Surveyed employers are generally able to fill positions for medical diagnostic radiographers across a range of sectors, modalities and locations. Vacancies continue to attract large numbers of unqualified radiographers who are seeking supervised practice programs or clinical placements for their professional development year.

Survey results

- The Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA) was conducted for the occupation of medical diagnostic radiographer in June quarter 2017.
- Overall, 93 per cent of surveyed vacancies were filled.
  - Recruitment for this occupation has been relatively easy historically, with it not having had a shortage or recruitment difficulty rating over the past five years.
  - The proportion of vacancies filled over the five years to 2016 averaged 84 per cent.
- There was an average of 4.7 applicants per vacancy, of whom 3.1 were qualified radiographers.
  - These numbers are relatively low historically, with employers attracting an average of 11.1 applicants per vacancy, of whom 5.4 were qualified radiographers, over the five years to 2016.
- Employers considered 1.5 applicants per vacancy to be suitable (compared to an average of 2.0 over the five years to 2016).
  - Around half of all employers surveyed were able to choose between multiple suitable applicants.
- The Department surveyed vacancies across public hospitals and medical diagnostic imaging clinics.
- Employers sought radiographers with experience in the following modalities: CT, MRI and mammography.
  - A small number of employers, however, were specifically seeking to recruit entry level or graduate radiographers.
- All surveyed employers were seeking qualified applicants with a bachelor degree in medical radiation science approved by the Australian Institute of Radiology, registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and a radiation licence from the NSW Environment Protection Authority.
- The majority of vacancies were for full-time, permanent positions. A small number of roles, however, were contract positions ranging from 10 to 12 months duration.
• The small number of unfilled vacancies were for experienced roles in regional NSW. The employers involved indicated it can be difficult to attract radiographers with these skills to their regional locations.
• This occupation has been rated as not being in shortage, consistent with the large percentage of vacancies filled and there being only a small number of employers who did not attract any applicants during their recruitment round.

Unsuitable applicants
• Nearly 30 per cent of all surveyed employers attracted unqualified applicants who were seeking supervised practice programs (SPP) or clinical placements for their professional development year. As employers were seeking registered radiographers, all of these applicants were unsuitable.
  ○ A third of applicants were unqualified (compared with 13 per cent in 2016).
  ○ Furthermore, a number of employers considered applicants who had recently graduated and completed their SPP to be unsuitable as they lacked the level of clinical experience required.
• Qualified radiographers were generally considered to be unsuitable if they lacked experience in the modality advertised.

Demand and supply trends
• In March 2017 there were around 4000 registered diagnostic radiographers in NSW. This represents an increase of 2.0 per cent over the year and 15.8 per cent over four years.¹
• Department of Education and Training data show the number of domestic students completing radiography courses in New South Wales was around 400 in 2015. While this figure remained unchanged over the year, it is below the average of completions over the three years ending 2014 (around 440 per annum).²
  ○ There were around 680 commencements in 2015 (an increase of around a third compared to the average over the previous three years). This rise was driven by a large increase at the undergraduate level.
• Net immigration for medical imaging professionals is very low and is a minor source of supply to the occupation.³

¹ AHPRA: Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, Registrant Data, various issues.
² Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2015, customised tables
³ Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Subclass 457 visas granted pivot table,

Labour Economics Office NSW
Department of Employment
Other indicators and issues

- The Australian Institute of Radiography, in a submission to the Department of Education and Training, acknowledge the difficulties with graduates securing SPP positions: “Significant increase of student numbers into the Medical Radiation Science field especially in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy are creating problems clinically. Supervised practice positions are becoming more competitive and harder to obtain. Graduates struggle to obtain these positions and consequently are unable to complete their training and become fully qualified practitioners. This would become a significant problem in the long term.”

- Charles Sturt University and University of Sydney each have a four year Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science course. These courses include sufficient clinical placements to ensure all students who undertake the course have accessed to a SPP.

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