

Quantity Surveyor		Queensland
ANZSCO Code: 2332-13		March 2009
Labour market rating	Shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

Quantity surveyors prepare cost estimates and plans, audit projects, monitor and control building costs and administer contracts for all levels, types and stages of construction. Most of the demand for quantity surveyors depends on the level of activity in the construction industry, with quantity surveyors in Queensland employed predominantly as consultants on major building and construction projects in both the public and private sectors. The construction industry in Queensland has experienced high levels of activity over the last several years, particularly in engineering construction and non-residential building. Australian Bureau of Statistics data show the volume of construction work done in Queensland has registered increases for the last 22 quarters, with engineering construction in particular strengthening by 23.5 per cent over the year to December 2008.

Occupational supply

Entry to this profession is generally via the completion of a four year bachelor degree in property and sustainable development, applied science or urban development. Specific commencement figures for quantity surveyors are difficult to ascertain as some universities offer a year of generic subjects prior to students choosing a discipline. However, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations figures show that the annual number of students commencing specialist quantity surveying courses between 2001 and 2006 averaged 24. Since 2006, approximately 400 students have commenced generalist development degrees, with an unspecified number selecting quantity surveying as a major. Historically, the number of students leaving the specialist courses before completion has averaged around 56 per cent and if completions stay commensurate with enrolments, it is anticipated that around 14 newly qualified quantity surveyors will graduate and enter the labour market at the end of 2009. Arrivals and departures data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship suggest that overseas migration may be a significant source of supply to this profession as the number of self-identified quantity surveyors migrating to Queensland has been on an upward trend over the past five years, peaking at 101 in 2007-08.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Although employers in this year's survey reported an increasing number of applicants compared with previous years, only 43 per cent of vacancies for quantity surveyors in Queensland were filled within six weeks of advertising. Contacts considered approximately 80 per cent of the applicants as unsuitable because they either presented with limited practical experience and skills or they were seeking remuneration beyond the capacity of the business. Many respondents received strong interest from overseas, but the applicants were generally considered unsuitable because they were not available to commence work immediately. Recruitment agencies noted that the quantity surveyor labour market has eased in the recent past and employers are taking advantage of the situation by insisting applicants have specific skill sets and experience. They also advised that some employers are now recruiting directly to save costs.

Labour market outlook

Australian Bureau of Statistics data show that the value of construction work still in the pipeline for Queensland in the December quarter was 20.6 per cent higher 2008 than in 2007. When coupled with the high level of investment in infrastructure projects planned across the State, demand for quantity surveyors looks set to continue. The combined supply to this profession from overseas migration and the tertiary sector is not meeting the current demand. It is therefore likely that the present shortages of quantity surveyors in Queensland will persist over 2009.