

Software Tester

Find the bugs before the customers do. The most common side door into a tech career.

TYPICAL PAY

\$73,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$36k to \$107k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Software companies, banks, game studios, government, remote

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Computer science if offered. Testing rewards people who are careful, curious and a little suspicious. Try breaking the apps you use and writing down exactly how.
- 2 Training, or not** 0 to 4 years
 A 2-year college diploma in computer programming (Algonquin, Seneca, NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology), Nova Scotia Community College) is the most common. Some testers have a computer science degree. Some have no training and got in through a ga...
- 3 First testing job** Months
 Manual QA (quality assurance): following test plans, clicking through features, writing bug reports developers can reproduce.
- 4 Add automation** 1 to 2 years
 Learn to write tests in code (Selenium, Playwright, Cypress) and to read the developers' code. Get the ISTQB (International Software Testing Qualifications Board) Foundation certificate.
- 5 Specialize or move on** 3 to 5 years in
 Automation engineer, performance tester, security tester, QA lead, or cross over to development or product management.

Pros and cons

- + The lowest barrier into tech, no degree needed
- + You learn how software is really built, which sets up a move into development
- + Remote work is common
- Low starting pay, especially in games and contract work
- Job Bank rates prospects limited in Ontario, Alberta and BC and very limited in Quebec
- Manual testing is being automated, so standing still is risky

Optional boosts

Test automation. Performance testing. Security testing. ISTQB (International Software Testing Qualifications Board) advanced and agile certificates.

Good to know

Over a million people hold the same certificate

ISTQB (International Software Testing Qualifications Board) had issued more than 1.1 million certifications worldwide as of 2025, across more than 130 countries. Its vocabulary is the shared language of testers e...

The first computer bug was an actual bug

In 1947, engineers at Harvard found a moth stuck in a relay of the Mark II computer and taped it into the logbook with the note: first actual case of bug being found. The word had been used for glitches before,...

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Software tester, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Job Bank: Software tester, job outlook

Canadian Software Testing Board (CSTB)

ISTQB: International Software Testing Qualifications Board

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-tester>



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