

Photographer

Weddings, portraits, products, news, sport. Most photographers run a small business, not a job.

TYPICAL PAY

\$50,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$36k to \$101k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Studios, weddings and events,
client locations, news, freelance**

How you get there

- 1 Shoot constantly** From now
Friends, sports teams, events, anything. The only way to get good is volume.
- 2 School, or not** 0 to 4 years
A two-year college diploma or a four-year degree such as Sheridan College's honours bachelor of photography, which runs eight semesters with a 14-week internship. Plenty of working photographers skip this.
- 3 Assist a working photographer** 1 to 2 years
Carrying gear, setting lights, managing files. You learn the business side that no course teaches.
- 4 Build a portfolio and a niche** Ongoing
Weddings, food, real estate, sport, newborns, products. Clients hire specialists, not generalists.
- 5 Register a business** A few weeks
A business number, invoices, liability insurance, contracts and taxes. This is the part that ends most photography careers.

Pros and cons

- + You can start with no school and no debt
- + You choose your clients and your style
- + Every job is a different place and different people
- You are running a business whether you wanted to or not
- Weekends and holidays are the busy times
- Phone cameras and stock libraries wiped out the easy money

Good to know

You own the photo, usually

Under Canadian copyright law the photographer normally owns the copyright in a photo, even one taken for a paying client, unless a contract says otherwise. That is why photographers sell licences inst...

The wedding is the training ground

Weddings are the most common first paid work in Canadian photography, and the least forgiving: there is no second take of the ceremony. Most commercial photographers started as a second sho...

Optional boosts

Commercial and product. Architecture and real estate. Video as well as stills. Aerial work.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Photographer in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Professional Photographers of Canada
CAPIC (Canadian Association of Professional Image Creators)
Sheridan College: Honours Bachelor of Photography

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/photographer>



Scan for the full clicker