

Graphic Designers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as a Graphic Designer

Job Description

Graphic designers and illustrators are visual communicators – they create images to communicate information for publications, advertising, films, packaging, posters, signs and interactive media such as Web sites.

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 sketches, layouts, and graphic elements using traditional tools, multimedia software and image processing, layout and design software
- estimate the cost of materials and time to complete graphic design projects
- co-ordinate all aspects of production including sub-contracting for print, audio-visual or electronic materials, such as websites

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profile for Graphic Designers & Illustrators
<https://www.workbc.ca/careers/5241>
- Career Cruising – Profile for ‘Graphic Designer’
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

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 and illustrators will be wanted by product designers, advertising and marketing firms to fill the demand for visual and “brand” appeal for information, goods and services. As a result, more and more designers are undertaking marketing and public relations work.

Graphic Designers with knowledge of sustainable design will be in demand -. There is currently a need for consultants and designers alike in this area.

Source:

- WorkBC Career Profile for Graphic Designers & Illustrators
<https://www.workbc.ca/careers/5241>
- Graphic Designers of Canada – Sustainable Design
<https://gdc.design/sustainable-design>

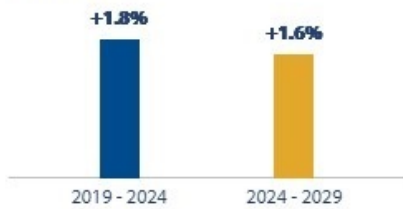
Job Outlook in BC

Graphic Designers & Illustrators NOC 5241

B.C. Labour Market Outlook (2019-2029)

Provincial outlook

Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings

10 year expected job openings: 4,720



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Composition of job openings

Replacement of retiring workers:
54.0%
2,550 openings



New jobs due to economic growth:
46.0%
2,170 openings

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/careers/5241>

Regional Outlook for Graphic Designers & Illustrators NOC 5241



Cariboo

Employment in 2019:	50
Average annual employment growth(%) 2019-2029:	3.6%
Expected number of job openings 2019-2029:	40

Kootenay

Employment in 2019:	220
Average annual employment growth(%) 2019-2029:	1.7%
Expected number of job openings 2019-2029:	90

Mainland / Southwest

Employment in 2019:	9,060
Average annual employment growth(%) 2019-2029:	1.8%
Expected number of job openings 2019-2029:	3,840

North Coast & Nechako

Employment in 2019:	60
Average annual employment growth(%) 2019-2029:	-0.7%
Expected number of job openings 2019-2029:	10

Northeast

Employment in 2019:	40
Average annual employment growth(%) 2019-2029:	1.9%
Expected number of job openings 2019-2029:	20

Thompson-Okanagan

Employment in 2019:	550
Average annual employment growth(%) 2019-2029:	1.9%
Expected number of job openings 2019-2029:	240

Vancouver Island / Coast

Employment in 2019:	1,230
Average annual employment growth(%) 2019-2029:	0.9%
Expected number of job openings 2019-2029:	500

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/careers/5241>

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

- WorkBC Career Profile for Graphic Designers & Illustrators
<https://www.workbc.ca/careers/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 median salary is \$56,311.

According to the 2018/2019 Creative Earners Survey (Society of Graphic Designers of Canada), in BC the average annual salary for graphic designers is \$56,340 and for senior graphic designers in BC is \$66,542.

Source:

- WorkBC Career Profile for Graphic Designers & Illustrators
<https://www.workbc.ca/careers/5241>
- 2018/2019 Creative Earners Survey (Society of Graphic Designers of Canada)
<https://gdc.design/article/national/creative-earners-national-salary-survey>

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

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	17.00	27.00	43.27
Cariboo Region	15.20	26.92	36.05
Kootenay Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	16.83	28.00	45.00
Nechako Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Coast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northeast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thompson–Okanagan Region	17.00	27.00	43.27
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	19.00	24.04	43.20
Canada	16.00	26.44	40.87

Source: JobBank Canada <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/5703/BC>

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 overtime including evening and weekends.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- strong creativity
- strong computer skills
- 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. Experience or training in multimedia design at a post-secondary college or technical institution may also be required.

Alternatively, they may possess a college diploma in graphic arts or be certified graphic designers by the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada (GDC) <https://gdc.design/>. Certification with GDC requires a confidential portfolio review of the individual's work by the Standards Officers of their local GDC chapter. A designer must also have five to seven years of combined education and professional practice to receive a licentiate (LGDC) designation or have more than seven years of combined education and professional practice to receive a professional (MGDC) designation.

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:

- WorkBC Career Profile for Graphic Designers & Illustrators <https://www.workbc.ca/careers/5241>
- Society of Graphic Designers of Canada, <https://gdc.design/certification>

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

JOB Freeway.com

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom>

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: Access at VPL locations only

Online Job Postings

- **Graphic Designers of Canada, Job Board**
<https://gdc.design/jobs>
- **Behance – Find Creative Jobs**
<https://www.behance.net/joblist>
under “All Creative Fields”, select ‘Graphic Design’
- **Indeed.com**
<http://www.indeed.ca/>
Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards.
- **Neuvoo.ca**
<http://neuvoo.ca>

Professional Associations’ Career Resources

- **Society of Graphic Designers of Canada, British Columbia Chapter**
<https://gdc.design/chapter/bc>
- **Applied Arts Magazine, Creative Careers**
<https://www.creativefutures.ca/career-guide/>
<https://www.creativefutures.ca/>

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

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

- **Find a Canadian Designer** (Society of Graphic Designers of Canada)

<https://gdc.design/find-a-designer>

- **Business in Vancouver – Biggest Digital & Media Agencies in BC**

<https://biv.com/datatables/biggest-digital-and-media-agencies-bc-2021>

- **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. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to*

enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).

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**
<https://gdc.design/>
- **Society of Graphic Designers of Canada, British Columbia Chapter**
<https://gdc.design/chapter/bc>

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**
<https://gdc.design/resources>

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/>.