

# Software Developer

Build apps, websites and systems. No licence required, many roads in.

**TYPICAL PAY****\$95,000**

a year, full time

**PAY RANGE****\$58k to \$160k**

starting to experienced

**TIME TO QUALIFY****1 to 4 years**

after high school

**DEMAND****Good**

job outlook

**LICENCE NEEDED****No**

anyone can do it

**WHERE YOU WORK****Offices, remote, startups, banks, government**

## How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12  
Take every math you can. Advanced Functions and Calculus are required for most computer science (CS) degrees. Computer science courses help but are not required.
- 2 Computer science or software engineering degree** 4 to 5 years with co-op  
Four years. Choose a school with co-op: Waterloo, Toronto, UBC (University of British Columbia), McGill, Concordia and many others alternate study and paid work terms.
- 3 Internships and side projects** During school  
Employers care more about what you have built than your grades. A GitHub with real projects matters.
- 4 First job** Final year  
New grad hiring happens in the fall for the following summer. Apply early.

## Pros and cons

- + High pay with no licence and no grad school
- + Remote work is normal
- + You can switch industries easily: banking, games, health, government
- Hiring is cyclical, junior jobs got harder to land after 2022
- You have to keep learning forever or fall behind
- Long stretches of sitting and staring at screens

## Good to know

**Waterloo is famous for a reason**

The University of Waterloo sends more students to Silicon Valley internships than any school outside the United States. Its co-op program is the model everyone else copies.

**Canada's tech giant**

Shopify, headquartered in Ottawa, was for a time the most valuable company in Canada. It employs thousands of developers, almost all remote.

## Optional boosts

Cloud certifications. A specialty. Open source contributions. Working for a US company remotely.

**Where these numbers come from**

Job Bank: Software developers and programmers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Statistics Canada: Tuition fees for degree programs, 2024/2025

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/software-developer>



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