

ANZSCO 2525-11 Physiotherapist

Queensland June 2018

Current labour market rating:

Shortage

Previous labour market rating (June 2017):

Regional Shortage

Comments

There is a shortage of physiotherapists across Queensland with surveyed employers reporting a distinct decline in both the proportion of vacancies filled and the number of suitable applicants received.

Survey results¹

- In this year's survey, just 10 per cent of physiotherapy vacancies across Queensland were filled within six weeks of advertising. This result is significantly lower than the proportion of vacancies (75 per cent) filled in 2017.
- The most notable decrease was in the metropolitan area with nil vacancies filled, a distinct contrast with the 100 per cent of vacancies reported as filled in 2017. The regional area result was also low with 20 per cent of vacancies filled, decreasing from 57 per cent in 2017.
- The overall average number of applicants per vacancy was 2.3, higher in regional areas (4.0) than in metropolitan areas (0.6).
- The proportion of employers who received no applicants was 80 per cent in metropolitan areas and 60 per cent in regional areas.
- The average number of suitable applicants per vacancy declined at a greater rate in the metropolitan area (0 compared with 2.8 in 2017) than the regional area which varied slightly (0.6 compared to 1.1 in 2017).
 - While the average number of qualified applicants per vacancy for metropolitan areas was low, employers indicated that applicants were generally inexperienced new graduates or unqualified persons, rather than from persons with the desired experience and clinical skills.

Unsuitable applicants

- Employers required applicants to possess degree level qualifications and registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Applicants failing to meet essential criteria were deemed unsuitable.
- Overall, around 80 per cent of applicants were unsuitable, a substantial increase from 45 per cent in 2017. The main reasons were insufficient experience in a relevant area or inexperienced graduates.

¹ 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.



Demand and supply trends

- Demand for physiotherapists in Queensland is influenced by ongoing population growth, the health and ageing of the community and changes in servicing policy.
 - One of the factors influencing an increase in demand for therapeutic support, such as physiotherapy, is the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). As at December 2017, there were 1008 sole traders and 1867 organisations providing therapeutic support services in Queensland, in comparison with 138 and 490 respectively in December 2016.²
- The Department of Job and Small Business's Internet Vacancy Index data for Queensland shows that the number of internet vacancies for physiotherapists increased marginally from July 2017 (138) to June 2018 (146).³
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics, counts of Australian businesses data, shows that the number of physiotherapy businesses in Queensland increased by approximately 3.2 per cent from June 2016 (1050) to June 2017 (1084).⁴
- There were 5798 physiotherapists registered in Queensland with the Physiotherapy Board of Australia as at March 2018, 3.6 per cent more than December 2016. Females represent 65.6 per cent of the total number of registered physiotherapists.⁵
- Entry to this profession is via the completion of an undergraduate degree in physiotherapy or the combination of a relevant undergraduate degree and postgraduate qualification in physiotherapy. Registration with the Physiotherapy Board of Australia is mandatory to practice in Queensland.
- The most recent figures from the Department of Education and Training indicates that the number of students commencing a Bachelor of Physiotherapy in Queensland during 2016 was 224, a slight decrease from 260 in 2015.⁶
 - The number of newly graduated physiotherapy students entering the labour market in 2016 was 179, an increase of around 22 per cent from 146 in the previous year.⁷
- There were 20 temporary resident skilled visas (class 457 and 482) granted for positions in Queensland in 2017-18 (at 31 March 2018), a slight increase from 15 in 2016-17.⁸

Other indicators and issues

- The demand for physiotherapists in metropolitan areas appears to have increased since last years' survey. Some employers were of the opinion that self-employment is on the rise, as once a physiotherapist has practiced for at least three years, they are confident enough to practice independently, and have control and flexibility over work hours and client base sources.
- In an effort to attract suitable applicants, some employers increased the flexibility of advertised working conditions by offering the choice of full-time or part-time employment, and were willing to advertise interstate.

² National Disability Insurance Agency, Quarterly reports

³ Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index, May 2018, 12 month moving average

⁴ ABS, 8165.02 Counts of Australian Businesses

⁵ Physiotherapy Board of Australia, Statistics, Registration data table, March 2018

⁶ Department of Jobs and Small Business, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2016, customised tables

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Department of Home Affairs, Temporary Work (Skilled) visa program, March 2018