

# ANZSCO 2414-11 Secondary School Teachers

Queensland  
April 2018

**Current labour market rating:** No shortage

Previous labour market rating (April 2017): No shortage

## Comments

There is no shortage of generalist secondary school teachers. Some employers report that vacancies for a number of secondary school specialisations can be hard to fill especially for senior year subjects, or when seeking specific subject combinations.

## Occupation and vacancies

- Secondary school teachers teach one or more subjects within a prescribed curriculum to secondary school students and promote student's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.
- Around 20 per cent of employers in this year's survey were public schools with the remainder being private schools including a small proportion of flexible learning schools for disadvantaged or disengaged students.
- The employers surveyed had vacancies for a wide range of subject areas and subject combinations.
  - Around one quarter of vacancies were for qualified and experienced mathematics, science, physics, chemistry and biology teachers or a combination of these.
  - Around 10 per cent of vacancies sought qualified special education teachers.
  - Other vacancies were for teachers of subjects such as English, art, humanities, drama, dance, music, manual or industrial arts, health and physical education, Japanese, digital technology, legal studies, accounting, home economics, religious education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects.

## Survey results<sup>1</sup>

- This year, 91 per cent of vacancies for secondary school teachers were filled within six weeks of advertising, compared with 96 per cent last year.
  - All metropolitan vacancies and 82 per cent of regional vacancies were filled.
- The average number of applicants per vacancy was 12.6, which is an increase on last year (9.7) and 5.6 in 2016.
  - Metropolitan vacancies attracted a greater average number of applicants per vacancy (14.6) than regional vacancies (10.5).
- There were 3.3 suitable applicants per vacancy on average, compared with 2.9 in 2017.
- Several employers nominated a number of teaching specialisations as difficult to fill, including mathematics or physics/chemistry/biology for the senior years, manual or industrial arts, home economics, dance, music or digital technology.

<sup>1</sup> The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business - Document library, Australian Government](#) and can also be accessed by the QR code.



- Some employers reported that certain subject combinations such as English/humanities, mathematics/science or Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects/English were also difficult to fill, sometimes requiring a redistribution of subjects and combinations.
- Some schools, particularly in rural or regional areas such as Central and North Queensland, were willing to take on new graduates and mentor them to meet the proficiency required.
  - Smaller schools sought experienced teachers able to teach a variety of subjects or the ability to teach across secondary and primary students.
- The schools in this year's survey revealed a range of models to cater for students with special needs including those that are gifted and talented, ranging from special education teachers supported by teacher aides, additional personal assistance for children with disability, class teachers integrating students' individual needs into each subject, and extra extension work as required.
  - Several employers reported very low turnover of special needs or learning enhancement teachers and, as they found it difficult to recruit special education teachers with relevant qualifications, were generally willing to accept applicants with appropriate experience.<sup>2</sup>

### Unsuitable applicants

- Of the applicants who were qualified, 69 per cent were considered unsuitable by employers, most notably for issues around specific experience.
  - Several unsuitable applicants did not have experience teaching a requisite subject such as senior mathematics or physics.
  - Some unsuitable applicants were new graduates and did not have the depth of experience to teach at the level required or the subject combinations required.
  - In some smaller remote or regional schools, applicants were considered unsuitable if they could not teach a wide range of subjects.
- Some employers considered applicants unsuitable because their applications were poor or lacking in documentary evidence required; other applicants were deemed a poor cultural fit or did not demonstrate a commitment to a particular ethos, values or behavioural control models.
  - In flexible learning schools for disadvantaged or disengaged students, qualified applicants were considered unsuitable if they did not have extensive experience teaching this cohort and dealing with the students' multiple and severe behavioural issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Data for special education teachers have been included in this occupational assessment. Please note that prior to 2018 special education teachers were assessed separately and consequently historical data for secondary school teachers does not include special education teachers.

## Demand and supply trends

- Demand for secondary school teachers depends on school and subject selection by students and school communities. Government funding and policies also affect occupational demand.
- Over 2016 and 2017 secondary teaching staff increased by a total of five per cent to 27,768.<sup>3</sup>
- Workforce data provided by Queensland Department of Education (DoE) indicates the following:
  - There are 107,000 teachers registered in Queensland, with approximately 50 per cent employed by DoE, and a further 25-30 per cent employed in other (non-state) schools.
  - Demand for teachers is expected to increase from 2020 when, aside from the standard annual population growth of around 9000 students, the student population is forecast to increase by an additional 11,000 students. This reflects a one-off impact of the first prep cohort (which experienced enrolment at a rate of only 60 per cent of subsequent years) graduating from the school system at the end of 2019.
  - The transition to the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), starting with Year 11 in 2019, with new curriculum offerings and assessment requirements, creates potential for new supply challenges.
  - The subject areas identified as most likely to experience supply challenges are languages, particularly Asian languages; science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects specifically, advanced mathematics, physics and chemistry; and senior English, industrial technology and design, especially manual arts.
- Entry to this profession is generally via a bachelor degree with a major in secondary education or completion of a postgraduate qualification in secondary education and specialisation in at least two secondary curriculum areas. All teachers in Queensland schools must be registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT).
- Data from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training indicates that in 2016 the number of students completing secondary teacher education qualifications in Queensland was 481 with a further 753 post-graduates completing education courses.<sup>4</sup>
- Commencing in 2018 the post-graduate education program for secondary teaching changed from 12 to 24 months. The absence of postgraduates in 2019 is likely to result in a one-off drop of around 60 per cent in the supply of new secondary teachers potentially leading to supply challenges in 2019.
- The ongoing impact of this change on postgraduate commencements and completions is not yet clear, however, following similar changes to some postgraduate primary teaching courses, commencements in 2015 dropped by 68 per cent.<sup>5</sup> If reductions in postgraduate completions occur in 2020 (concurrent with the projected increase in demand) then it appears very likely that supply challenges will increase in 2020.

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<sup>3</sup> ABS, 4221.0 Schools, Australia 2017 Table 51a, In-school Staff (FTE) by School Level

<sup>4</sup> Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2016, customised tables

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.