

Rehabilitation Counsellor		Australia
ASCO Code: 2513-11	July 2007	
Labour market rating	Recruitment Difficulty	
Comment: Difficulties relate to highly experienced counsellors.		

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who advertised for rehabilitation counsellors was undertaken for this report. This occupation is defined in the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) as a professional occupation which 'assists physically, mentally and socially disadvantaged people to re-integrate into work and the community'. A number of surveyed vacancies used titles such as rehabilitation coordinator and rehabilitation consultant. Vacancies surveyed varied between non-government community service organisations, government health system and private rehabilitation organisations. One quarter of vacancies surveyed were in regional areas. No employers in the Northern Territory participated in the survey.

Overall, employers filled around 68 per cent of surveyed vacancies. The rate at which vacancies were filled did not vary greatly between large and small States or between regional and metropolitan areas. However, several employers explained that positions in regional localities were generally more difficult to fill. While most employers filled their advertised vacancies, many received a relatively small number of applications and a small number of employers who did not fill their positions did not receive any interest from suitable applicants.

On average, employers reported receiving around six or seven applications per vacancy, with approximately two applicants per vacancy considered by employers to be suitable. Unsuitable applicants were often considered by employers to lack the required qualifications or experience or were not suited to the employer's particular client group. Most non-government community organisations contacted noted that applicants who would have been suitable were seeking remuneration packages they were unable to provide. Many believe their main difficulty recruiting was due to their inability to match the pay and conditions offered by private companies or government organisations. Several employers filled their positions internally due to a lack of external interest by offering promotions and training to existing staff.

Employers also commented that the qualifications held by potential rehabilitation counsellors allow them to work in a variety of fields, including higher paid occupations such as occupational therapy or psychology. Employers suggested that competition for qualified rehabilitation professionals is high within the rehabilitation industry as well as other health related industries. Several employers also noted that recruitment is difficult for those positions that require three or more years experience.

Responses from employers suggest there is significant interest in the occupation and many applicants had the minimum tertiary qualifications but lacked accreditation with the Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors. Some employers identified recent reforms to accreditation requirements as a factor contributing to difficulties recruiting rehabilitation counsellors. The reforms make it more difficult for rehabilitation counsellors to obtain accreditation. Response from international applicants was common, but most were unable to obtain accreditation in Australia.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest the labour market for rehabilitation counsellors will change significantly over the next six months.

National Office

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) July 2007