# Signals Intelligence Analyst

Make sense of foreign communications for Canada's signals intelligence agency in Ottawa. Citizens only, and hiring can take 18 months.

| TYPICAL PAY | PAY RANGE | COST TO QUALIFY | TIME TO QUALIFY |
|---|---|---|---|
| **$91,000** | **$56k to $139k** | **$25k to $50k** | **4 to 6 years** |
| a year, full time | lower end to upper end | tuition, fees, exams, kit | after high school |

| DEMAND | LICENCE NEEDED | WHERE YOU WORK |
|---|---|---|
| **Moderate** | **No** | **Secure offices in Ottawa, on site full time** |
| job outlook | no licence to hold | |

## How you get there

1. **High school diploma** — Grade 12
   Languages, history and writing help most. Stay away from illegal drugs: the agency rejects anyone who used them in the year before applying.
2. **Bachelor's degree** — 4 years
   Linguistics, translation, languages, international relations and political science all fit. An equivalent mix of education and experience is also accepted.
3. **Apply** — Weeks
   A cover letter and a résumé covering the last 10 years. Students graduating within 12 months may apply.
4. **Tests, interviews and clearance** — 12 to 18 months
   Some tests are in person in Ottawa, Montréal, Toronto, Kingston, Calgary, Vancouver or Halifax. Then the background check, a polygraph and a psychological assessment.
5. **Training on the job** — Ongoing
   You learn the tools and the technology from colleagues, with training and mentoring.

In Quebec the route is different. It is set out on the career page: career.help/ca/careers/signals-intelligence-analyst

## Pros and cons

+ Work that feeds real government decisions
+ Federal pension, benefits and a pay scale with yearly steps
+ Paid co-op terms that can lead straight to a job
- 12 to 18 months of process with no guarantee
- You cannot talk about your work, for life
- Material that can be disturbing or clash with your values

## Good to know

### Secret for 28 years

The agency began in 1946 under a secret order, as a branch of the National Research Council. It was first mentioned in public in a 1974 CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) documentary, and Parliam...

### It may not look at Canadians

The law that governs CSE (Communications Security Establishment) forbids it from targeting the communications of Canadians anywhere, or of anyone in Canada. Its intelligence work is aimed at foreign targe...

## Optional boosts

An advanced foreign language · Translation experience · Computer and network experience · A related degree

**Where these numbers come from**

Job Bank: Intelligence Analyst, Security, in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Job Bank: Intelligence Analyst, Security, job prospects
Communications Security Establishment: careers
Communications Security Establishment: compensation

Numbers checked October 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/signals-intelligence-analyst

Scan for the full clicker