

Architect

Design buildings and take legal responsibility for them. Two degrees, a long internship and an exam before you can use the title.

TYPICAL PAY

\$85,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$50k to \$130k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

8 to 11 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Architecture firms, construction sites, government, developers

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Physics, Advanced Functions, Calculus and visual arts. Some schools ask for a portfolio or an interview, so start drawing now.
- 2 Pre-professional degree** 4 years, 5 with co-op
 A bachelor's in architectural studies or environmental design. Waterloo, Toronto, Carleton, McGill, UBC (University of British Columbia), Manitoba, Calgary, Dalhousie, Laval, Université de Montréal, TMU (Toronto Metropolitan University, formerly Ryerson).
- 3 M.Arch (master of architecture)** 2 to 3 years
 The professional degree, accredited by the CACB (Canadian Architectural Certification Board). Two years if your bachelor's was in architecture, three or more if it was not.
- 4 Internship** About 3 years
 Register as an intern with your provincial association and log 3,720 supervised hours across set categories in the IAP (Internship in Architecture Program), with a mentor.
- 5 Exam and licence** About 1 year
 Pass the ExAC (Examination for Architects in Canada), a four-part exam held once a year. Then apply to your regulator, such as the OAA (Ontario Association of Architects).

Pros and cons

- + You shape buildings people use for decades
- + Respected, legally protected title
- + A mix of art, technology and problem solving
- 9 to 11 years to a licence, for pay engineers reach in 4
- Long hours before deadlines, often unpaid at small firms
- Work dries up in recessions and layoffs are common

Good to know

3,720 hours, logged one by one

Before you can be licensed you record 3,720 hours of supervised work in categories like design, contract documents and site review, signed off by a mentor. That is about two years of full-time work, but most i...

The exam happens once a year

The ExAC (Examination for Architects in Canada) is written over two days each November. Fail a section and you wait a full year to try it again.

Optional boosts

LEED (a green building rating system) or Passive House. Revit and BIM (building information modelling) skills. PMP (Project Management Professional). A specialty.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Architects, wages (updated Nov 2025)
 Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
 Canadian Architectural Certification Board
 ExAC: Registration procedure and fees

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/architect>



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