

Quality Assurance Manager	Western Australia
ASCO Code: 2294-15	March 2007
Labour market rating:	Recruitment difficulty
Comment <i>Employers usually require quality assurance managers with very industry-specific and technical experience.</i>	

Occupational demand

Quality assurance managers monitor processing systems and product or service delivery, to improve them and ensure they meet specified quality standards for customer requirements. They are responsible for all the quality control systems for products and services within an organisation. Australia uses the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 9000 series of quality systems standards.

Demand for quality assurance managers is determined by economic activity in a wide range of industries, including construction, engineering services, manufacturing, transport and health and community services. The buoyant WA economy, particularly in the mining and resources sector, is associated with high levels of construction and engineering activity. ABS data show there was a 70 per cent increase in the value of all engineering construction work done in WA over the year to June 2006, compared with the same period to June 2005. Manufacturing firms associated with mining and the resources sector have benefited from continuing strong global demand for those commodities. Commercial, public and residential infrastructure development also reflects the need to service the expanding economy and population in WA.

Occupational supply

Quality assurance managers have diverse relevant technical and professional experience, supplemented by further study of quality management systems for specific industries. The quality assurance manager workforce may also be supplied from the upgrading of skills of quality assurance inspectors who are very experienced workers, especially in manufacturing and processing industries. They may become quality assurance managers after further experience and training to coordinate quality systems. The overall trend of supply is difficult to estimate because entry to this occupation is so diverse. However, the supply of quality assurance managers is likely to be sourced by people with local industry specific training, as well as by interstate and overseas migration.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of WA employers who had recently advertised for quality assurance managers found that 60 per cent of the vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. About one quarter of the applicants was considered suitable and there were 1.2 suitable applicants per vacancy. The unsuitable applicants lacked adequate quality assurance and risk management experience and also the industry specific technical skills required for the advertised positions. The 2007 survey results were based on a small number of recently advertised vacancies requiring varying levels of formal qualifications and specific industry experience. A recruitment agent commented that degree qualified applicants with apparently relevant experience referred to a particular client were rejected because the employer required very specific industry experience.

The WA labour market for this occupation has not been assessed in the previous three years.

Labour market outlook

The current labour market for qualified and experienced quality assurance managers in WA appears to be in shortage and it is unlikely to change over the next 6-12 months.