

Graphic Designer

Logos, websites, packaging, apps. A portfolio matters more than a diploma.

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**Moderate**

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED**No**

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK**Agencies, in-house teams,
freelance, tech companies**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Art, media arts and any computer courses. Start a portfolio now.
- 2 Design program** 2 to 4 years
A 2 to 3 year college diploma (Sheridan, Seneca, Humber, Capilano, Red River) or a 4-year degree (OCAD University, Emily Carr, NSCAD University, York). Portfolio review is part of admission.
- 3 Internships and freelance** During school
Real client work while in school. This is what employers look at.
- 4 Portfolio and first job** After graduation
A strong online portfolio of 8 to 12 projects gets interviews. The diploma gets you through the door; the work gets you hired.

Pros and cons

- + Creative work you can point to
- + Remote and freelance friendly
- + Short, affordable education
- Low starting pay and a crowded junior market
- Clients and revisions can wear you down
- AI image tools are pressuring the lower end of the market

Good to know

The Canadian flag was a design project

The maple leaf flag was chosen in 1964 from thousands of submissions. Its final form was refined by designer Jacques Saint-Cyr and art director George Bist.

Ontario has a legal design title

The RGD (Registered Graphic Designer) designation was created by an act of the Ontario legislature in the 1990s, making it one of the few legally recognized design titles in the world.

Optional boosts

UX (user experience) and product design. Motion design. Front-end code. Brand strategy.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Graphic designers and illustrators, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Association of Registered Graphic Designers: Certification

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/graphic-designer>



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