

Clinical Perfusionist

Run the heart-lung machine that keeps a patient alive during open-heart surgery. A science degree, a 2-year master's, and one of the smallest health professions in Canada.

TYPICAL PAY

\$85,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$63k to \$106k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Cardiac surgery operating rooms,
intensive care units, heart centres**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, physics and calculus. You need marks for a science degree.
- 2 Bachelor of science** 4 years
Any science major with anatomy, physiology, physics, chemistry and calculus. Michener wants a GPA (grade point average) of at least 3.0. Registered nurses and respiratory therapists with a science degree and a year of critical care can also apply.
- 3 Perfusion master's** 2 years
Three programs in Canada: Michener in Toronto, Université de Montréal, and BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology). Michener's is a 2-year master of science with a Casper test at admission and 32 weeks of clinical placement anywhere in Canada.
- 4 Write the CSCP (Canadian Society of Clinical Perfusion) exam** After graduation
Held once a year in November at test centres. Pass it to become a CCP (certified clinical perfusionist).
- 5 Get hired and keep certified** Ongoing
Hospitals hire only certified perfusionists. Recertification requires ongoing clinical activity and education.

Pros and cons

- + You literally keep a person alive with your hands
- + Small profession, close to full employment
- + Hospital pension, union grid and strong on-call pay
- Six to seven years of school, with an expensive master's
- Very few seats a year; many strong applicants are turned away
- On-call means nights, weekends and cancelled plans

Good to know

Three schools in the country

Canada trains perfusionists at just three programs: Michener in Toronto, Université de Montréal, and BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology) in Vancouver. Each takes a small class, which is why the...

One exam day a year

The CSCP (Canadian Society of Clinical Perfusion) certification exam is held once a year, in November, at test centres in Canada and the US. The 2026 sitting is November 2. Miss the July 1 application deadli...

Optional boosts

ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation). Pediatric and congenital perfusion. Ventricular assist devices. Organ perfusion for transplant.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Clinical perfusionist, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Canadian Society of Clinical Perfusion

CSCP: certifying exam

Michener Institute: Cardiovascular Perfusion, Master of Science

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/clinical-perfusionist>



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