



ANZSCO 2415 Special Education Teachers

Queensland
April 2017

Current labour market rating

Regional shortage

Previous labour market rating (April 2016)

Shortage

Comments

The survey found that non-metropolitan employers experienced difficulty filling vacancies for qualified Special Education Teachers indicating a regional shortage.

Survey results

- In this year's survey, vacancies were for special education teachers in the private and public primary and secondary school systems.
- All vacancies required teachers that are qualified teachers and registered with the Queensland College of Teachers.
- Overall, 67 per cent of vacancies for special education teachers were filled within six weeks of advertising, a 23 per cent increase from last year's survey.
 - All metropolitan vacancies surveyed this year were filled, however only 50 per cent of the vacancies in regional areas were filled.
 - Regional employers in Queensland continue to have difficulties in filling vacancies. While the 2016-17 vacancy fill rate of 50 per cent and 0.8 suitable applicants per vacancy is higher than the 2015-16 survey result (33 per cent filled and less than 0.3 suitable applicants), it still indicates regional employers have difficulty filling vacancies.
- A number of employers specifically sought teachers that possessed special education or special needs qualifications, however in the absence of such applicants some were prepared to accept teachers with recent demonstrated experience in the relevant primary or secondary school settings.
- Several regional employers reported that an increasing demand for special education teachers accompanied by a limited supply of qualified and experienced special education teachers has resulted in a regional shortage. This is despite incentives such as bursaries to attract teachers and special education teachers to regional areas.

Unsuitable applicants

- Approximately 39 per cent of metropolitan and 81 per cent of regional applicants were considered unsuitable by employers. The reasons provided included a lack of formal or post-graduate qualifications; limited or no experience in a special education setting; poor written communication skills, failure to perform at interview and negative references.

Demand and supply trends

- Demand for special education teachers depends on government policy, funding and the number of special needs students.
- Entry to this profession is generally via completion of a post-graduate qualification in special education after completing an initial teacher education program. However the list of pre-service teacher education programs approved by the Queensland College of Teachers for the purposes of teacher registration in Queensland includes two that specialise in Special Education:
 - Bachelor of Education (Primary/Special Needs Double Major) at Griffith University; and
 - Bachelor of Education (Special Education) at the University of Southern Queensland.¹
- All teachers in Queensland must be registered with the Queensland College of Teachers.
- The Australian Government decided in 2016 that prior to graduation all students enrolled in entry-level teacher education courses would be required to sit the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students. The Test would be used to demonstrate that graduates have levels of literacy and numeracy within the top 30 per cent of the population.
- The Queensland Department of Education and Training reports there were 4827 students enrolled in public special education schools in Queensland, an increase of around four per cent from 2016.²
- Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows there are 76 special education schools in Queensland, 45 Government, 13 Catholic and 18 Independent Sectors schools.³
- The latest data available from the Department of Education and Training indicates that during the period 2012 to 2015 an average of 168 domestic students commenced undergraduate and post-graduate qualifications in special education.⁴
- The number of graduates completing qualifications in special education averaged 114 during the period 2012 to 2015.⁵
- According to data from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, temporary skilled migration is a minimal source of supply to this occupation, with fewer than five class 457 visas granted for positions in Queensland in the nine months to 31 March 2017. Over the last five years there has been five or less class 457 visas granted each year for positions in Queensland.⁶

Other indicators and issues

- Contacts were concerned about supply into the profession, noting that with a growing population and increased demand for special education teachers, there are not sufficiently qualified special education teachers to meet demand.

¹ Queensland College of Teachers

² Department of Education and Training

³ ABS, 4221.0, All Australian Schools by States and Territories 2016

⁴ Australian Department of Education and Training

⁵ ibid

⁶ Department of Immigration and Border Protection

- In 2011, the Queensland Government established the Teacher Education Centre of Excellence: Special Education (TECESE) to support, prepare and develop high quality pre-service teachers who are interested in working in the special education sector in Queensland state schools. TECESE graduates that commit to teaching in the Central Queensland, Darling Downs South West, Far North Queensland or North Queensland regions, will receive a Career Start bursary upon commencement in an identified high priority state school.⁷
- From 2015, students enrolled at state special education schools are recorded against their age or ability appropriate year level as determined by their school.

⁷ Department of Education and Training