

Medical Diagnostic Radiographer		Australia
ANZSCO Code: 2512-11	February 2009	
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational Demand

Employer comments suggest demand for medical diagnostic radiographers is growing in response to continuing developments in medical diagnostic procedures and the ageing population. Medicare Australia reports the number of diagnostic imaging services increased by approximately five per cent in the year to December 2008. ABS 2006 Census data show about 6000 medical diagnostic radiographers were employed, a rise of nine per cent over the five years from 2001. More recent data from the Labour Force Survey indicates employment has continued to increase, with growth of six per cent for medical imaging professionals as a whole for the year to November 2008 compared to the previous year.

Occupational Supply

To be eligible for state registration and professional recognition by the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR) medical diagnostic radiographers must complete a four year accredited university course, followed by a professional development year. DEEWR data show an average of about 400 graduates per year completed bachelor degrees over the five years to 2006. The data suggests a slight increase in graduate completions over the period.

Supply of medical diagnostic radiographers to Australia through migration appears to be negligible, with fewer than 20 medical imaging professionals arriving in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Research for this report was undertaken over two periods; December 2008 and February 2009. The combined results of the surveys of employers who recently advertised for medical diagnostic radiographers found 55 per cent of surveyed vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising, an apparent improvement on the fill rate of 27 per cent recorded when the profession was assessed nationally in May 2008. Employers received an average of about two applications per advertised vacancy, with about one applicant per vacancy considered by employers to be suitable. Primarily employers cited lack of experience as the main reason applicants were considered unsuitable. A number of vacancies remained unfilled despite attracting applications from suitably qualified and experienced radiographers because the applicants withdrew, often to accept other positions.

Although the fill rate has improved markedly since the May 2008 assessment, employers in public health institutions and private practices experienced difficulty filling vacancies across all levels of the profession, with specialist areas such as Mammography, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Computer Tomography (CT) the most difficult. The higher fill rate may reflect the number of new graduates recruited in December and the significance of vacancies filled internally with no other applicants. When considering these two factors a shortage of radiographers is evident in both the public and private sectors and in metropolitan and regional locations. Some large public institutions are recruiting overseas.

Labour market outlook

It is unlikely the shortage of medical diagnostic radiographers will ease over the next six months.