

Industrial Relations Officer		Australia
ASCO Code: 2291-15	June 2008	
Labour market rating	No Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

Demand for industrial relations officers depends on a number of factors, such as the complexity of workplace legislation, the level of industrial disputes, firm size and membership of employee associates. ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 data show more than half of industrial relations officers work for labour associations, with a large number also employed by employer associations and government organisations. Employment of industrial relations officers has increased over recent years with ABS 2006 Census data showing an increase of slightly more than nine per cent over the five years to 2006 to number around 3700. This is confirmed by employer contacts who commented that recent changes to industrial relations policies have resulted in increased demand for industrial relations officers.

Occupational supply

Entry to this occupation is usually through completion of a bachelor degree with a major in industrial relations, a Diploma of Unionism and Industrial Relations or a Certificate IV in Human Resources, although there are a number of relevant courses Australia wide. ABS Census 2006 data indicate 39 per cent of industrial relations officers have a Bachelor degree or higher qualifications and 29 per cent hold Certificate III/IV qualifications, or an Advanced Diploma or Diploma. Department of Immigration and Citizenship migration data for human resource professionals, the group that includes industrial relations officers, indicate an increase in supply to the occupation from overseas with an average net gain of 430 per year in 2003-04 and 2004-05, to an average of 624 per year in 2005-06 and 2006-07.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for industrial relations officers was undertaken for this report. As no advertised vacancies were identified in Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory during the survey period, businesses employing industrial relations officers were cold canvassed in these areas. Almost 80 per cent of advertised vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising and a significant number of employers commented that they did not experience difficulty recruiting.

On average, there were more than nine applications received by employers for each vacancy, with an average of 2.8 suitable applicants per vacancy. Applicants considered to be unsuitable frequently lacked experience or specialised skills, particularly for positions involving tribunal work where employers often preferred applicants with a legal background. A significant number of employers also felt applicants did not possess adequate contemporary knowledge of Australian industrial relations policies and regulations.

Labour Market outlook

There are no indications that the labour market for this occupation will change significantly in the next six months.