



ANZSCO 3513-11 and 3514-11 Chef/Cook

Australia
August 2013

Current labour market rating

Shortage

Previous labour market rating (September 2012)

Shortage

Comments

Employers continue to experience difficulty attracting applicants with the required qualifications and relevant experience to fill their chef and cook vacancies. Employers report that many qualified applicants do not meet their expectations of skill and experience.

Survey results

- Surveyed employers were recruiting for a range of businesses, including restaurants, hotels, cafés, resorts, bars, clubs and fine dining establishments.
 - There were also a small number of vacancies for positions in child care centres, aged care facilities and catering companies which have particular additional requirements.
- The vast majority (80 per cent) of employers required applicants with formal qualifications, most commonly a Certificate III or IV in Commercial Cookery.
 - Some employers, however, were willing to accept applicants with extensive experience and appropriate skills in lieu of qualifications.
- Some employers sought entry level cooks, others required executive chefs to prepare a variety of cuisines and take responsibility for menu development and ordering of supplies.
- Employers sought chefs and cooks with varying years of experience, depending on the level of the position. For example, employers seeking commis chefs or cooks generally required around two years experience, while those recruiting sous or executive chefs were looking for applicants who had up to 10 years experience.
- Employers filled 61 per cent of their vacancies, almost unchanged from 2012 (62 per cent).
- There were large fields of candidates overall, with an average of 14.0 applicants per vacancy. The vast majority of these, though, were considered to be unsuitable, leaving an average of 1.7 suitable applicants per vacancy.
 - In 2012 there were smaller fields of candidates, but a similar number of suitable applicants per vacancy (1.6).
- Although some employers attracted suitable applicants, they did not fill their vacancies as they could not agree with preferred candidates on the pay and conditions of employment.
- Almost 20 per cent of surveyed employers did not attract any applicants they regarded as suitable.
- Those employers seeking senior or highly experienced chefs experienced more difficulty filling their vacancies than those recruiting for more junior level positions.

- Recruitment was easier in metropolitan locations (these employers filled 63 per cent of their vacancies), than it was in regional areas (52 per cent of vacancies filled). This disparity is similar to that identified in the research undertaken in 2012.
- In addition to interviews, a significant number of employers used work trials to test applicants' skills.

Reasons for rating

- Despite relatively large fields of candidates, there were low numbers of suitable applicants and almost 40 per cent of vacancies remained unfilled four weeks after advertising.
- Employers report that many qualified applicants did not meet their expectations due to their lack of experience.

Unsuitable applicants

- Around 55 per cent of applicants did not hold qualifications, the majority of whom were considered by employers to be unsuitable.
- In addition, around 65 per cent of the qualified applicants were considered to be unsuitable, with lack of experience being the primary reason.
 - Some candidates did not have experience in a particular cuisine or have the level of experience required for senior positions.
 - A number of employers commented that new graduates were insufficiently prepared for working in a professional kitchen.
 - Many employers regarded applicants who had completed short courses in cookery as having inadequate training and practical experience to meet their needs.
- Poor presentation at interview and unsuccessful work trials were other reasons applicants were considered by employers to be unsuitable.

Demand and supply trends

- Labour Force Survey¹ data show employment of chefs rose significantly over the five years to August 2013 (up by almost 25 per cent) to 79,000. Employment of cooks grew more moderately over the period (up by 5 per cent) to 40,500.
- Internet Vacancy Index data² show advertised vacancy levels for chefs and cooks declined (by almost 30 per cent) over the five years to August 2013, but this fall is less marked than the decrease for all occupations.
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research data³ show the number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements for cooks decreased marginally (down by 3 per cent) over the five years to 2012. Completions increased by 11 per cent over the same period.

Other indicators and issues

- Employers commented on the difficulty attracting and retaining apprentices for chef and cook positions, mainly due to the hours of work and pay rates.

¹ ABS, *Labour Force Survey, Australia*, August 2013, Department of Employment trend

² Department of Employment, *Internet Vacancy Index*, August 2013, 12 month moving average

³ NCVET, *Apprentices and Trainees*, March 2013, estimates