

REPORTE SOBRE LAS PERSPECTIVAS DEL MERCADO LABORAL EN QUEBEC PARA ARQUITECTOS

2151 - Architects **Analytical text**

Type of work

Architects conceptualize, plan and develop designs for the construction and renovation of commercial, institutional and residential buildings.

For the full and official description of this occupation according to the 2001 National Occupational Classification, visit the 2001 NOC site at:

<http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/groups/2151.shtml>

Examples of Occupational Titles

Architect;
architectural standards specialist;
chief architect;
consulting architect;
industrial and commercial buildings architect;
residential architect.

Outlook

Job prospects in this occupation are fair.

(Update: July 2006)

The number of architects remained fairly steady during the recession at the beginning of the 90s and in the years that followed, despite the sharp decline in employment in the construction industry, and subsequently increased sharply. These changes are mainly attributable to the trends that affect the construction industry and changes in the demand for architectural services. Given the lack of growth anticipated in construction, but the increase in demand for architectural services, the number of architects should increase significantly in the next few years.

Sources of employment

Openings will come primarily from opportunities that arise when architects retire or change jobs, but also from job creation. In fact, experience and training in this area may lead to jobs as site managers, entrepreneurs and teachers, and to promotion to management-level jobs.

Labour pool

These openings will be accessible to university graduates in the first instance and, to a lesser

extent, unemployed, experienced architects and immigrants who meet the requirements of the Ordre des architectes du Québec. In 2001, about 20% of architects were immigrants, a percentage that is much higher than for all occupations (10%).

According to the Quebec Department of Education, Recreation and Sport's Relance surveys of university graduates, the situation on the labor market for architecture graduates is comparable to the situation for all university graduates : the large majority of employed architecture graduates work full time and consider their job to be related to their field of study. However, the unemployment rate is significantly higher than the average and the salaries clearly lower. Note that the mitigated situation of these graduates, as their relatively high unemployment rate, is to a large extent a result of the fact that the Relance surveys are conducted in January, which is a month when unemployment rates are the highest for architects.

Labour market prospects for architecture graduates are expected to improve or at least hold steady over the coming years. Even though job growth prospects in this occupation are not quite as good as they were in recent years, the total number of students in the three-year undergraduate program in architecture dropped by more than 15% between 2000 and 2005, which means that there will be a significant decrease in the number of graduates in the next few years.

In another vein, many of the graduates do not become members of the Ordre des architectes du Québec, whether because they do not continue their schooling to complete their master's, do not complete their internship, fail the entrance exam or decide to move to another occupation.

Industries

According to census data, in 2001 about 80% of architects worked in architectural and engineering firms, and related services. A significant number were also found in public administration (6%) and the construction industry (3%).

Trends

The demand for architects depends largely on the trends that affect the construction industry and the demand for architectural services.

- Construction industry

The recession at the beginning of the 1990s and slow recovery during the years that followed seriously affected this industry. Several factors converged: loss of jobs and decline in individual incomes, government budget reductions, business closures, high interest rates, decline in consumer savings, decline in immigration, decrease in the number of young people old enough to leave home, etc.

That decline continued until 1998 and was followed by a vigorous recovery, leading to pre-recessionary employment levels by 2005. Many factors combined to account for the recovery: low interest rates, a substantial increase in business investment, strong job creation, lower taxes, new government spending on buildings and infrastructure (roads, water systems, etc.), improvement in the youth labour market that encouraged more young people to leave home, etc. More recently, the migratory balance (international and interprovincial immigrants minus emigrants), which was low from 1994 to 2000, returned to a healthy surplus in 2001 and from 2003 to 2005 was back at the levels of the early 1990s, being in 2004 the highest ever. In real terms, these factors led to growth of more than 70% in the number of hours worked in the

regulated construction industry between 1998 and 2005, according to data from the Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ), and the result was a level of activity last seen 25 years ago. Growth was stronger in residential construction (close to 140%) and weaker in the industrial (about 25%) and civil engineering and roads sectors (about 50%). Given these factors together with a likely increase in interest rates and the high level of activity attained in 2005, employment in the construction industry should remain fairly stable in our forecast period (2006-2010), so will remain at a historically high level.

- Demand for architectural services

Over the past 15 years, the number of architects increased at a faster pace than employment in the construction industry. This was mainly because of growth in the demand for architectural services.

The main reason for this growth in demand was an expansion in the range of services provided by architects, such as urban design, preliminary studies, management and project co-ordination consulting, feasibility studies and facilities planning. Consequently, architects have assumed an increasingly important role in understanding the impact of the environment on individuals, the improvement of building performance and the design of special environments.

Strong growth in home ownership is also increasing the demand for architectural services. People who have a home built for them are generally much more concerned about the architectural elements than people who rent. According to the census data, home ownership in Quebec increased from 55.6% in 1991 to 58.0% in 2001. That may seem like a small increase, but it led to an 18% increase in the number of owned homes compared with an increase of 7% in the number of rented homes. Despite the strong growth, the home ownership rate in Quebec (58%) was still far lower than the rate in the rest of Canada (69%). The trend toward strong growth in home ownership should therefore continue in the next few years and continue to foster growth in the demand for architectural services.

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- Other trends

Because many of the people in this occupation are self-employed - in 2001, about 43% of all architects were self-employed, compared with 11% for all occupations - they are less subject to fluctuations in employment than other workers in the construction industry. Before they get out of the business they are in, self-employed workers tend to scale back their level of activity and income. Reflecting this phenomenon, the average employment income for architects, including those who work full time, part time, full year and part year, decreased by 7% between 1991 and 1996, which were bad years for the construction industry, and increased by more than 26% between 1995 and 2000, when construction was doing better. Further, because self-employed architects do not qualify for employment insurance, they cannot count on replacement income if they stop working. In many cases, too, they have spent a great deal of time and money setting up their practice, developing their expertise and establishing a strong network of contacts. Finally, their dedication to their craft makes them disinclined to abandon it except as a last resort.

As in past years, architects will face strong competition, as there are many professionals, designers and technicians who offer some of the same services provided by architects (construction management, urban planning, etc.) but at a lower cost. For example, these professionals and technicians, who include architectural technologists (see 2251), are authorized

to sign and seal architectural plans and specifications for the construction, expansion, reconstruction, renovation or alteration of some buildings, including detached single-family homes and most buildings not more than two storeys high and with not more than 300 square metres of gross floor area. In other cases, architects are hired as subcontractors only.

The use of computer-assisted design and computer-assisted drafting (CAD) software is more and more prevalent. This software makes it possible to create three-dimensional plans, facilitate basic design correction and eliminate a part of the routine drafting tasks. This results in gains in time and accuracy. However, a pencil and drafting board are still used when designing and presenting a sketch.

Computer-based communication tools make it possible to improve and accelerate contacts between architects and other partners in the construction sector. Engineers, architects, entrepreneurs and their clients can now discuss and modify an architectural project presentation in real time. The use of the Internet has therefore had a significant effect on construction project development and the documents produced by the architect.

ISO and Qualimetry certification as regards project performance standards is becoming an increasing competitive advantage. Some large companies and government services automatically require it for projects of \$10 million and more.

Employment characteristics

According to census data, women held about 25% of the jobs in this occupation in 2001, a percentage that has been rising slightly since 1991 (23%). This percentage should increase faster over the next few years, because for several years more than 50% of Master's programs in architecture graduates were women. The annual employment income (\$51,128) shown in the "Characteristics" section of the "Statistics" applies only to the 61% of people in this occupation who worked full time and full-year in 2000. The average employment income for those who did not work full time and full-year was \$33,234 in 2000.

Requirements

Candidates for this profession must have good spatial visualization and technical problem-solving skills, as well as mathematical ability. The ability to work in teams, leadership and a sense of organization are qualities in demand. Bilingualism is mandatory. Management skills and aptitudes are necessary for anyone who wants to be self-employed; they are also assets for anyone who wants to be promoted to a management-level job.

Architects must keep up to date on innovations in design and construction techniques.

Education and Training

A Master's degree in architecture is generally required.

To exercise this profession and hold the title of architect, membership in the Ordre des architectes du Québec is required. To this end, candidates must:

- have a Master's degree recognized by the Ordre or pass examinations set by the Ordre;
- complete 5600 hours (approximately three years full time) of training in architectural firms. However, a portion of this training can be in a related area;
- pass a professional examination; and
- have appropriate knowledge of the French language.

The Ordre des architectes du Québec is mandated to grant certificates issued by the "Canadian

Architectural Certification Board" to holders of degrees from outside Quebec. In the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), this certification makes it possible to exercise this profession all over North America.

Three Quebec universities offer programs leading to a degree in architecture: Laval University, McGill University and University of Montreal.

Ongoing training is essential for architects and will be mandatory beginning in October 2006 for the Ordre des architectes du Québec members.

Useful References

Ordre des architectes du Québec

<http://www.oaq.com/>

Association des architectes en pratique privée du Québec

<http://www.aappq.qc.ca/>

Canadian Centre for Architecture

<http://www.cca.qc.ca/>

The School of Architecture

McGill University

<http://www.mcgill.ca/architecture/>

Faculté de l'aménagement

University of Montreal

<http://www.ame.umontreal.ca>

Faculté d'aménagement, d'architecture et des arts visuels

Laval University

<http://www.faaav.ulaval.ca/>

Commission de la construction du Québec

<http://www.ccq.org/Accueil.aspx?lang=en&profil=Medias>

Important Considerations

Given the lack of growth anticipated in construction, but the increase in demand for architectural services, the number of architects should increase significantly in the next few years.

A large proportion of university architecture graduates do not join the Ordre des architectes du Québec because they do not complete their practical training, they fail the Ordre admission examination or they decide to enter another profession.

Labour market prospects for architecture graduates are relatively good. Since the number of graduates will decrease dramatically over the coming years, the employment situation is expected to remain stable, and perhaps even improve.

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Main Labour Market Indicators

Employment, average 2003-2005	3300	3675500
EI Claimants in 2005	35	153350
Average Annual Growth Rate 2006-2010	1.7%	1.0%
Annual Employment Variation 2006-2010	60	38900
Annual Attrition 2006-2010	100	97350
Total Annual Needs 2006-2010	160	136250

Employment Distribution by Gender

Males	75.4%	53.5%
Females	24.6%	46.5%

Employment Distribution by Age

15-24 years	3.4%	14.7%
25-44 years	61.4%	49.9%
45-64 years	31.9%	34.0%
65 years and over	3.3%	1.4%

Employment Distribution by Status

Full-time	90.1%	79.8%
Part-time	9.9%	20.2%

Average Annual Employment Income (Full-Time, Full-Year)

Full-time, full-year	60.6%	52.7%
Average income	51128\$	39150\$
0-19999\$	10.7%	20.6%
20000-49999\$	53.0%	55.1%
50000\$ and over	36.3%	24.4%

Employment Distribution by Highest Level of Schooling

Less than high-school	0.8%	18.7%
High-school	0.8%	25.1%
Post-secondary	12.4%	37.5%
Bachelor's	86.0%	18.7%

Employment Distribution by Region

Gaspésie-îles-de-la-Madeleine	0.5%	1.1%
Bas-St-Laurent	0.6%	2.5%
Capitale-Nationale	14.7%	9.0%
Chaudière-Appalaches	2.9%	5.5%

Etrie	1.5%	4.0%
Centre-du-Québec	0.6%	3.0%
Montérégie	10.5%	18.4%
Montréal	50.7%	24.8%
Laval	3.4%	4.9%
Lanaudière	0.8%	5.3%
Laurentides	4.6%	6.5%
Outaouais	4.6%	4.6%
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	0.5%	1.9%
Mauricie	1.9%	3.2%
Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean	1.9%	3.5%
Côte-Nord-Nord du Québec	0.3%	1.7%

Employment Distribution by Self-employment	42.6%	10.6%
Employment Distribution by Immigration	19.6%	10.2%

Main Areas of Employment (%)

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	83.7	
- Architectural, Engineering and Related Services		80.1
Public Administration	5.5	
Construction	2.8	

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