

Mechanical Engineering Associate		Western Australia
ASCO Code: 3125-11		June 2007
Labour market rating:	Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

Demand for mechanical engineering associates has continued to increase due to a buoyant Western Australian economy, driven particularly by the resources sector. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that the value of engineering construction work done in WA continues to grow, fuelling the demand for more skilled mechanical engineering associates. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey shows that property and business services, manufacturing, construction and wholesale trade are the main employing industries.

Occupational supply

Several Perth metropolitan and regional TAFE campuses offer courses at the diploma and advanced diploma level, with graduates receiving qualifications that deal in engineering processes and principles. Further specialised roles are available through formal training, mixed with practical experience. However, applicants with qualifications and several years experience in computerised drafting and drawing are highly sought after. Inter-state migration and on-the-job training also add to some level of occupational supply.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for mechanical engineering associates showed that 71 per cent of vacancies were filled. There was an average of 8.5 applicants per vacancy, although the number of suitable applicants was low, at around 2.5 per position. The main reasons for rejecting applicants were their lack of skills, qualifications and experience. Employers stated how hard it was finding an applicant who had the necessary skills to commence work with them. Some offered applicants additional training on the job to complement their training received through TAFE, in specialised areas such as CNC machining and instrumentation. According to many employers, there are not enough suitable candidates coming onto the labour market.

Labour market outlook

Western Australia is forecast to experience continued low rates of unemployment and high participation rates rate. The State is also expected to continue to enjoy economic growth. Since 2000-01, WA has experienced a 39 per cent increase in real economic terms. There is an estimated \$21.6 billion of State Government capital works over the next four years and \$95 billion worth of resource related projects either underway or planned for the State over the next few years. The ABS Labour Force Survey illustrates that employment in mining in Western Australia continues to grow, and that across Australia, employment in mining is heavily concentrated in the Perth and Greater WA labour market regions. Shortages in the number of mechanical engineering associates, especially in highly specialised roles, are expected to persist