

Perfusionist

Perfusionists operate heart-lung machines—the equipment that replaces a patient’s circulatory and respiratory functions during open-heart surgery. This includes the following responsibilities, as directed by the heart surgeon:

- redirecting the circulation of a patient’s blood outside of the body and through artificial organs (heart, lung, and kidney)
- administering medications to stop the heart and protect it while it is stopped
- monitoring and managing the patient’s breathing and circulation
- re-starting the heart and circulation after surgery
- providing expertise in devices such as artificial hearts and lungs

Education

Bachelor’s or higher degree in a Department-registered perfusion licensure program, a Commission of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) accredited perfusion program, or the equivalent program.

Examination

Certification exam of the American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion.

Salary and Projected Growth

- Median salary: \$136,093 in the U.S.
- Salary range: \$104,000-\$180,000 in the U.S.
- Salaries in NY are expected to be higher
- Projected growth: faster than average

Where Could I Work?

- Hospitals
- Colleges and universities
- Research and development

Your Interests and Abilities

- Basic and medical sciences
- Manual and technical skills
- Participation in surgical procedures

Professional Skills

- Mental and physical endurance
- Concern for others
- Attention to detail
- Communication

