

Quantity Surveyor		New South Wales (NSW)
ANZSCO Code: 2332-13	April 2009	
Labour market rating:	Recruitment difficulty	
Comment: <i>Recruitment difficulties are evident for quantity surveyors with five to eight years of experience in a broad range of professional functions.</i>		

Occupational demand

ABS Census data indicate that employment of quantity surveyors grew by a solid 2.7 per cent per annum from 2001 to 2006. Demand for the occupation has been mixed over the past year with the value of residential building in NSW falling by 4.6 per cent in 2008, non-residential building falling by 3.8 per cent and engineering construction rising by 25.8 per cent. Engineering construction has been boosted by the NSW Government's State Capital Program, involving \$56.8 billion in capital expenditure over the four years to 2011-12: a 57 per cent increase on the previous four years. The consensus of employers was that low activity in non-residential building was adversely affecting demand for the profession.

Occupational supply

DEEWR estimates that 250 persons completed NSW university courses accredited by the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors in 2008: a substantial increase on the average of 213 for the previous five years. Although there are no reliable data on the number of completing students who specialised in quantity surveying, it is likely that this also increased significantly. Official immigration data indicate that net overseas immigration of quantity surveyors to NSW averaged about 50 a year in the two years to 2007-08. While this represents a high apparent supply rate from net immigration compared with an estimated 850 employed quantity surveyors in the state, qualified quantity surveyors often find employment in other construction fields such as project management.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers and recruitment agencies specialising in construction found wide variations in their recent labour market experiences relating to quantity surveyors. Most respondents had not recruited for quantity surveyors in the preceding three months. The majority of these reported that the recent economic downturn had adversely affected their business activity and had made recruitment unnecessary. Some of those surveyed had cut their contingent of quantity surveyors and several noted an increase in the number of those in the professional making unsolicited approaches for work.

Of those who had recently advertised for quantity surveyors, a quarter received applications from qualified persons but withdrew their vacancies due to the economic downturn. Of the remainder, about two-thirds were unable to fill their vacancies, with recruitment difficulties most evident for quantity surveyors with five to eight years of experience in a broad range of professional functions. A significant minority of advertisers, however, were able to fill vacancies for experienced quantity surveyors quite readily, with some vacancies attracting up to five suitable applicants. The general consensus of advertisers was that the number of qualified quantity surveyors seeking employment had increased noticeably in recent months, although most applicants had unsatisfactory communication skills or insufficient local experience.

Labour market outlook

The Construction Forecasting Council expects total construction activity to grow by 14.5 per cent (in current prices) in 2009-10, with residential building and non-residential building contributing most of the increase. If these forecasts are realised, demand for the occupation is likely to improve over the next 12 months. Although DEEWR is projecting another substantial increase in university completions in quantity surveying in 2009, it is likely that a minority of employers will continue to experience recruitment difficulties for experienced staff.