Graphic Designers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia
1. Working as a Graphic Designer

Job Description

As a Graphic designer you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Consult with clients about project, audience, content, budget
- Determine the best and most appropriate medium
- Prepare and present rough drafts of sketches, layouts, and graphic elements
- Use the collected elements to create a final product
- Co-ordinate all aspects of production including sub-contracting
- Supervise other graphic designers or graphic arts technicians.


And Career Cruising Database, (Graphic Designer Profile) Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising

Industry Overview

Job prospects for graphic designers in BC are expected in the areas of:

- digital animation
- product design
- advertising, marketing, public relations

Graphic Designers knowledgeable in current technology will be most in demand. In particular, sustainable design practitioners. Sustainable design practice is relatively new, but growing quickly. There is currently a demand for consultants and designers alike in this area.

Job Outlook in BC

Chart from WorkBC

The Employment Outlook for BC provides job openings projections for graphic designers in BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2010 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>2015 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>Avg Annual % Change, 5 years, 2010 to 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland /Southwest</td>
<td>5,790</td>
<td>6,520</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson-Okanagan</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootenay</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cariboo</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast &amp; Nechako</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


You can learn more about the graphic design industry in BC from:

- WorkBC Career Profiles http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/ [search NOC 5241]

Last updated: January 7, 2016
Types of Employers

Graphic designers are employed by advertising agencies, design firms, and multimedia production companies and also larger companies with advertising or communications departments and by government agencies. Many graphic designers are self-employed.

Salary

In BC, the average annual salary is between $44,000 and $53,000. According to a salary survey conducted by the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada the average annual salary for junior graphic designers is $33,000; intermediate graphic designers is $40,000; senior graphic designers is $51,000.

Source: Career Cruising (Profile for Graphic Designers).

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for graphic designers and illustrators in BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Wage ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland – Southwest Region</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson–Okanagan Region</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island and Coast Region</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Working Hours

Working hours depend on the place of employment. Designers who work for large companies or design firms usually work regular business week hours. Freelance graphic designers generally have more irregular schedules, and often work longer hours. If an important deadline is approaching, graphic designers might work up to 15 hours a day including evening and weekends.
2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- strong creativity
- computer savvy
- good organizational and communication skills
- problem solving skills
- excellent ability to work under demanding timelines and meet deadlines

Education and Experience

Graphic designers are required to have a university degree in visual arts with specialization in graphic design, commercial art, graphic communications or cartooning.

Alternatively, they may possess a college diploma in graphic arts or be certified graphic designers by the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada (GDC). Certification with GDC requires a confidential portfolio review of the individual’s work by the Standards Officers of their local GDC chapter. Two years of design training is an asset.

Experience or training in multimedia design at a post-secondary college or technical institution may be required.

A well-developed portfolio of work is required for graphic designers. This allows clients and prospective employers to view the type and quality of work that an individual can accomplish.

Source: Society of Graphic Designers of Canada, https://www.gdc.net/

Qualifications

This occupation does not require certification in British Columbia.
3. Finding Jobs

You’ll find job advertisements in local newspapers and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations’ publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the Vancouver Sun and The Province at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the Vancouver Sun on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in The Province on Sundays.

Job White Pages

- Available in print at the Central Library or online at
  http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom

NOTE: You can only access this database from the Central Library or VPL branch libraries. Access is NOT available from home or outside the Library.

Online Job Postings

- Applied Arts Magazine, Creative Careers
  http://www.appliedartsmag.com/creative_careers/

- Indeed.com
  http://www.indeed.ca/
  Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards.

Professional Associations’ Career Resources

- Society of Graphic Designers of Canada, British Columbia Chapter
  http://bc.gdc.net/blog/category/jobs/
Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you’ll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For graphic designers, look for these related job titles (from NOC code 5241):

- advertising designer
- graphic artist
- layout designer
- package designer
- page designer

Source: NOC, 5241

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of graphic design employers in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- Ad Pages
  Available at Central Library, 380 Ad2CB

- Reference Canada
  Click on “Start Search” beside Canadian Businesses, then select the “Advanced Search” button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter “Graphic Design” and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.
  Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

**NOTE:** You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database.
4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume (curriculum vitae) and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/ to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following pathfinders which are available in print at the Central Library or online at http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

- **Networking for Employment**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Networking for Employment]

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]
5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for the graphic design industry in BC and Canada provide assistance to individuals. Some require paying a fee for membership.

- Advertising & Design Club of Canada  
  http://theadcc.ca/

- Society of Graphic Designers of Canada  
  http://www.gdc.net/

- Society of Graphic Designers of Canada, British Columbia Chapter  
  http://bc.gdc.net/blog/

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples at the Central Library:

- Applied Arts Magazine  
  Available at VPL Central, 741.605 A65 and online  
  http://www.appliedartsmag.com/

- Society of Graphic Designers of Canada  
  http://www.gdc.net/  
  See: Blog and eNewsletter

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/.