

# Engineering

## UK Life Sciences Labour Market Trends

June 2022

## INTRODUCTION



The Covid19 pandemic in 2020 meant engineering became a key area within life sciences, suddenly under immense pressure to develop vaccines while having to step up to a new world of challenges in real time.

Companies across the world collaborated more deeply to expedite processes and it could be said this has ended with unprecedented results. We are now seeing a further pattern emerging and a similar pressure being applied to speed up the development of other drugs and treatments. This need for innovation means engineering vacancies in Europe are likely to hit record levels in 2022, with almost 500 more vacancies from January to May 2022 (3,018) compared to 2021 (2,551).

During Covid19 we saw many adjustments in regulatory approaches and expectations. Many of the regulatory accommodations intended to expedite development and approval of products to prevent the spread or reduce the symptoms and secondary effects of COVID-19. Regulatory authorities adjusted regulatory processes intended to reduce potential for drug shortages for essential medicines for other therapeutic priorities.

Because the industry leveraged regulatory opportunities and accelerated development for treatment and vaccines for COVID-19 and for supply chain continuity of medicines, we may well see these new learns allow goals to be achieved in the speed and development of drugs and treatments that may have been held up during the pandemic.

Our vacancy data currently shows all scientific and engineering vacancies have experienced a comparable slowdown trend with a 23.4% average monthly growth rate, down from a peak of 48.5% in 2021. The surge of vacancies experienced in 2021 correlated with the pharma industry responding rapidly to the Covid19 pandemic. However, the underlying trend sees engineering roles increasing year on year.

The greatest challenge the pharma industry faces currently has not changed though. We do not have enough training and development for the skills the life sciences industry needs.

Equally it's not a lack of STEM graduates that's the problem, rather it's that STEM graduates choose not to, or are unable to, find work in life sciences. Unless the industry wakes up to this issue and focuses on how to promote the exceptional career available within life sciences, however agile the industry is in response to crisis or development, without skilled workers to take the industry forward, the industry itself will fail.

**Yvette Cleland** - CEO | Cpl UK

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**Overview**

When the COVID-19 virus hit the world in 2020, the life sciences field was thrown into the spotlight, tasked with developing a vaccine as a matter of urgency. Companies all over the globe collaborated to expedite the process – with unprecedented results. Now that same pressure is being applied to speed up the development of other drugs and treatments.

This need for innovation means engineering vacancies in Europe are likely to hit record levels in 2022, with almost 500 more vacancies from Jan-May 2022 (3,018) compared to 2021 (2,551). The total for the year 2021 was 6,084.

Engineering vacancies are increasing year-on-year, growing at a diminishing average monthly rate of 19.1% in 2022 compared to the 44.2% surge experienced in 2021. In a similar light, all scientific and engineering vacancies have experienced a comparable slowdown trend with a 23.4% average monthly growth rate, down from a peak of 48.5% in 2021.

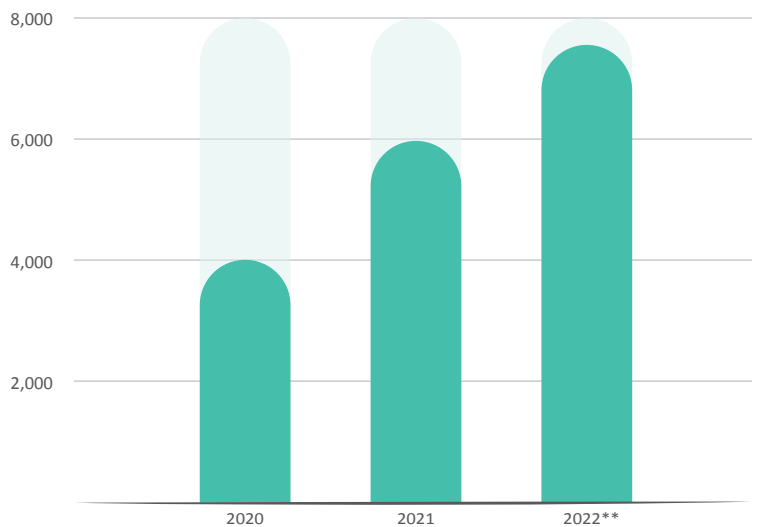
The share of engineering vacancies, of all scientific and engineering vacancies, has dropped from 9.5% in 2020 to 8.9% in 2022, signalling a relative slowdown in engineering recruitment compared with the rest of the field.

Examining the data on a monthly average basis for engineering shows a slight slowdown in activities after Q1, with a slowdown of 16.5% in April 2022 compared with March. Generally, March tends to see a surge in recruitment activities in Europe. March 2022 had the highest recorded number of 679 vacancies, and March 2021 had the second highest number, reaching 664. During the last 12 months, the highest monthly growth was observed in September 2021 - 36.8%.

Similarly, the highest monthly growth in the year prior also took place in September 2020 reaching 31.4%. This could reflect the end-of-summer lull and the launch of recruitment campaigns at autumn’s start.

**Annual Totals**

Engineering Vacancies, Europe, Life Sciences, 2020-2022

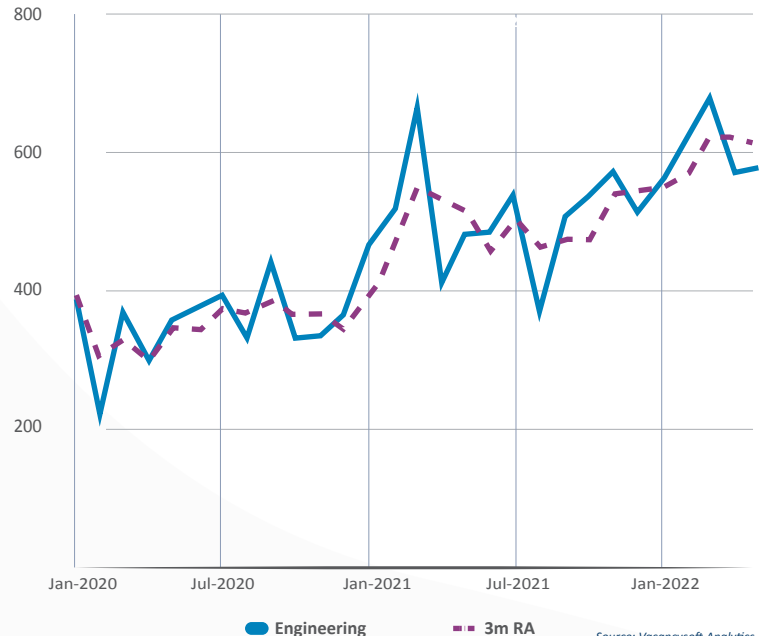


\*\* - Forecast 2022

Source: Vacancysoft Analytics  
Fig. 01

**Monthly Totals vs 3m Rolling Average**

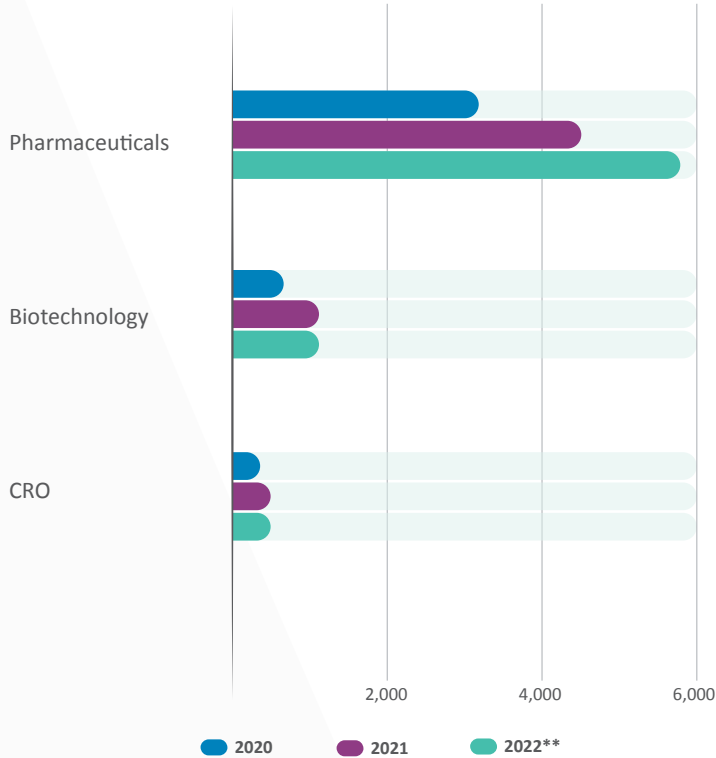
Engineering Vacancies, Europe, Life Sciences, 2020-2022



Source: Vacancysoft Analytics  
Fig. 02

**Sectoral Breakdown**

Engineering Vacancies, Europe, Life Sciences, 2020-2022

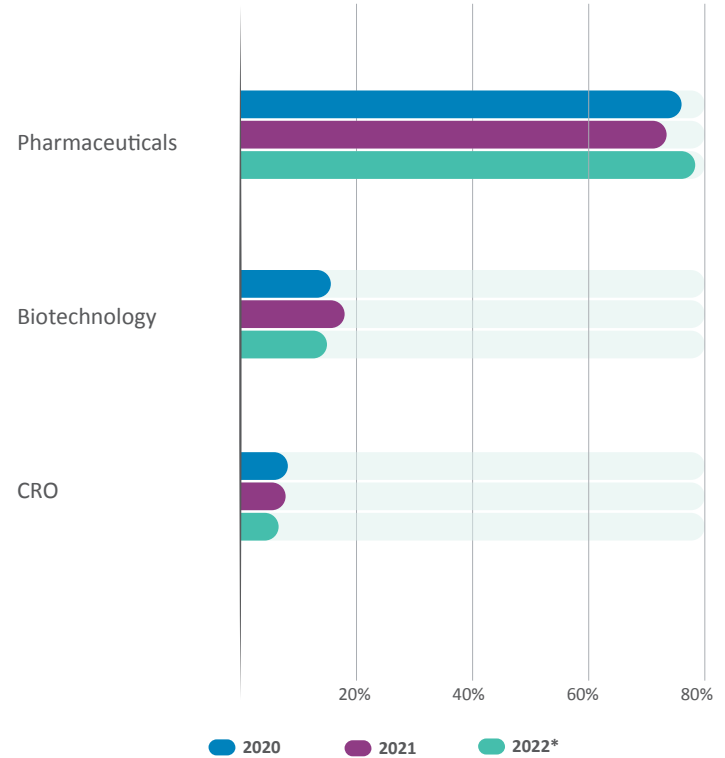


\*\* Forecast 2022

Source: Vacancysoft Analytics  
Fig. 03

**Sectoral Breakdown as %**

Engineering Vacancies, Europe, Life Sciences, 2020-2022



\* Jan-May 2022

Source: Vacancysoft Analytics  
Fig. 04

In 2022 and beyond, the five key areas of focus expected in the life sciences are the usage of artificial intelligence to accelerate research and reduce costs, digitalisation for more virtual healthcare and wearable medical tech, research and development (R&D) leveraging data science, medicine tailored to individuals' DNA, and supply chain optimisations to tackle delays and capacity limitations. These areas are expected to shape innovation in the life sciences and the concomitant job skills across that sector.

In terms of engineering vacancies by sector, pharmaceuticals shows clear supremacy, with a 78.1% monthly average share in 2022 compared to 73.7% in 2021, representing 4,482 vacancies in 2021.

Pharmaceuticals witnessed strong continued growth of 28.8% in 2022 compared to a broadly flat rate experienced within clinical research organisations (CRO) and biotechnology companies with -1.6% and 2.3%, respectively.

The runner-up sector is biotechnology with a 15.3%

share in 2022 YTD vacancies, down from 18.2% in 2021 with a total of 1,107 vacancies in 2021. Overall, biotechnology saw the highest percentage change, with a 66.2% increase year-on-year in 2021.

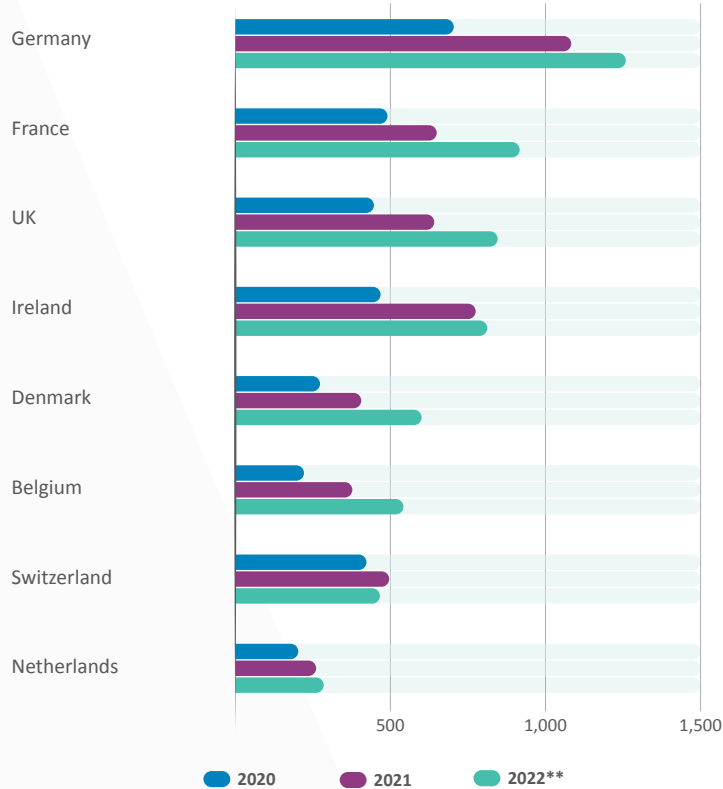
The CRO sector has a 6.6% share of vacancies in 2022 YTD, where it has been experiencing a gradual downward decline over the years, with 8.1% and 8.6% shares in 2021 and 2020, respectively.

In a similar way to how vacancies in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors expanded in 2021, CRO followed suit, increasing its vacancy share to 36%. However, it was the lowest rate among the three sectors, with a total of 495 vacancies in 2021.

Comparing 2022 with 2020, it is estimated that the pharmaceutical sector will record the highest growth of 81%, compared to 70% by biotechnology and 33.9% by CRO. This indicates that the life sciences field has been carried along by the momentum in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors.

**Country Analysis**

Engineering Vacancies, Europe, Life Sciences, 2020-2022

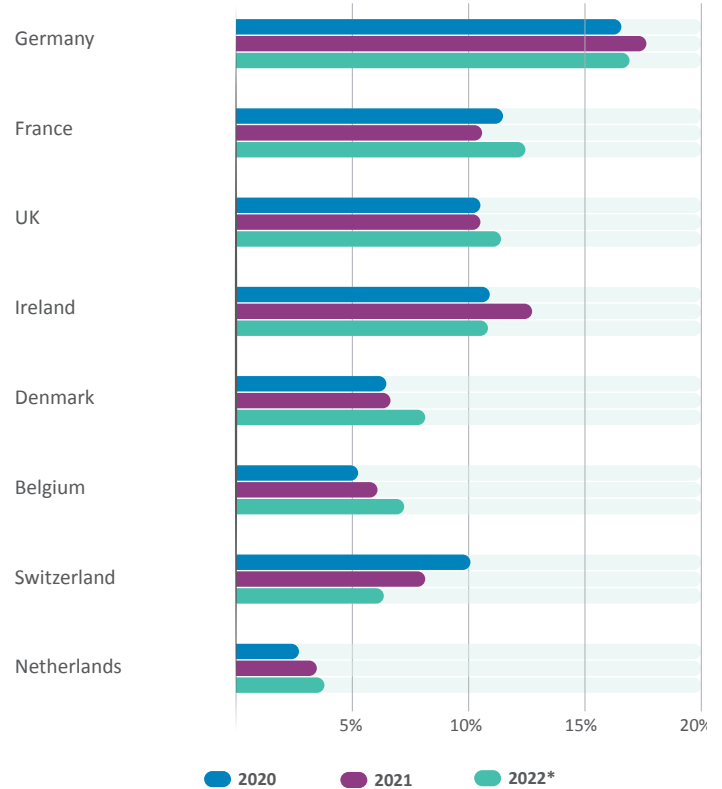


Source: Vacancysoft Analytics  
Fig. 05

\*\* Forecast 2022

**Country % Share of Total**

Engineering Vacancies, Europe, Life Sciences, 2020-2022



Source: Vacancysoft Analytics  
Fig. 06

\* Jan-May 2022

When analysing engineering vacancies by country, Germany leads the pack with 1,080 vacancies in 2021, an increase of 53.6%. In 2022, Germany is still experiencing growth in this regard, though at a diminished rate of 16% so far.

The highest year-on-year growth in 2021 was observed in Ireland, with 68%, reaching 776 vacancies in 2021, followed by Belgium's 67.8%, with 374 vacancies.

With regards to 2022, Denmark has the highest average monthly growth rate at 47.4%, with Belgium and France up by 44.4%, and 42.1%, respectively.

Switzerland is the only top eight country in 2022 to have a negative monthly average growth rate with -5.65%.

In 2021, life sciences exports in Switzerland increased to a record \$111.4 billion, up by 9% from 2020. This accounts for 42% of total Swiss exports, making it a core export field for Switzerland.

Seeking a new package of bilateral agreements, Swiss president Ignazio Cassis attempted to get closer to the EU bloc in February 2022, following the ditching of a draft treaty in May 2021, likely further facilitating trade and exports with that group of nations.

Germany has 16.9% of Europe's share in 2022, down from 17.8% in 2021. France retakes second position with 12.4% in 2022, having been overtaken by Ireland in 2021.

Given the contraction Switzerland is experiencing YTD, its share has also declined to 6.3%.

Its shares are declining year-on-year with 8.2% in 2021 down from 10.1% in 2020.

With regards to the UK, after a stable 10.5% share in 2020 it finally bounced up in 2022, reaching 11.4%, making it the third largest country for engineering vacancies. This is potentially fuelled by the booming biotechnology sector in the UK with a 60% increase in UK funding, reaching a record high of \$5.6 billion in 2021.

With pharmaceuticals having the lion’s share of engineering vacancies in Europe with 78% YTD, it is almost guaranteed to be the dominating sector, with 17 organisations out of the top 20.

In terms of the volume of vacancies, Merck has posted the highest number this year, up by 28.8%, overtaking Abbott, whose vacancies dropped by 6.7% this year.

Out of the top 10 organisations, Novartis has been the most active in 2022 so far, with engineering vacancies up by 86%.

Given the overall decline in Switzerland’s engineering vacancies, it is interesting to see that the focus of this campaign has been Austria and Slovenia - Novartis has posted 27 vacancies for engineers in Slovenia in 2022 YTD, compared to 30 vacancies across the entirety of 2021.

Second after Novartis in terms of growth rate in 2022, Novo Nordisk has seen a 60.8% increase in terms of average monthly rate compared to 2021.

In the top 10, Bayer has been unique in seeing a diminished growth rate of 24.1% in 2022 YTD. Within the top 20, three more organisations experienced a decline in their engineering volumes. These are PSC Biotech, down by 37.5%, Cytiva down by 36.8%, and Lonza down by 30.3%.

Finally, as the only non-pharmaceutical organisations in the top 10, Eurofins is experiencing a more modest monthly average growth rate in 2022, with 2.3%.

The two other non-pharmaceuticals in the top 20 are PSC Biotech, down by 37.5% in 2022 YTD and BioNTech with an 80% increase over 2021, with 42 vacancies posted by May 2022 compared to a total of 56 vacancies posted across 2021.

## Top 20 Organizations

Total Engineering vacancies, within Life Sciences 2021-22

Organization	Sector	2021	2022*	% Change
<b>Merck</b>	Pharmaceuticals	382	205	<b>28.8</b>
<b>Novo Nordisk</b>	Pharmaceuticals	291	195	<b>60.8</b>
<b>Abbott</b>	Pharmaceuticals	450	175	<b>-6.7</b>
<b>GSK</b>	Pharmaceuticals	295	167	<b>35.9</b>
<b>Eurofins</b>	CRO	366	156	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Roche</b>	Pharmaceuticals	246	126	<b>22.9</b>
<b>Pfizer</b>	Pharmaceuticals	205	111	<b>30</b>
<b>Novartis</b>	Pharmaceuticals	130	101	<b>86.5</b>
<b>Johnson &amp; Johnson</b>	Pharmaceuticals	210	98	<b>12</b>
<b>Bayer</b>	Pharmaceuticals	260	82	<b>-24.3</b>
<b>Sanofi</b>	Pharmaceuticals	181	82	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Takeda</b>	Pharmaceuticals	151	78	<b>24</b>
<b>Cytiva</b>	Pharmaceuticals	285	75	<b>-36.8</b>
<b>AstraZeneca</b>	Pharmaceuticals	88	60	<b>63.6</b>
<b>Lonza</b>	Pharmaceuticals	203	59	<b>-30.2</b>
<b>Boehringer Ingelheim</b>	Pharmaceuticals	78	59	<b>81.5</b>
<b>PSC Biotech</b>	Biotechnology	165	43	<b>-37.5</b>
<b>AbbVie</b>	Pharmaceuticals	96	42	<b>5</b>
<b>BioNTech</b>	Biotechnology	56	42	<b>80</b>
<b>Teva</b>	Pharmaceuticals	66	41	<b>49.1</b>

Source: Vacancysoft Analytics

\* Jan-May 2022

Fig. 07





**Cpl Life Sciences have an international presence, recruiting across Europe, supplying Pharmaceutical, Biotechnology and Clinical Services industries with the talent they require for success.**

Cpl UK is a group of specialist talent businesses which service the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Professional Services and Healthcare sectors across the UK.

Together we form the UK footprint for **Cpl Resources Plc** which is one of the largest staffing companies in Europe. As a group we've been powering businesses by providing transformational talent solutions for over 30 years and have been listed on the London Stock Exchange since 1999.

Our mission is to be the UK's best transformational talent partner across all our core markets and add meaningful value to lives of our clients, candidates and colleagues.

### **What we do:**

Our Service Capabilities across all European Countries include:

- Contingency permanent recruitment
- Contract recruitment – freelance and PAYE via Cpl UK
- Search and selection permanent recruitment
- Specialist 'project-based' interims via Cpl UK
- FSP outsourced teams across Europe
- European Salary Survey to determine the salary and benefits for each sector of the UK Life Science industry.

For more information or to speak to one of our team please contact us on **+44118 959 4990** or email [UK@CPL.COM](mailto:UK@CPL.COM)

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Vacancysoft's products helps firms to optimise their businesses. Established in 2006, we have thousands of clients worldwide, ranging from FTSE-listed businesses to industry specialists.

### **How we gather data**

The data contained within this report is gathered solely and specifically from the career centres of company websites, not job boards.

Before publication, job postings are de-duplicated and verified as unique. Every vacancy is assigned up to 20 data points through Vacancysoft's proprietary algorithm, which is double-checked for validity by a data quality control team.

The data showcased here is available within the Vacancy Analytics platform, where users can create and customise their own reports. To find out more please contact a member of the team or email [support@vacancysoft.com](mailto:support@vacancysoft.com).

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