

How to become a perfumer: A guide to starting your career in fragrance industry



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This era has witnessed the emergence of many new careers in offbeat fields, other than technology. Few of them are not unique but also low in competition, thus giving a lot of opportunities for the individual to excel. Recently, a lot has been written on the career potential of art therapists, pet groomers, hair stylists, sound healers, etc. A new career option in the fragrance industry is fast becoming a choice among many youngsters.

Currently, there are not many schools in the country to train students in the field of perfumery. Yet there are a few institutes in India that offer courses in perfumery. Mumbai University and Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai offers a Master's in perfumery and flavour technology.

Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC) at Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh offers a one-year course in Technology Development Programme in Aroma and its Management, open to students from both chemistry and non-chemistry backgrounds, as well as PG in Aroma Technology in partnership with the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. The centre offers short-term courses as well.

COURSES OFFERED IN INDIA AND ABROAD

Apart from India, many universities offer courses in perfumery abroad too. One of the most reputed courses is offered by EFCM (European Fragrance and Cosmetics Master's degree) run by The Institut superieur Internatioanl du Parfum (ISIPCA) at the University of Versailles, France in partnership with the University of Padua in Italy. Most of the major perfume companies abroad have their perfumery schools.

Though one doesn't need to have any basic degree to get into this industry, still having a degree in Chemistry is highly recommended. Later, one can go for a doctorate or master's for growth.

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The perfumery course will teach about fragrance genealogy, the chemistry of fragrance, recognising the smells of hundreds of essential oils & enhancing your olfactory sense, how departments work in a global perfume company, etc. But passion and patience are the important requirements in the perfumery industry, one needs to constantly learn and experiment with new compounds to reach that wonder formula.

SALARY STRUCTURE

Dr Rohit Seth, Managing Partner of Seth Trading Company shares, "The perfume industry is on the rise, and with proper training and guidance, one can create a mark in this field. But like all other fields, this field also requires passion, perseverance, and hard work. It takes many years and undergoes a rigorous training process to become a perfumer. Most of the freshers start as apprentices under established perfumists, to learn the basics of perfume-making, and then venture out on their own. This is a field where one keeps on learning and experimenting. The basic salary starts from 15000 as an intern, and it goes up to Rs 40000 in earlier years. Based on the skills and expertise, the career growth happens."



He further adds, "One can be a perfumer with the existing companies or can create their brand of perfumes cosmetics, etc. Online sales have opened up a plethora of opportunities. A willing entrepreneur can go global by listing their perfume on various marketplaces and e-commerce sites. R&D labs also provide the broad spectrum which can also be used in pharma."

THE PROCESS

The process is simple; big perfume houses or corporations chiefly have three departments- creative, application, and evaluation departments. The creation department is involved in the process of developing new fragrances. The application is to check the fragrance compound in the product.

The application department should study the product to understand its performance, constancy, and legal compliance in terms of environmental pollutants and toxicity. The last one is evaluation or testing, where one analyses and evaluates the performance of the product in the current used condition and recommends changes.