Graphic Designers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia

skilled immigrant
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Contents

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.

Source: NOC http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/Profile.aspx?val=5&val1=5241

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.

Source: Work BC Career Profiles http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/ [search 5241]

Job Outlook in BC

1.5% Expected annual demand growth rate (2014-2024)

2,830 Job openings (2014-2024)

Occupation Outlook for B.C.:

% of job openings from replacement	**52%**
% of job openings from expansion	**48%**
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	**1.5%**
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	**2,830**

Chart from WorkBC

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

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

Source: Regional Employment Projections, BC Stats. Projections for development regions. http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/LabourIncome/EmploymentUnemployment/RegionalEmploymentProjections.aspx [accessed October 2014]

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

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

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:

Location	Wage ($/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	15.00	22.50	39.42
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	14.50	22.50	40.51
Thompson--Okanagan Region	15.00	22.50	39.42
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	15.00	22.50	39.42

Source: Job Bank Canada, http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home-eng.do

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**

    http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/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
  [Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

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

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

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
  Go to 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/.