

Architectural Technologist

Turn a rough design into the drawings a crew can build from. Two years of school, no exams, no license.

TYPICAL PAY

\$66,150

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$46k to \$100k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Architecture firms, engineering firms, contractors, city building d...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Geometry, drafting or technology classes, and any computer course you can take.
- 2 Two-year associate degree** 2 years
 Architectural or civil drafting and design technology at a community or technical college. You learn drafting standards, building codes, structures basics and the software.
- 3 An internship or co-op term** A summer or semester
 Most programs arrange one. This is how the majority of graduates get hired.
- 4 First job as a junior drafter** Year 1 to 2
 You redraw, detail and correct other people's drawings for a year or two. That is how you learn what actually gets built.
- 5 Grow into modeling or design** Year 3 and up
 Take over the building information model, move toward designer or project coordinator, or go back for an architecture degree later.

Pros and cons

- + Two years and a modest tuition bill to a real salary
- + No license, no exams, no logged hours
- + Steady indoor work with normal hours most of the year
- You draw someone else's design decisions most days
- Pay ceiling is lower than the licensed jobs next to you
- Tied to construction, so hiring dries up in a downturn

Optional boosts

Become the building information modeling lead. Learn structural or civil detailing. Add code and permit knowledge. Voluntary certification.

Good to know

The American job title is different

Architectural technologist is a common title in Canada and the United Kingdom. In the United States the same work is advertised as architectural drafter, design technician or architectural designer. Sea...

Drawings used to be done on linen

Before computers, construction drawings were inked onto linen or vellum by hand, and a mistake meant scraping the ink off with a razor blade. Whole rooms of drafters worked in rows at tilted boards.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Architectural and Civil Drafters (17-3011.00)
 American Design Drafting Association
 Pennsylvania College of Technology
 Apprenticeship.gov, United States Department of Labor

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/architectural-technologist>



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