

Fashion Designer

You design clothing and accessories, then work with pattern makers and factories to get them made.

TYPICAL PAY

\$65,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$37k to \$100k

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

**Apparel brands, retail head offices,
costume shops, your own label**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 10 to 12
Visual arts, any textiles or family studies course, and business. Start sewing. Make things that fit real people.
- 2 Fashion program** 2 to 4 years
A 2 to 3 year college diploma or a 4-year degree such as the Bachelor of Design in Fashion at Toronto Metropolitan University. You learn pattern drafting, draping, construction, textiles and digital design.
- 3 Internship** 3 to 8 months
A season inside a brand, a studio or a costume shop. This is where the job offers come from.
- 4 First role** 1 to 3 years
Assistant designer, technical design assistant, or production coordinator. You will spend a lot of time on spec sheets and sample fittings.
- 5 Designer** 3 to 6 years in
You own categories and make the calls on fabric, fit and price. Or you leave and start your own label.

Pros and cons

- + You see your work worn by strangers on the street
- + Real craft skills that transfer to costume, tailoring and your own business
- + Entry is by portfolio, not by exam or licence
- Low starting pay and a lot of unpaid or low-paid internships
- Job Bank rates the 3-year outlook as limited or undetermined almost everywhere
- Canadian manufacturing is small, so most production is overseas and on someone else's clock

Optional boosts

Pattern making and grading. 3D garment software. Technical design. Sourcing and production.

Good to know

Labels are the law

In Canada most clothing must carry a label listing fibre content in English and French, plus a dealer identity. It is federal law, not a brand choice, and it is one of the first things a new label has to sort out.

It is a small field

Job Bank counted about 9,600 fashion designers working in Canada in 2023. That is roughly one designer for every 4,000 people in the country.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Fashion Designer in Canada, wages (updated November 2025)

Job Bank: Fashion Designer in Canada, job outlook

Toronto Metropolitan University: School of Fashion

NSCAD University: Textiles and Fashion

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/fashion-designer>



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