

Hospital and Retail Pharmacists		Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 2515-11,13	June 2009	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

The majority of pharmacists supply, dispense and manufacture medicines and drugs in retail pharmacies and hospitals and advise on their appropriate use. Others conduct research into the formulation, production, storage, quality control and distribution of medicines and drugs. Demand for pharmacists continues to be generated by population growth, the health and ageing of the population and new developments in medicine and medications. In the retail sector, demand has grown with the number of local medical practitioners opening and community pressure for additional pharmaceutical supplies and services. Data from the Private Health Insurance Administration Council show that privately funded pharmacy services in Queensland increased by 5.8 per cent or by 29 297 services over the year to March 2009. In the public sector, demand for hospital pharmacists has been buoyed by State Government investment in health services including the recruitment of additional allied health professionals needed to provide those services.

Occupational supply

It is mandatory that pharmacists in Queensland be registered with the Pharmacists Board of Queensland. As at June 2009, there were 4997 pharmacists registered in Queensland. Registration requires the completion of an undergraduate pharmacy degree, or the combination of an undergraduate and masters program in pharmacy and at least 1824 hours of supervised practical training. The latest available data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations indicate the number of students entering pharmacy programs has increased by approximately 15 per cent each year since 2003, with the total intake in 2007 reaching 421. The number of students graduating from pharmacy programs has grown accordingly and with an historical average attrition rate of 10 per cent for this profession, it is expected that approximately 280 newly qualified pharmacists will enter the labour market at the end of 2009. Arrivals and departures data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations suggest that overseas migration contributed 82 self-identified pharmacists to Queensland in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Based on this year's survey, the vacancy-filled rate for pharmacists in Queensland was 62 per cent, higher than the 39 per cent recorded in the last report. Employers considered only one in four applicants as suitable, citing no qualifications, no registration or no experience in the advertised role as the main reasons for unsuitability. The majority of unregistered applicants were from overseas and employers advised that they rarely consider these candidates because of the time and cost associated with the immigration process and the attainment of Queensland registration. Recruitment difficulties were reported for pharmacy managers and clinical pharmacists, particularly in the aged care sector where pharmacists need accreditation to perform annual medication reviews. Recruitment specialists reported it is generally easier to fill retail positions compared with hospital or aged care facility vacancies and they attribute this to the differences in remuneration and working conditions offered in each sector. Respondents generally agreed that supply and recruitment at the graduate level is unproblematic; demand is currently for experienced pharmacists; demand from the private sector has eased over the last six months and public sector demand continues to hold steady.

Labour market outlook

Demand for pharmacists in Queensland is expected to increase in line with the State's growing and ageing population. Supply to the profession is improving with ascending student numbers, but it will be some years before the new graduates are able to qualify as pharmacy managers or accredited clinical pharmacists. In the meantime, the labour market for this profession has been found to be in shortage and this outlook is not likely to change over 2009-10.