

Museum Curator

Decide what a museum collects, keeps and shows. A research job with a public audience.

TYPICAL PAY

\$76,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$49k to \$114k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Museums, art galleries, historic sites, science centres, universities

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Strong history, English and a second language if you can manage one.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
In the subject you want to curate: art history, history, anthropology, archaeology, biology or geology. The subject matters more than the school.
- 3 Volunteer and intern** During your degree
Museums hire people they already know. Front desk, collections help, summer programs, anything inside the building.
- 4 Master's degree** 2 years
A museum studies degree such as the two-year Master of Museum Studies at the University of Toronto, or a subject master's plus museum experience.
- 5 Work up through the collection** 3 to 10 years
Assistant, registrar or interpreter, then associate curator, then curator. Openings are scarce and you may move cities for them.

Pros and cons

- + You get paid to research something you care about
- + Public-sector pay and pensions at larger institutions
- + Work that stays in the building long after you leave
- Two degrees and years of low-paid contracts to get in
- Very few permanent jobs, and you may have to move for one
- Budgets are political and get cut first

Good to know

Most of the collection is never on display

A large museum typically shows only a small fraction of what it holds. The rest sits in climate-controlled storage, and looking after it is a bigger part of the curator's job than putting on shows.

Returning items is now core work

Canadian museums are actively working through the return of Indigenous belongings and ancestral remains to the communities they came from. The Canadian Museums Association has led national work...

Optional boosts

A second language. Collections database work. Grant writing and fundraising. Digital exhibitions.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Museum Curator in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Canadian Museums Association

University of Toronto: Master of Museum Studies

Government of Canada: Young Canada Works

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/museum-curator>



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