

Animator

You make drawings and models move, frame by frame, for films, series and games.

TYPICAL PAY

\$65,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$42k to \$110k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Animation and visual effects studios, game studios, ad agencies...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Draw, film things, try Blender. You need Grade 12 English and a visual arts or communication technology credit for most programs.
- 2 Portfolio for admission** Grade 12
Sheridan College asks for a portfolio plus about a 65% overall average. Other schools are similar.
- 3 Animation program** 2 to 4 years
A 4-year honours degree or a 2 to 3 year college diploma. You learn timing, acting, rigging, lighting and the pipeline software studios use.
- 4 Internship or placement** 3 to 4 months
Sheridan College builds in a three-month internship between years 3 and 4. Take any studio placement you can get.
- 5 Demo reel and first contract** First 2 years
A tight reel of 60 to 90 seconds of your best shots. Juniors usually start in cleanup, in-betweens, roto or layout and move up.

Pros and cons

- + You work on films and games people actually watch
- + Skills move between studios and between countries
- + Most studio jobs carry benefits, unlike most freelance art work
- Job Bank expects a strong risk of labour surplus from 2024 to 2033
- Contract to contract work, with gaps between productions
- Crunch before delivery dates is normal

Optional boosts

Character animation. Rigging. Visual effects and simulation. Game animation.

Good to know

Canada is a global animation hub

Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal host large studios doing animation and visual effects for productions made elsewhere. Provincial and federal tax credits are a big part of why the work lands here.

Twelve drawings for half a second

Traditional animation runs on twelves and twenty-fours. Animating on twos, a new drawing every second frame, still gives 12 drawings for every half second of screen time.

Where these numbers come from

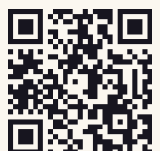
Job Bank: Animator, animated films in Canada, wages (updated November 2025)

Job Bank: Animator, animated films in Canada, job outlook

Sheridan College: Honours Bachelor of Animation

OCAD University

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/animator>



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