

Architectural Associate		South Australia (SA)
ASCO Code: 3121-13	October 2006	
Labour market rating	No Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

Over 70 per cent of architectural associates are employed in the business services industry, with a further 20 per cent working in construction. Demand for architectural associates is affected by the level of building and construction activity. The value of SA building 'work done' increased 2.8 per cent in the June quarter 2006 to around \$910 million, the highest level on record. However, building approvals – a useful indicator of forward demand and activity levels – declined for six consecutive months up to August 2006, and were 5.1 per cent lower compared to August 2005. Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force data (averaged over four quarters) show that employment of architectural and related associate professionals fell by over 10 per cent in the year to August 2006.

Occupational supply

Architectural associates usually complete a relevant certificate IV or diploma course through TAFE. Training data show that combined course completions numbered 64 in 2003, 130 in 2004 and 132 in 2005. The number of annual course completions is high relative to the small size of the workforce, which numbered less than 400 at the time of 2001 ABS Census. Supply from immigration is insignificant for this occupation.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for architectural associates showed that almost 80 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks. Most employers were seeking workers with some prior design/drafting experience, and almost a quarter of all applicants were considered suitable in this respect. On average, there were two suitable applicants per vacancy and only a small number of positions could not be filled. More difficult to fill vacancies were those requiring significant levels of experience (in excess of five years) or specialist skills (such as high level computer design skills). Labour turnover amongst architectural drafters was described as low, although some employers noted that higher levels of demand from the eastern states had made it more difficult to retain experienced workers in the past year. Demand conditions within SA have been reasonably solid during 2006, with employment levels increasing in some firms due to additional work. Not surprisingly, employers who experienced recruitment difficulties indicated that this was a constraint on business growth. At the same time, some firms noted that activity levels within the SA construction sector are declining and this may reduce occupational demand over the short term. Overall, the employer survey results show a high vacancy fill rate which suggests that architectural associates are not currently in shortage.

Labour market outlook

Training data suggest that the number of annual TAFE course completions is high relative to the overall size of the architectural associate workforce. At the same time, forecasts from the HIA show that combined SA investment in new housing and non-residential construction will decline by around 2 per cent in 2006-07. A shortage of architectural associates is therefore not expected to emerge over the short-term.