

Retail Pharmacist	Western Australia
ANZSCO Code: 2515-13	June 2009
Labour market rating:	Regional shortage
Comment: <i>Shortages are restricted to regional areas.</i>	

Occupational demand

The 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data show that in WA the majority (90 per cent) of retail pharmacists work in the major industry division of Retail Trade with the number of retail pharmacists having increased between 2001 and 2006 by nine per cent to 1299.

Practicing pharmacists are required to be registered with the Pharmaceutical Council of WA. The number of registered pharmacists grew by 6 per cent in the year to December 2008, from 1639 to 1739. The Pharmaceutical Council of WA report that there are currently 517 retail or 'community' pharmacies as well as six retail pharmacies located physically within major hospitals. At these outlets, 1807 pharmacists work as sole owners, partners or employees. A further 473 pharmacists work in other environments such as hospitals and universities.

Occupational supply

Curtin University is the only WA institution offering a Bachelor of Pharmacy (for four years full time). Recent graduate numbers of domestic Bachelor of Pharmacy students from Curtin University have been 77 in 2007 and 140 in 2006. The University of WA and Murdoch University both offer a two year Master of Pharmacy designed to complement a Bachelor of Science degree as an entry to the pharmacist profession. A total of 33 graduates completed the courses in 2007, the first year there were any graduates.

Before applying for registration with the Pharmaceutical Council of WA, pharmacy graduates must successfully complete 2500 hours of supervised training and practical experience. Many pharmacists continue to be employed by the pharmacy providing training, following their registration. Overseas migration to WA has provided a net gain of 30 retail pharmacists in 2007-08, which was an increase from 27 in 2006-07.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

DEEWR research of recently advertised vacancies showed that this occupation is very rarely advertised so a number of employers who employ pharmacists were canvassed for their experiences. The survey included large and small employers and employers located in the metropolitan, rural and remote areas of WA. Large employers of retail pharmacists who operate predominantly in the metropolitan area reported no difficulty in the recruitment of qualified retail pharmacists. This was a change from the previous year when employers were seeking his assistance to find suitable people. He attributed this to an increase in the availability of registered retail pharmacists.

Owners of pharmacies located in the north and remote areas of WA who were contacted reported difficulty in recruitment, due to location. Owners of pharmacies located in the southern regions of WA indicated they had been successful in their previous recruitment drives. Overall, employers surveyed did not think there was a shortage of retail pharmacists but a general reluctance for retail pharmacists to work outside of the metropolitan area.

A spokesperson for the Industry Body pertaining to pharmacists in WA said that they no longer advertised pharmacist vacancies, adding that jobs were often secured following the preregistration training program. If not, recent graduates, seeking employment contacted employers directly.

Labour market outlook

Labour market research indicates an increase in availability of retail pharmacists and no shortages are expected for the metropolitan area in the medium term. Shortages in regional and remote areas are likely to persist.