

Quality Assurance Manager	New South Wales (NSW)
ASCO Code: 2294-15	June 2007
Labour market rating	Recruitment difficulty
Comment: <i>There are recruitment difficulties for positions requiring experience in quality management and in-depth knowledge of particular industries and processes.</i>	

Occupational demand

Underlying demand for quality assurance has increased over the past decade due to the growth in regulatory requirements stipulating quality standards in various industries and the greater international acceptance of common standards for documenting processes and quality control systems (for example, the ISO 9000 series standards). The translation of this underlying demand to effective demand for quality assurance managers, however, depends on the decisions of individual enterprises and organisations to assign the task of overall quality management to a dedicated individual or team of quality managers, or to allocate the function to other positions (for example, the production manager of a small manufacturing enterprise) or to decentralise the responsibility. Census data show that the number of quality assurance managers employed in NSW fell from about 3600 in 1996 to about 3200 in 2001. There are no more recent and reliable data on employment of quality assurance managers.

Occupational supply

Quality assurance managers usually have relevant technical qualifications (for example, in food technology for the food manufacturing industry) or expertise in a particular product, service or administrative process along with experience in quality management. There are no university degrees or post-graduate courses in general quality management in NSW. However, there are many courses run by universities, TAFE and private providers which cover quality assurance in particular industries including specific quality programmes such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

Separate data on immigration of quality assurance managers are not available.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for quality assurance managers was conducted for this report. The survey found that 50 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. Unfilled vacancies were scattered across a wide range of industries and specialisations including health care, construction, manufacturing and the management of specific public sector programmes and processes. Employers generally were not seeking applicants with a broad knowledge of quality management which could be applied in a specific job context but rather persons with a technical background in their own industry (for example the manufacture of specialised medical equipment) and experience in quality management. No clear pattern emerged regarding industries or geographic locations where positions were especially difficult to fill and the labour market would be best characterised as a collection of recruitment difficulties for positions requiring specific industry knowledge rather than a shortage of professionals with broad training in quality management skills.

Labour market outlook

The long-term trend towards the development of regulatory or voluntary quality control systems, along with continued solid growth in the NSW economy, should lead to firm demand for quality assurance managers over the short term. Recruitment difficulties are likely to remain for quality assurance professionals with expertise in a range of specific industry sectors and management systems.

Quality Assurance Manager		Victoria
ASCO Code: 2294-15	March 2007	
Labour market rating	No Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Demand for quality assurance managers is broadly determined by business levels within the overall economy and economic activity. Victoria's economy grew by 2.9 per cent over the year to December 2006 and the Australian economy grew by 3.7 per cent. However, demand is also determined by the need for Victorian companies to increasingly compete in a global market. Australia uses the International Organisation for Standardization's (ISO) 9000 series of Quality System Standards. Quality assurance programs are primarily in manufacturing and processing industries, however many organisations including the public sector are increasingly concerned with continuously improving upon product delivery and the meeting of customer requirements and expectations.

Occupational supply

ABS Education and Work Figures suggest around one third of employed management consultants and quality assurance managers have bachelor degrees. It is difficult to estimate the supply of quality assurance managers as they hold varied degree qualifications. Quality assurance managers have diverse backgrounds and may have completed tertiary education in anything from business studies to engineering disciplines.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

The Survey of Employers who Recently Advertised (SERA) found approximately 80 per cent of quality assurance manager vacancies were filled. For those positions that were not filled, employers were often trying to entice employees from other organisations, but were unsuccessful as these employees are highly sought after. The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy was 4.1 and the average number of unsuitable applicants per vacancy was 16.8. Employers considered many applicants to be unsuitable due to lack of appropriate qualifications and work experience. Employers were seeking applicants with a minimum of tertiary qualifications and experience within the employers industry – such as manufacturing. All employers were seeking specialised skills, such as awareness of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

Labour market outlook

The relatively balanced labour market for quality assurance managers in Victoria is expected to continue over the next six months.

Quality Assurance Manager		Queensland
ASCO Code: 2294-15	March 2007	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment:		

Occupational demand

Quality assurance managers are employed across a wide range of industries in Queensland, including construction, engineering services, health and community services and manufacturing, especially food processing and pharmaceutical manufacturing. Quality assurance managers monitor products and processing systems to ensure that they meet specifications and standards of presentation and quality. Recent growth in demand for this occupation in Queensland has been driven by increasing levels of construction activity, particularly in engineering construction. Data from Australian Bureau of Statistics on the trend volume of engineering construction work done in the State indicate that activity in the September Quarter was more than 25 per cent higher in 2006 than it was in 2005. Residential, commercial and public infrastructure development have all been supported in Queensland by the need to service the State's growing population.

Occupational supply

People working as quality assurance managers come from a range of backgrounds and usually hold a post school qualification. Contacts reported that relevant professional experience is needed, along with further studies, to specialise in quality management or systems in specific industries. Depending on the type of industry, suitable degree programmes are offered at various universities across Queensland. The supply of quality assurance managers may have been supported by overseas migration, with net permanent and long term temporary arrivals to Queensland of 42 self-identified business and organisation analysts in 2005-06. This group, however, also includes the larger occupation of management consultant. Labour Force Survey data show a strong increasing trend in the numbers of business and organisation analysts employed in Queensland over the last two years, indicating that interstate migration and on-the-job training also contribute to supply.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

About two thirds of the vacancies for quality assurance managers in this year's survey were filled within six weeks of advertising. More than 20 per cent of applicants were considered to be unsuitable due to their lack of quality experience, local knowledge of the industry, or the specific skills needed for the advertised role. According to university contacts, employers often encourage workers with relevant industry experience into the role, which typically includes undertaking further studies in quality practices and regulatory standards. Employers were keen to employ qualified quality assurance managers with relevant industry experience from interstate or overseas but stressed that knowledge of Australian regulations and standards is highly desirable when considering applicants. Employers reported that work for skilled quality assurance managers continues to grow in most regions of Queensland and suggested greater marketing of the career in schools to help in addressing supply issues in coming years. Contacts reported that they had to advertise repeatedly and use multiple recruitment techniques to attract applicants to vacancies regardless of whether they were located in the Brisbane area or in regional Queensland.

Labour market outlook

The labour market for qualified or experienced quality assurance managers in Queensland is presently in shortage. The State's growing population and increasing private and public investment are expected to continue expanding activity in commercial building and engineering construction, while quality-intensive areas of manufacturing, like food processing, should remain strong. Without significant growth in supply through industry training and other means, the existing State-wide shortage of quality assurance managers is expected to continue for a least the next few years.

Quality Assurance Manager		South Australia
ASCO Code: 2294-15	February 2007	
Labour market rating	Recruitment Difficulty	
Comment <i>The majority of positions were filled without difficulty. However, professionals with experience in a food manufacturing environment and those with high level skills in developing and implementing project quality management systems were difficult to source.</i>		

Occupational demand

A high proportion of quality assurance managers are employed in the manufacturing industry, and therefore occupational demand is strongly influenced by activity levels in this sector. Conditions in the SA manufacturing industry have declined due to increased competition from low cost import replacement items, the loss of existing contracts to off-shore companies, and the persistently high Australian dollar. The effect on the automotive manufacturing sector has been especially severe, with significant numbers of retrenchments occurring in the past two years. Manufacturing firms with exposure to the mining industry have been less affected by these developments, benefiting from the strong global demand for mining commodities. The Engineering Employers Association of SA's monthly survey of *Engineering Business Trends* shows a flattening-out in activity levels over the second half of 2006, although the general trend over the past two and half years has been one of decline.

Occupational supply

There is no specific educational qualification for quality assurance managers. ABS Census data show that around 23 per cent of those employed in the occupation have a trade-level qualification, a further 21 per cent have a diploma, while 30 per cent have a bachelor degree or higher. Formal qualifications may vary, depending on the individual organisation and/or industry sector of employment. Given the lack of a standard career path into the occupation, overall supply trends cannot be quantified.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for quality assurance managers showed that two thirds of vacancies were filled within six weeks. There was an average of 24 applicants per vacancy, although the number of suitable applicants was low, at around two per position. The major reason for rejecting applicants was lack of relevant experience. The survey results were based on a small number of recently advertised vacancies, all of which required differing levels of experience and qualifications. Vacancies in general manufacturing were filled with little or no difficulty, while the most difficult to fill positions were in the business services and food manufacturing industries. Therefore, the overall labour market rating is 'recruitment difficulty' in respect of the latter specialisations only.

Labour market outlook

Activity levels in the major employing industry sector – manufacturing – are likely to remain variable over the short-term. Conditions in the automotive sector are expected to remain subdued, while niche sectors such as defence, mining, and food manufacturing should be reasonably buoyant. Major projects, including the Air Warfare Destroyer project and the expansion of BHP-Billiton's Olympic Dam mine may result in higher demand for quality assurance managers over the medium term. Recruitment difficulties for experienced professionals may therefore persist.

Quality Assurance Manager	Western Australia
ASCO Code: 2294-15	March 2007
Labour market rating:	Recruitment difficulty
Comment <i>Employers usually require quality assurance managers with very industry-specific and technical experience.</i>	

Occupational demand

Quality assurance managers monitor processing systems and product or service delivery, to improve them and ensure they meet specified quality standards for customer requirements. They are responsible for all the quality control systems for products and services within an organisation. Australia uses the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 9000 series of quality systems standards.

Demand for quality assurance managers is determined by economic activity in a wide range of industries, including construction, engineering services, manufacturing, transport and health and community services. The buoyant WA economy, particularly in the mining and resources sector, is associated with high levels of construction and engineering activity. ABS data show there was a 70 per cent increase in the value of all engineering construction work done in WA over the year to June 2006, compared with the same period to June 2005. Manufacturing firms associated with mining and the resources sector have benefited from continuing strong global demand for those commodities. Commercial, public and residential infrastructure development also reflects the need to service the expanding economy and population in WA.

Occupational supply

Quality assurance managers have diverse relevant technical and professional experience, supplemented by further study of quality management systems for specific industries. The quality assurance manager workforce may also be supplied from the upgrading of skills of quality assurance inspectors who are very experienced workers, especially in manufacturing and processing industries. They may become quality assurance managers after further experience and training to coordinate quality systems. The overall trend of supply is difficult to estimate because entry to this occupation is so diverse. However, the supply of quality assurance managers is likely to be sourced by people with local industry specific training, as well as by interstate and overseas migration.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of WA employers who had recently advertised for quality assurance managers found that 60 per cent of the vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. About one quarter of the applicants was considered suitable and there were 1.2 suitable applicants per vacancy. The unsuitable applicants lacked adequate quality assurance and risk management experience and also the industry specific technical skills required for the advertised positions. The 2007 survey results were based on a small number of recently advertised vacancies requiring varying levels of formal qualifications and specific industry experience. A recruitment agent commented that degree qualified applicants with apparently relevant experience referred to a particular client were rejected because the employer required very specific industry experience.

The WA labour market for this occupation has not been assessed in the previous three years.

Labour market outlook

The current labour market for qualified and experienced quality assurance managers in WA appears to be in shortage and it is unlikely to change over the next 6-12 months.