

# Exploring Careers Through Technical Routes

## Packaging Technician



### The Industry

A packaging technician creates a specification for, and operates, a variety of machinery to package a product. They monitor and control part of a production line resulting in final packaged products meeting regulatory and quality standards. They may also: ensure the proper functioning of manufacturing equipment; perform cleaning and simple maintenance; troubleshoot packaging equipment to increase efficiency and minimise downtime. Some technicians may also complete standards documents for quality assurance following established procedures and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) concerning quality, safety and hygiene.

Mark Caul, board member of the Packaging Society and technical food packaging manager at a large supermarket chain, explains, "This healthy industry has some well paid jobs and offers you the ability to change the way we do things".

The Packaging Society  
<http://www.iom3.org/packaging-society>  
The Packaging Federation  
<http://www.packagingfedn.co.uk>

### Skills and Requirements

Working in the packaging industry can offer an exciting and fulfilling career. To be successful you will need:

- A positive attitude and can do approach
- To have a creative approach to problem solving
- A high standard of literacy and numeracy
- Excellent IT skills including the use of spreadsheets
- Effective organisational skills with the ability to forward plan and prioritise
- Good interpersonal and team working skills
- Excellent attention to detail
- To be flexible and be able to adapt to changing assignments
- To be highly motivated and self-driven with a desire to continuously improve own skill set
- An ability to work with minimal supervision
- Written communication skills to complete production documentation paperwork accurately
- The ability to follow standard operating procedures, health and safety guidelines and maintain all 'Good Manufacturing Practices'.

'The UK Packaging Manufacturing Industry currently has annual sales of £11 Billion and employs some 85,000 people, which represents 3% of the UK's manufacturing workforce.'

Source: <http://www.packagingfedn.co.uk>

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## Working and Learning as a Packaging Technician



### Progression

Study Programme	Apprenticeships	Further study	Career roles
<p><b>Level 2</b> Performing Engineering Operations.</p> <p><b>Level 3</b> Engineering Mechatronics.</p>	<p><b>Level 4</b> Packaging Technology.</p>	<p><b>BEng (Hons)</b> Mechanical Engineering.</p> <p><b>Industry recognised courses</b></p> <p>L3 Certificate Packaging Technology.</p> <p>L5 Diploma Packaging Technology.</p>	<p>Packaging machine operator.</p> <p>Packaging buyer.</p> <p>Packaging technical manager.</p> <p>Packing Technologist.</p> <p>Specialist e.g. Pharmaceuticals.</p>

### Calculation including problem solving

#### Tasks:

1. Identify the main stoppage reasons on a packaging production line over a month and produce a report for your line manager.
2. Collect data monthly to record and analyse the loss of production time.
3. Calculate the number of staff required to achieve a packing target of 2 million tablets per quarter based on number of lines and working times.

#### GCSE maths links:

1. **Ratio, proportion and rates of change** (percentages - finding a percentage).  
**Algebra** (graphs - drawing graphs).
2. **Statistics** (collecting data - data collection sheets, sorting data).
3. **Number** (whole numbers - addition, subtraction, multiplication, division).

#### Functional skills maths L2 links:

1. **Number**  
**N/L2.5** Work out percentages of amounts.
2. **Solving problems**  
**SMP/L2.4** Identify suitable operations and calculations to generate results.
3. **Number**  
**N/L2.2** Carry out calculations with numbers including strategies to check answers.

### Communication, all forms

#### Tasks:

1. Attend a meeting as the primary liaison to test/contact a laboratory to ensure compliance with product.
2. Create a product packaging specification to describe: quantities in which products are to be packed; what packaging materials to use; and, the sequence to pack.
3. Understand and follow site health and safety procedures and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) to maintain a safe working environment.

#### GCSE English links:

1. **Spoken language** (audience and purpose, discussion skills, listening to others and building on arguments, individual presentations).
2. **Writing** (planning - flow chart; organising information - signposting and linking ideas).
3. **Analysing non-fiction** (non-fiction text type - information; responding to a non-fiction text - understand the questions).

#### Functional skills English L2 links:

1. **Speaking, listening and communicating**  
**SLC/L2.5** Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly and effectively, providing further detail and development if required.
2. **Writing composition**  
**WC/L2.4** Convey clear meaning and establish cohesion using organisational markers effectively.
3. **Reading**  
**R/L2.5** Use a range of reference materials and appropriate resources (e.g. glossaries, legends/keys) for different purposes.