

Sonographer

Ultrasound scanning, from pregnancies to hearts. High demand and good pay, but hard to get into and hard on the body.

TYPICAL PAY

\$88,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$70k to \$108k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospital imaging, private imaging clinics, cardiology labs

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Grade 12 physics, biology, math and English.
- 2 Get in** 0 to 4 years
 Some programs take you straight from high school into a 2 to 3 year diploma. Many others require a prior health diploma or degree, or 2 years of university science, and then run 1 to 2 years. Competition is intense either way.
- 3 Sonography program** 1 to 3 years
 Physics of ultrasound, anatomy, scanning labs, then months of full-time unpaid clinical placement. You learn generalist scanning, or cardiac, or both.
- 4 Write the Sonography Canada exams** During or after the program
 A core exam plus a specialty exam, merging into one exam per specialty from 2027. Passing gives you the CRGS (Canadian Registered Generalist Sonographer) or CRCS (Canadian Registered Cardiac Sonographer) credential.
- 5 Register where required** A few weeks
 In Ontario that is the CMRITO (College of Medical Radiation and Imaging Technologists of Ontario). Elsewhere, employers require the Sonography Canada credential.

Pros and cons

- + Serious shortage. Jobs and locum contracts everywhere
- + High pay for the years of school
- + No radiation, real patient contact, and you see the answer live
- Repetitive strain injuries to the shoulder, wrist and neck are very common
- Emotionally hard scans: miscarriages, cancers, and you cannot tell the patient
- Very competitive admission, often after another credential

Optional boosts

Cardiac (echocardiography). Vascular. High-risk obstetrics. Musculoskeletal.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Medical sonographers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Sonography Canada

College of Medical Radiation and Imaging Technologists of Ontario

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/sonographer>

Good to know

Most sonographers work in pain

Surveys keep finding that 8 or 9 in 10 sonographers have work-related pain in the shoulder, neck or wrist, and many leave the field because of it. Good posture, equipment and pacing are not optional.

You are not allowed to tell them

The sonographer sees the image first but cannot share a diagnosis. Learning to keep a neutral face while scanning a pregnancy with no heartbeat is one of the hardest skills in the job.



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