



## **Medical Illustrator**

### **Work Activities/Work Locations:**

- Medical illustrators provide visual aids to enhance the understanding of medical science. They draw illustrations of human anatomy and surgical procedures.
- Illustrators create graphics by hand, computer, or other technical equipment to be used in publications, television, presented at workshops/museums, or posted on instructive websites.
- They use a variety of mediums including pen and ink, watercolor, plaster, wax, plastics, and photographic equipment. They are increasingly utilizing computer graphic software packages to create illustrations.
- Medical illustrators need to have a solid foundation in anatomy and general medical knowledge so they can present visual aids accurately.
- Medical illustrators can work in medical schools, large hospitals and clinics, for publishers of medical textbooks and journals, or advertising firms that carry pharmaceutical accounts. They can also work for public or private research institutions or pharmaceutical firms
- Some medical Illustrators are similar to freelance artists who try to develop a set of clients who regularly contract for work. They can then pick and choose the jobs that they will take, and many times work at home.

### **Advantages & Disadvantages:**

- Medical and scientific illustrators like using their creativity and many different skills to complete projects.
- They also mention that people are generally very appreciative of their work.

### **Method of Entry:**

- Medical and scientific illustrators must have master's degree in medical illustration to be certified by the Association of Medical Illustrators.
- The designation of Certified Medical Illustrator (CMI) is a voluntarily earned credential with Standards set by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). CMI's have passed examinations dealing with business practices, ethics, biomedical science, drawing skills, and have undergone a rigorous portfolio review. Once earned, certification is maintained through meeting continuing education requirements.
- Note, the CMI credential is not necessary or required for a medical illustrator to be a skilled or successful practitioner.
- Many complete a bachelor's degree program in anatomy or instructional design prior to pursuing a graduate degree.
- Most employers prefer candidates with a bachelor's degree; however, some illustrators are contracted based on their portfolios of past work.

- Evidence of appropriate talent and skill, displayed in an artist's portfolio, is an important factor used by art directors, clients, and others in deciding whether to hire or contract out work.

### **Helpful High School Courses & Experiences:**

- Students should take a college preparatory curriculum and concentrate on courses and/or activities that would strengthen their artistic abilities.
- Development of a portfolio or an audition that demonstrates their talent is critical for students' entry into private fine arts or performing arts institutions, respectively.
- Helpful high school courses would include Drawing, Multimedia Design, Photography, Biology, and Computer Graphics.
- Get practical experience by contributing your illustrations to school newspaper.

### **Education & Training:**

- Training requirements for artists vary by specialty, and although formal training is not strictly necessary for fine artists, it can be very difficult to become skilled enough to make a living without some training.
- Medical illustrators must have both a demonstrated artistic ability and a detailed knowledge of living organisms, surgical and medical procedures, and human and animal anatomy.
- A 4-year bachelor's degree combining Art with courses in drawing, life drawing, painting, design, color theory, photography, and layout and Premedical courses usually is preferred, followed by a master's degree in medical illustration.
- College/university coursework includes core subjects such as English, social sciences, and natural science in addition to art history and studio art.
- Independent Schools of Art and Design also offer postsecondary studio training in the fine arts leading to an Associate in Art (AA) or BFA degree. Typically, these programs focus more on studio work than the academic programs in a university setting.
- Formal educational programs in art also provide training in computer techniques. Computers are used widely, and knowledge and training in them is critical for many jobs in this field.
- This master's degree in Medical Illustration is offered in only a few accredited schools in the United States. This two-year program includes gross anatomy, histology, pathology, anatomical and surgical illustration, three-dimensional modeling, exhibit construction, and cinematography.
- Learning how to assemble a winning portfolio is a key to success with employers. The portfolio is a collection of hand-made, computer-generated, photographic, or printed samples of the artist's best work.

- Assembling a successful portfolio requires skill usually developed in a bachelor's degree program or other postsecondary training in art or visual communication

### **Advancement Opportunities:**

- Fine artists advance professionally as their work circulates and as they establish a reputation for a particular style.
- Medical and scientific illustrators may become directors or assistant directors of media services units.
- Some become freelance illustrators and may independently contract their services.

### **Salary:**

- Typical Salary Range (Wisconsin): \$23,400 to \$55,200 per year.
- Typical Salary Range (National): \$19,600 to \$80,000 per year.

### **Hours:**

- Medical and scientific illustrators usually work 40 hours a week, Monday thru Friday.
- Freelance Illustrators can set their own hours.
- Can work part- time.

### **Employment Information (Wisconsin):**

- Number Employed in 2004: 260
- Expected Employment in 2014: 290
- Percent Employment Growth (2004–2014): 11%

### **Educational Institutions:**

- **Bachelor's degree can be earned at any accredited college or university.**
- Alverno College
- Beloit College
- Cardinal Stritch University
- Carroll College
- Carthage College
- Concordia University Wisconsin
- Edgewood College
- Lakeland College
- Lawrence University
- Marian College of Fond du Lac
- Marquette University
- Mount Mary College
- Northland College

- Ripon College
- Silver Lake College
- St. Norbert College
- University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
- University of Wisconsin – Green Bay
- University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
- University of Wisconsin - Madison
- University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
- University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
- University of Wisconsin - Parkside
- University of Wisconsin - Platteville
- University of Wisconsin – River Falls
- University of Wisconsin – Steven’s Point
- University of Wisconsin - Stout
- University of Wisconsin - Superior
- University of Wisconsin - Whitewater
- Viterbo College
- Wisconsin Lutheran College

**Wisconsin currently does not offer a Master’s Degree Program in Medical Illustration. Currently there are 4 accredited graduate programs in the nation and 1 in Toronto. See [www.ami.org](http://www.ami.org) for a complete listing of schools.**

- University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Biomedical Visualization, College of Associated Health Professions, M.S. degree-2 year curriculum, see [www.ahs.uic.edu/bhis/](http://www.ahs.uic.edu/bhis/)

**Professional Organizations & Additional Information:**

- See Wisconsin Health Careers Website: [www.wihealthcareers.org](http://www.wihealthcareers.org)