

Mathematician

Work on the math itself. A tiny job title, a long training, and a skill that every other field wants.

TYPICAL PAY

\$126,710

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$69k to \$195k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 10 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Universities, federal agencies,
defense labs, finance and technol...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Calculus if your school offers it. Grades in math and a habit of working on hard problems for hours are what matter.
- 2 Bachelor's degree in mathematics** 4 years
Four years. Real analysis and abstract algebra are the two courses that tell you whether this is for you.
- 3 Undergraduate research** One or two summers
A summer research program or a project with a professor. This is what gets you into graduate school.
- 4 Master's or doctorate** 2 to 6 years
A master's is two years and opens industry jobs. A doctorate is five or six, is usually funded, and is what the job title normally requires.
- 5 First research position** Year 1
A postdoctoral position in a university, or a job in a federal lab, a defense contractor or a technology firm.

Pros and cons

- + You are paid to think about genuinely hard problems
- + Graduate school is usually funded instead of costing you
- + The skill transfers to finance, technology and government
- Only about 2,400 people hold this job title nationally
- Employment is projected to decline slightly
- Nine or ten years of training before the real job

Good to know

One of the smallest job titles in the country

The federal occupation database counts about 2,400 employed mathematicians in the entire United States, with roughly 100 openings projected a year. Tens of thousands of people graduate with mathe...

Cryptographer is on the official list

Among the job titles the government files under Mathematician are Computational Mathematician, Research Scientist and Cryptographer. Codebreaking is a real career that a mathematics degree leads to, an...

Optional boosts

Cryptography. Operations research. Computational mathematics. Quantitative finance.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Mathematicians (15-2021.00)

O*NET OnLine: Mathematicians summary

University of Pittsburgh: undergraduate mathematics degrees

USAJOBS: the federal government's official employment site

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/mathematician>



Scan for the full clicker