

Dentist and Dental Specialist		Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
ANZSCO Code: 252311 and 252312		May 2009
Labour market rating	Dentist: Shortage. Dental Specialist: Too small to rate.	
Comment		

Occupational demand

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data show there are around 160 to 170 dentists and dental specialists in the ACT and that employment has remained relatively stable from 2001 to 2006. More recent Labour Force Survey (LFS) data suggest employment levels continue to be relatively unchanged. Census data for the ACT show most dentists and all dental specialists work in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. Around four per cent of dentists are employed in Public Administration and Safety.

Occupational supply

ABS census data indicate about 90 per cent of dentists in the ACT hold only a bachelor degree and the remainder have completed post-graduate studies. This compares with about 90 per cent of ACT dental specialists having completed postgraduate qualifications. Qualifications in dentistry can be obtained by completing an undergraduate bachelor degree. An accredited university course for this occupation is not available in the ACT and therefore new supply to the ACT dental labour force is dependent on graduates moving to the ACT from other locations. Dentists in the ACT must be registered with the ACT Dental Board. To become a dental specialist, dentists need to have a minimum of two years work experience and undertake post-graduate studies. Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) data indicate the net inflow of self identifying migrant dentists to the ACT is minimal in any given year.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market.

A survey of employers who recently advertised for dentists was undertaken for this report. Vacancies were difficult to source and a number of employers were cold canvassed for their experiences. Around a third of the surveyed vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising, although a small number of employers successfully filled their positions after this time. Most vacancies were suitable for graduates. Employers attracted an average of 1.5 suitable applicants per vacancy, little changed from the last time the occupation was assessed in 2007. However, experiences were varied with some attracting multiple applicants and others attracting none at all. Some cold canvassed employers indicated they had been approached by dentists seeking work. None of the surveyed vacancies related to dental specialists and employers could not provide any information in relation to recent recruitment experiences for specialists. Employers generally suggested there had been a fall in demand for dental services with most indicating they are unlikely to recruit dentists in the near future.

Labour market outlook

Shortages may ease in the medium term with the reported fall in demand for dental services.