



72%
of vacancies filled



7.2 applicants
(on average, per vacancy)



6.0 qualified applicants
(on average, per vacancy)



1.7 suitable applicants
(on average, per vacancy)



18% of employers
did not receive suitable applicants

Key research findings¹

- While there were differences by specialisation, in 2017-18, employers generally filled their nurse vacancies with relative ease.
 - In 2017-18, 72% of nurse vacancies were filled and there was an average of 7.2 applicants per vacancy. These results are fairly consistent with those experienced over the previous three years (see Figure 1).
- The vast majority of applicants were qualified nurses, however, over two thirds of qualified applicants were not considered suitable.
 - The primary reason for unsuitability was either a lack of experience in a specialisation or a lack of general experience in the occupation.
 - Other reasons included poorly written applications, poor interview performance, not being registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), and a lack of desired soft skills.
- There are marked differences, though, in recruitment experiences across the nursing occupations (see Figure 2).
 - Just over half of midwife positions were filled in 2017-18 and there were small fields of candidates. Midwives were in continuous shortage over the 15 years to 2012. Since then, patchy shortages have been evident, particularly in regional areas.
 - By comparison, 78% of registered and enrolled nurse vacancies were filled in 2017-18 and there were considerably larger fields of candidates. National shortages have not been evident for registered nurses since 2011 and since 2012 for enrolled nurses.

- Employers in regional areas generally have greater difficulty recruiting for nurses.
 - In 2017-18, 65% of regional vacancies were filled and there were few applicants (3.5, on average, per vacancy of whom 1.2 were considered suitable), compared with 76% of metropolitan nurse vacancies filled and an average of 9.7 applicants per vacancy, of whom 2.0 were suitable.

Supply and demand²

- The supply of nurses has increased in recent years, with nursing graduate numbers and nurse registrations at historically high levels.
 - In 2016, more than 11,000 students graduated from a nursing bachelor course and 6500 students completed a diploma level enrolled nursing course.
 - In March 2018, more than 392,800 nurses had general registration with AHPRA.
- That said, the demand for nurses has also increased. Internet vacancies for nurses have increased strongly over the five years to June 2018 (up by 66%). Internet vacancies for registered and enrolled nurses and midwives were all at or near historical peaks in June 2018.
- Employment outcomes for nursing graduates are fairly strong. In 2017, 79.3% of university nursing graduates were employed full-time four months after graduating. While higher than the average for all graduates (71.8%), outcomes are well below the historical employment outcomes for nurses (of above 90% from 2006 to 2012).

¹ The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business](#). For more detailed information on each occupation in this cluster go to www.jobs.gov.au/occupational-skill-shortages-information.

² Supply and demand sources: Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Statistics Data Cube, 2016, domestic students in general nursing courses for initial registration; NCVER, Total VET Students and Courses, 2017 data cube; AHPRA, Nursing and Midwifery Board, Registrant Data, March 2018; Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index, June 2018; Graduate Outcomes Survey, custom tables, 2017

Figure 1: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), Nurses, Australia, time series 2007-08 to 2017-18

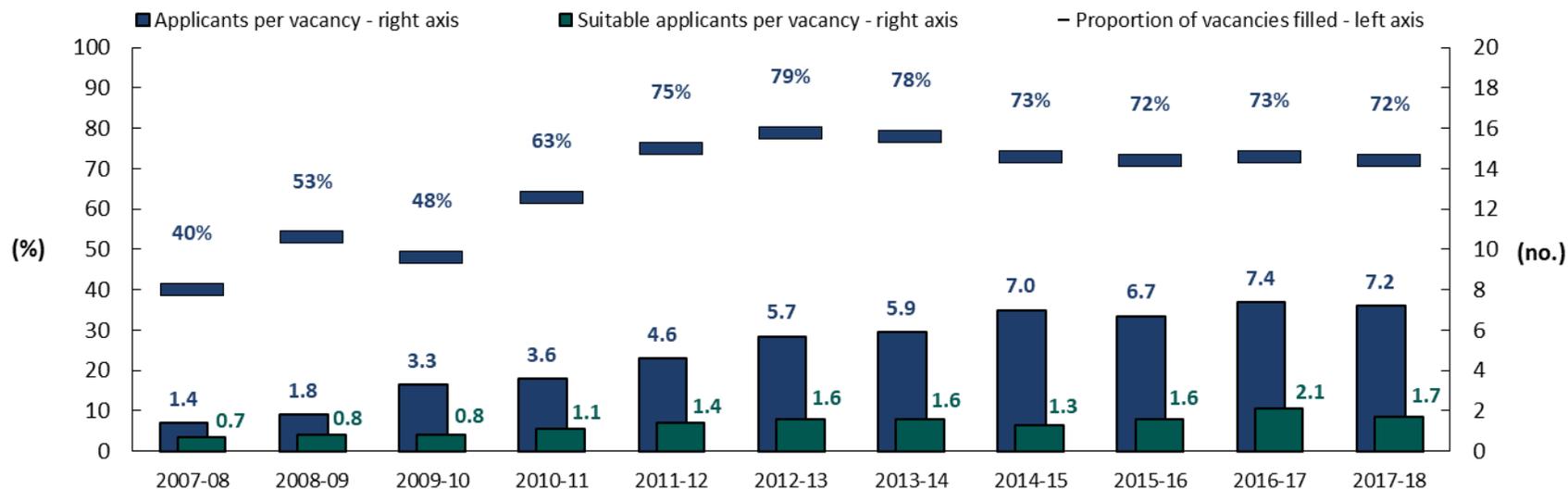


Figure 2: Proportion of vacancies filled (%), average number of applicants and suitable applicants per vacancy (no.), and national rating, Nurses, Australia, 2017-18

