



Occupational Therapist ANZSCO 2524-11

Australian Capital Territory June 2019

Current labour market rating: Recruitment difficulty for senior occupational therapists

The labour market tightened in 2019, with employers having significant difficulty filling positions for senior occupational therapists. Vacancies for junior occupational therapists, however, are readily filled.

Key research findings

- Although this labour market has tightened, there is a significant disparity between the experiences of employers seeking senior occupational therapists and those seeking more junior employees.
 - Applicant numbers fell to an average of 1.6 per vacancy, the lowest level since 2011 (Figure 1).
- The proportion of vacancies filled declined significantly in 2019, which was primarily due to the difficulty in filling advertised vacancies for senior or Allied Health Professional (AHP) Level 3 positions.
 - These positions had, on average, fewer than one suitable applicant per vacancy. Fewer than one in five such vacancies were filled.
- On the other hand, vacancies for recent graduates and those requiring at least one year of experience (including AHP Level 1 and 2 roles), had an average of 2.3 suitable applicants per vacancy. Three quarters of these vacancies were filled.

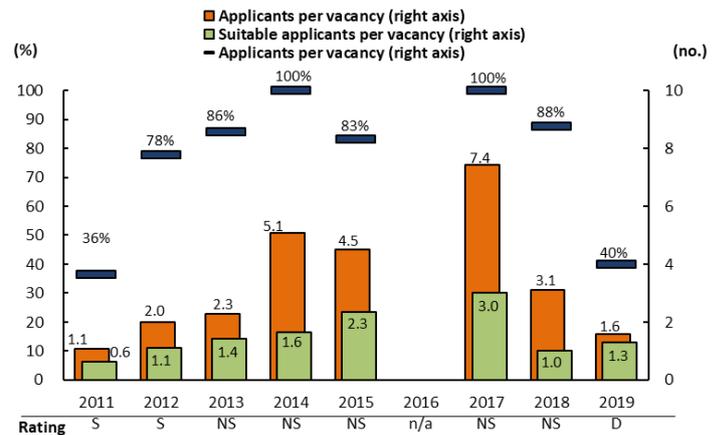
Employer requirements and unsuitable applicants

- Public and private sector employers were surveyed across the rehabilitation, aged care, disability, mental health and child development practice settings.
- All employers required tertiary qualifications in occupational therapy and registration with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia. None of the surveyed employers reported receiving unqualified applicants.
- All of the applicants for the junior and graduate level positions were considered suitable. Around half of the applicants for senior positions, however, were considered unsuitable, mainly because they lacked the clinical knowledge and skills required of a senior occupational therapist.

2019 Survey Results¹



Figure 1: Survey results, Occupational Therapist, 2011 to 2019



Key to ratings: S = Shortage; D = Recruitment difficulty; NS = No shortage; n/a = Not assessed

Demand and supply

- The demand for occupational therapists in the ACT has grown. In the year to May 2019, internet advertised vacancies increased by around 24 per cent.
- New supply to the occupation has also increased. The number of completions in the Master of Occupational Therapy at the University of Canberra has almost trebled since 2014, but growth has since steadied with around 30 completions in 2017.
- The number of registered and practising occupational therapists in the ACT increased by approximately 10 per cent in the two years to 2019.
- In 2018, a new four year Bachelor of Occupational Therapy course commenced at the University of Canberra, which may lead to an increase the supply of occupational therapists over the next few years.

¹ The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology](#)

Additional Data Sources: Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Internet Vacancy Index, May 2019; Department of Education, Higher Education Data Collection, 2017, customised tables, domestic students; Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, Registration Data Tables, 2017 to 2019.