

<b>Optical Mechanic</b>		<b>Australia</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 4999-11	November 2006	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment.</b>		

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for optical mechanics was undertaken for this report. The occupation of optical mechanic includes optical dispenser. Most of the surveyed vacancies were for optical dispensers. Optical dispensers are required to complete Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing and to be registered by state health authorities in New South Wales and South Australia. Approximately one third of employers surveyed were cold canvassed as an insufficient number of advertised vacancies were identified during the survey period.

Employers were generally seeking qualified optical mechanics, with more than half insisting on applicants holding relevant qualifications. Other employers advertised for experienced staff but preferred to recruit qualified optical mechanics.

Overall 43 per cent of the surveyed vacancies were filled by qualified or experienced optical mechanics within four weeks of advertising, lower than the fill rate of 60 per cent recorded when this occupation was assessed in late 2005. A number of vacancies remained unfilled despite receiving interest from suitably qualified and experienced optical mechanics because applicants were unwilling to accept the work hours required by employers, which often included evenings and weekends.

Employers in South Australia were the most successful, filling 60 per cent of their advertised vacancies. Employers in New South Wales and Tasmania filled about half of their vacancies while Western Australian and the Australian Capital Territory employers experienced greater difficulty. The experience of regional employers was similar to that of metropolitan employers.

Employers received an average of slightly less than four applications per vacancy, of which about one applicant per vacancy was considered by the employers to be suitable. The main reasons applicants were considered by employers to be unsuitable were lack of formal qualifications or relevant experience, poor customer service and sales skills or an unwillingness to work the hours required.

Almost half of surveyed employers mentioned training as a factor in the shortage of qualified optical mechanics, with most suggesting that not enough people are undertaking training due to a perceived low public profile of the occupation, while others suggested that some employers are reluctant to train or the quality of training provided is poor.

### **Labour market outlook**

There is no evidence to suggest there will be any significant change in the level of demand or supply to this occupation over the next six months, consequently the shortage of optical mechanic is likely to persist.