progression opportunities include:

- Belt Splicer
- Senior Composites Technician
- Production Planner
- Technical Manager

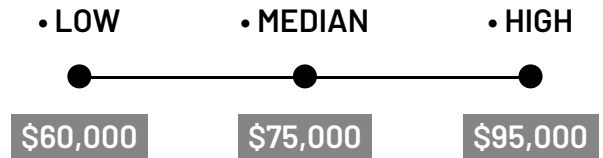
VALUES & ATTRIBUTES

Values and attributes of anyone considering a job as a polymer processing technician include:

- ✔ Safety-conscious
- ✔ Precision
- ✔ Adaptable
- ✔ Reliable
- ✔ Continuous learning
- ✔ Realistic – "Do-er"

SALARY EXPECTATION

The expected salary for a Polymer Processing Technician can vary across different areas of manufacturing and may vary as you become more experienced.



RELATED INDUSTRIES

- ▶ Polymers, Plastic and Rubber

RECOMMENDED SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- Chemistry
- Engineering
- Industrial Technology Skills
- Mathematical Methods
- Science in Practice

CORE SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- Essential Mathematics
- Essential English
- Engineering Skills

JOB OVERVIEW

As a Polymer Processing Technician, you will be a key player in driving innovation and efficiency within the dynamic field of polymer manufacturing. Your in-depth technical expertise will enable you to oversee the transformation of raw materials into a diverse range of high-quality plastic and rubber products through advanced processing techniques.

Whether you specialise in a particular process or work across multiple methods, your ability to expertly operate and optimise sophisticated machinery will be crucial. You will have a deep understanding of the properties and behaviours of thermoplastics, thermosets, and elastomers, allowing you to make informed decisions to maintain product quality and consistency.

Your technical prowess will be complemented by your strong problem-solving skills and adaptability. You will collaborate closely with cross-functional teams, including quality control, engineering, and production personnel, to troubleshoot issues, implement process improvements, and ensure efficient, sustainable, and safe operations.

As a Polymer Processing Technician, you will play a pivotal role in mentoring and training junior team members, sharing your knowledge and best practices to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Your strategic insights and ability to identify optimisation opportunities will be highly valued, as you contribute to the overall success and growth of your organisation.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Your role may include duties as follows:

1. Oversee the setup, operation, and optimisation of advanced polymer processing equipment, including extruders, injection moulding machines, and compounders
2. Analyse and interpret complex data to monitor and fine-tune machine parameters, ensuring product quality and consistency
3. Lead cross-functional teams in implementing process improvements and troubleshooting complex issues
4. Develop and implement comprehensive quality control protocols, conducting regular inspections and tests to uphold high standards
5. Mentor and train junior technicians, sharing your expertise and fostering a culture of continuous learning

HOW TO BECOME A POLYMER PROCESSING TECHNICIAN

Becoming a Polymer Processing Technician offers an exciting entry point into polymer manufacturing. While formal qualifications can be beneficial, many employers value hands-on experience and provide comprehensive on-the-job training. To get started:

1. Complete high school, focusing on subjects like mathematics and chemistry.
2. Consider pursuing a Certificate II in Polymer Processing (PMB20121) to gain foundational knowledge across various polymer processing techniques.
3. Look for entry-level positions or apprenticeships in polymer manufacturing companies that offer exposure to one or more processing methods.
4. Highlight any relevant skills or experience in your resume, such as mechanical aptitude, attention to detail, or interest in manufacturing processes.
5. Be prepared to start in a junior role and progressively learn different polymer processing techniques from experienced operators.
6. Show enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to adapt to new technologies and methods.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

Whether you're starting your journey or looking to upskill, there are multiple entry points and career progression opportunities available through vocational education and training.

You may want to pursue a qualification to deepen your expertise. The following qualification/s can be completed as an apprenticeship:

- Certificate III in Polymer Processing (PMB30121)

A range of specialisations exist for this qualification, including blow moulding, blown film, composites, conveyor belt maintenance and repair, conveyor belt manufacture, extrusion, plastic fabrication, injection moulding, polyurethane, rotational moulding, and rubber lining.

As an apprentice you will combine work with formal training, allowing you to gain practical skills and knowledge in a specific trade while earning a salary.

Duration: Apprenticeships typically last up to four years for full-time participants. Part-time apprenticeships may take longer, depending on the individual's work schedule and training progress.

Work and study combination: As an apprentice, you will work either full-time or part-time while receiving formal training from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). School-based apprenticeships may be available.

Eligibility: Generally, apprenticeships do not require any formal qualifications to enter, making them accessible to a wide range of individuals, including if you are a school leaver or someone looking to change careers. There are minimum age requirements and there may be other eligibility criteria.

Completion: On completion you will receive a nationally recognised trade qualification, showcasing your skill and experience.

Advancing Your Career

Choosing to advance your career offers exciting opportunities for growth and specialisation. As you gain experience and skills through entry-level positions or initial qualifications, you can explore higher-level vocational education and training options to elevate your expertise. These qualifications can open doors to senior roles allowing you to take on more responsibility, as well as offering a foundation for further education.

To advance your career, or deepen your knowledge in this industry, consider the following qualifications:

- Certificate IV in Polymer Technology (PMB40121)
- Diploma of Polymer Technology (PMB50121)

UNIVERSITY & HIGHER EDUCATION

Depending on the facility and employer, holding a business degree with a specialisation in human resources, finance, economics, marketing or management could also be useful. Degree qualifications in engineering and manufacturing are also available to help deepen your specialist knowledge.