



2019 SKILLS SURVEY RESULTS

Summary report

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About us



Consult Australia is the industry association that represents the business interests of consulting firms who provide design, advisory and engineering services for the built and natural environment. We represent an industry comprising some 48,000 firms across Australia, ranging from sole practitioners through to some of Australia's top 500 firms with combined revenue exceeding \$40 billion a year.

Some of our member firms include:



Executive summary

Consult Australia's skills survey is an annual account of human resources and workforce demands affecting consulting firms in the built and natural environment. This year's survey was conducted between June and July 2019 and reflects the experiences of firms over the preceding 12 months.

The results provide a valuable benchmarking tool for firms of all sizes, and is a useful source of data to support Consult Australia's advocacy activities on behalf of the industry.

40 firms participated in this year's survey, collectively employing over 21,000 people in Australia.

2019 survey findings – the skills challenge currently facing our industry

Our industry's profile

- A 20 per cent increase of firms who have provided services related to power and energy (38 per cent in 2019).
- A decline of around 10 per cent each year since 2017 of firms who have provided project management services (38 per cent in 2019) .
- For 68 per cent of firms, less than 20 per cent engineers and related staff are women.

Our industry's skills setting

- 63 per cent of firms are recruiting and currently experiencing a skill shortage.
- Civil engineers and drafters, structural engineers and engineering managers are the disciplines most affected by skill shortages in 2019.
- Sydney and Melbourne remain the hardest areas to find and place employees, with Brisbane quickly catching up.

Our industry's recruitment activities

- The proportion of firms spending 3 to 5 per cent of total turnover on recruitment activities has more than doubled over the past two years to 18 per cent.
- It takes 60 per cent of firms more than three months on average to recruit a principal/senior level employee.
- 20 per cent of firms believe there are insufficient number of graduates in specialist areas.

Our industry's skilled migration demand

- 10 per cent of firms expect 5 to 10 per cent of their staff will be recruited from overseas next year.
- 54 per cent of firms use temporary skill shortage visas to help meet demands.

Our industry's development and retention approach

- 83 per cent of firms offer flexible working arrangements.
- As a percentage of total payroll expenditure, 53 per cent of firms spend over 2 per cent on training and professional development.

Industry's profile

The 2019 survey saw 40 responses from Consult Australia member firms. These responding firms can be broken down by:

- 13 large firms of more than 200 employees (33 per cent);
- 15 medium-sized firms of 20 to 199 employees (37 per cent); and
- 12 smaller firms of less than 19 employees (30 per cent).

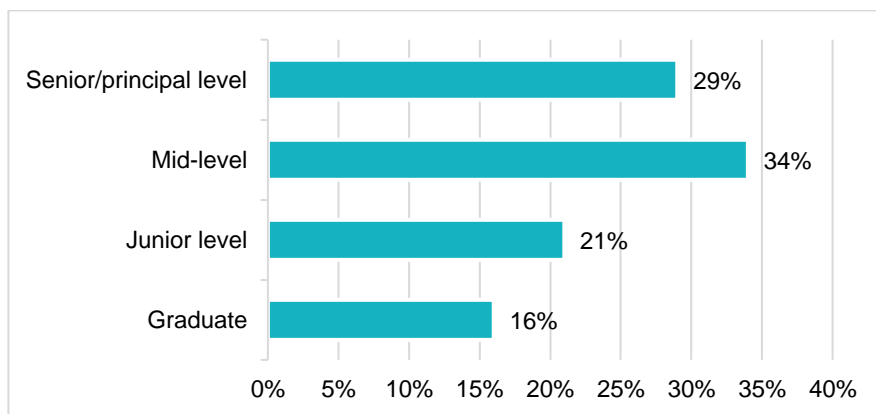
These firms collectively employ over 21,000 people throughout Australia.

Breakdown of our industry's current workforce

1. The breakdown of employees at different experience levels

Firms tend to have a top-heavy workforce. 63 per cent of employees at firms are in mid- or senior/principal level positions which require extensive professional experience and training in addition to base qualifications, typically more than five years.

A top-heavy workforce highlights the complexity of projects undertaken by firms, and challenges experienced by industry to meet sudden upswings in demand. Recruitment needs to meet any changes in demand will therefore likely require an approach that is in proportion with the below breakdown.



Graph 1: What percentage of your firm's employees are at each experience level?
(2019 average results)

2. Percentage of female engineers and related professional at firms

Our industry's workforce continues to experience a gender imbalance issue across engineers and related professionals. The 2019 results indicate an 11 per cent decline in the percentage of firms with 21 to 30 per cent women in engineering and related roles. There is a four per cent increase of firms who employ no women.

The result's year-on-year change may be attributable to the sample of participants in each survey.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
None	10%	6%	4%
1-10%	20%	16%	14%
11-20%	38%	35%	43%
21-30%	20%	31%	29%
More than 30%	12%	12%	11%

Table 1: What percentage of your firm's engineers and related professional are women?

3. Percentage of employees at firm's who will reach retirement age

Despite Australia's well-publicised ageing workforce, the percentage of our industry's workforce reaching retirement age in the next 12 months continues to decline from previous results. Only 15 per cent of firms have more than four per cent of staff at retirement age in the next 12 months, with 55 per cent of firms having between one to three per cent of staff reach this milestone and 30 per cent of firms having none.

As these results differ from broader population and demographic statistics,¹ this perhaps indicates a growing workforce is reducing the overall percentage of employees reaching retirement age, addressing previous concerns on a high number of baby boomers retiring at once.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
None	30%	34%	19%
1-3%	55%	44%	56%
4-5%	8%	14%	11%
6-10%	5%	8%	15%
More than 11%	2%	0%	0%

Table 2: What percentage of your firm's employees will reach retiring age in the next 12 months?

Locations and areas where our industry has undertaken activities

4. Locations where firms have predominately undertaken work

Our industry's work in most metropolitan locations has remained relatively the same for 2019, with the exception of declines in Melbourne (of 21 per cent) and Adelaide (of 10 per cent). These declines seem unusual given their current pipeline of projects, particularly in Victoria. The year-on-year change may instead be attributable to the survey participant sample. Consult Australia will monitor if there any consistencies with these declines in future surveys.

This year's results also indicate that work in most regional and remote locations by jurisdiction has increased, with the exception being the ACT, South Australia and Victoria. New South Wales has seen an increase in work in regional and remote locations by 12 per cent.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Older Australia at a glance \(2018\)](#)

International activities have this year declined by 10 per cent. This drops from fairly consistent results in previous years, and may indicate that domestic demands have reduced the appetite of firms to pursue international opportunities.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
ACT: Metropolitan	30%	36%	33%
ACT: Regional	8%	12%	7%
NSW: Metropolitan	63%	64%	67%
NSW: Regional or remote	50%	38%	41%
NT: Metropolitan	28%	20%	22%
NT: Regional or remote	18%	12%	11%
QLD: Metropolitan	55%	50%	56%
QLD: Regional or remote	45%	42%	37%
SA: Metropolitan	20%	30%	37%
SA: Regional or remote	18%	22%	22%
TAS: Metropolitan	8%	4%	7%
TAS: Regional or remote	8%	4%	4%
VIC: Metropolitan	45%	66%	67%
VIC: Regional or remote	23%	28%	30%
WA: Metropolitan	45%	42%	48%
WA: Regional or remote	40%	32%	33%
International	28%	38%	37%

Table 3: In which locations has your firm predominately undertaken work in the last 12 months?

5. Areas where firms have predominately undertaken activities

This year's results for the areas where firms have predominately undertaken activities indicate a sharp increase in services relating to power and energy (up 18 per cent), feasibility studies and reports (up 13 per cent), climate change consulting (up 11 per cent), and high rise buildings (up nine per cent) reflecting some findings in Consult Australia's [2019 Economic Forecast](#). These results were stable in previous years with the exception of high-rise buildings which returns to previous findings.

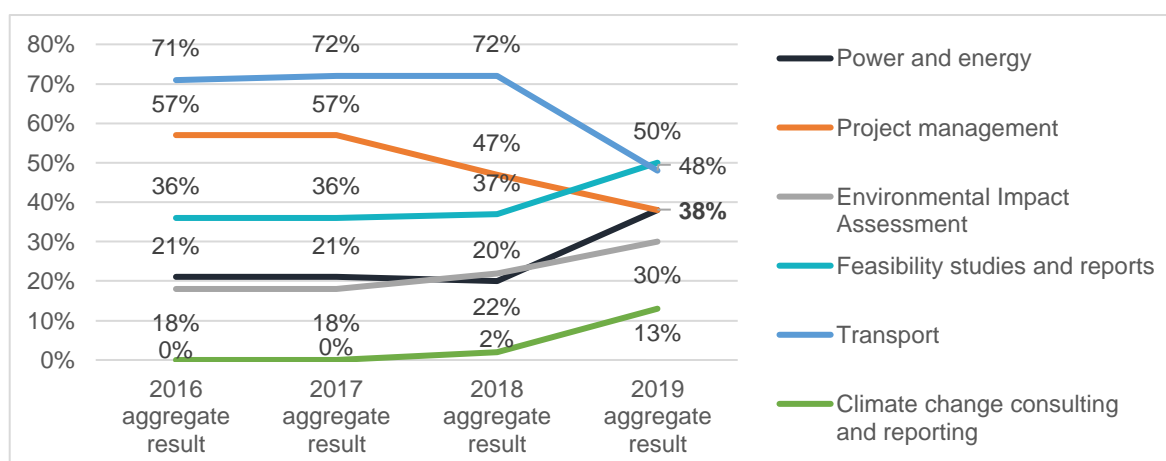
These results indicate that our industry is experiencing sharp decreases in the number of firms who have undertaken activities in transport projects (down 24 per cent) and project management services (down 11 per cent). Project management services has had a consistent decline over previous years (with a drop of 10 per cent in 2017) which suggests this drop may be an ongoing trend. The transport decrease may be due to a lull in related services as many projects move into the construction phase, or perhaps because firms captured in the survey participant sample are not participating in related investments due to their service offerings or capacity.

Consult Australia will monitor these sharp increases and decreases in future surveys to determine if these results are due to the survey participant sample or indicate changing demands on the areas where firms are predominately undertaking activities.

Consult Australia's 2019 skills survey
Results summary report

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Bridges	30%	35%	36%
Chemical process engineering	8%	2%	4%
Climate change consulting and reporting	13%	2%	0%
Dams	15%	20%	18%
Defence	30%	29%	36%
Education and training	10%	16%	21%
Environmental Impact Assessment	30%	22%	18%
Feasibility studies and reports	50%	37%	36%
Geoscience	25%	16%	14%
High rise buildings	48%	39%	50%
Individual dwellings	20%	16%	14%
Information technology	10%	4%	4%
International development	8%	9%	7%
Low rise buildings	48%	43%	54%
Minerals and metals	18%	10%	11%
Mining and industrial services	25%	24%	21%
Modular dwellings	8%	6%	11%
Oil and gas	10%	10%	11%
Power and energy	38%	20%	21%
Project management	38%	47%	57%
Research and development	8%	0%	0%
Schools, hospitals and community facilities	43%	41%	50%
Sewerage or water systems	35%	35%	36%
Specialist services	35%	22%	25%
Technical modelling	28%	24%	25%
Transport	48%	72%	72%
Tunnels	18%	24%	29%
Urban development	48%	54%	57%

Table 4: In which areas has your firm predominately undertaken work in the last 12 months?



Graph 2: Sample of year-on-year changes on key areas where firms have undertaken activities

Skills setting

Skills impact on our industry

6. The current skills setting facing firms

The current skills situation sees a consistent increase in our industry's demand for skills, with net growth in employee numbers increasing by five per cent from last year. Firms recruiting and experiencing a skill shortage increases by two per cent over the same timeframe. With nearly two-thirds of firms now experiencing a skill shortage, it is clear that our industry is facing a systemic challenge to have the right skills on hand to meet current demands for services from clients.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
We are downsizing and not recruiting	0%	0%	0%
We are recruiting and experiencing a skill shortage	63%	61%	54%
Our employees are being poached	40%	37%	43%
We have put a temporary freeze on recruitment	5%	2%	4%
We are experiencing a reduction in work activity, but we are still recruiting	10%	8%	14%
An economic downturn has made it easier to recruit	0%	4%	7%
We are making targeted redundancies	13%	6%	11%
We are experiencing net employment reductions	0%	2%	4%
We are experiencing no change in our employee numbers	18%	22%	18%
We are experiencing net growth in employee numbers	50%	45%	39%
We are supplementing Australian employees with overseas-based staff	25%	22%	25%

Table 5: What is your firm's current skills situation?

7. Employment disciplines affected by skill shortages

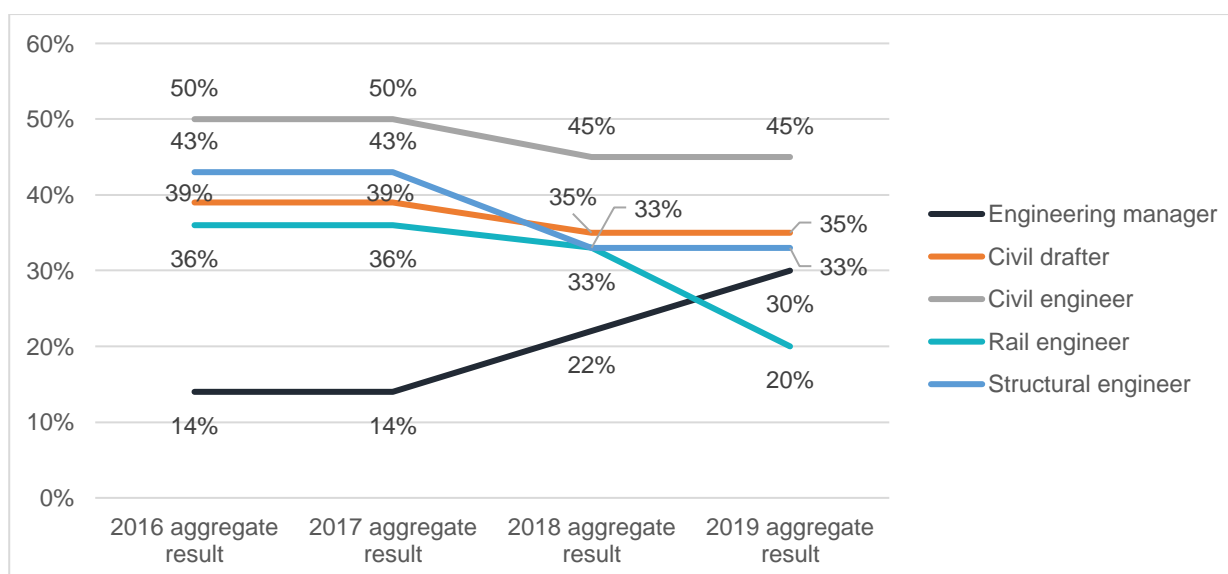
This year's survey results are seeing a number of employment disciplines continue to be affected by skill shortages, with engineering managers (increasing eight per cent to 30 per cent), civil drafters (continuing at 35 per cent), civil engineers (continuing at 45 per cent), and structural engineers (continuing at 33 per cent) the most affected. There are also sharp increases from last year's results for mechanical drafters (up 13 per cent to 15 per cent), and hydraulic engineers (up 10 per cent to 20 per cent).

The results also see some declines in how affected employment disciplines are by skill shortages. Rail drafters (down 13 per cent to five per cent) and rail engineers (down 13 per cent to 20 per cent) are the two employment disciplines with the biggest drops.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Architect	3%	2%	4%
Communications specialist	0%	0%	0%
Construction project manager	8%	12%	11%
Contract manager/administrator	3%	8%	4%
Economist	0%	2%	0%
Engineering manager	30%	22%	14%
Geologist	8%	4%	0%
Human resources specialist	5%	0%	0%
Legal counsel	3%	0%	0%
Marketing specialist	3%	0%	0%
Planner	8%	8%	4%
Quantity surveyor	0%	8%	4%
Scientist	10%	2%	4%
Surveyor	3%	6%	7%
Technician (lab technician)	3%	2%	4%
Drafter – civil	35%	35%	39%
Drafter – electrical	13%	8%	7%
Drafter – mechanical	15%	2%	0%
Drafter – rail	5%	18%	21%
Drafter – structural	23%	29%	36%
Drafter – other	3%	4%	4%
Engineer – civil	45%	45%	50%
Engineer – electrical	20%	20%	21%
Engineer – environmental	13%	6%	0%
Engineer – geotechnical	13%	12%	11%
Engineer – hydraulic	20%	10%	17%
Engineer – fire	15%	8%	11%
Engineer – industrial	3%	0%	0%
Engineer – marine	0%	2%	4%
Engineer – materials	0%	2%	4%

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Engineer – mechanical	18%	12%	18%
Engineer – process	3%	0%	0%
Engineer – production or plant	0%	2%	0%
Engineer – rail	20%	33%	36%
Engineer – structural	33%	33%	43%
Engineer – traffic and transport	25%	35%	36%
Engineer – tunnel	10%	12%	21%
Engineer – water	18%	20%	25%
Engineer – other	13%	4%	4%
None	5%	-	-

Table 6: Which employment disciplines have been affected by skill shortages for your firm?



Graph 3: Sample of year-on-year changes on key disciplines affected by skill shortages

8. Locations that are most difficult to find and place employees

The 2019 survey results have many consistencies with previous years on the locations that are difficult for our industry to find and place staff.

Metropolitan areas in New South Wales (55 per cent) and Victoria (40 per cent) remain the most difficult locations to find and place staff, however these results are easing compared to previous years. Difficulties in some metropolitan areas have increased this year, with Brisbane doubling in to 28 per cent and Perth increasing to 18 per cent.

This year's results also see a continued reduction in difficulties for firms to find and place employees in the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
ACT: Metropolitan	5%	10%	3%
ACT: Regional	0%	4%	3%
NSW: Metropolitan	55%	61%	67%
NSW: Regional or remote	15%	10%	14%
NT: Metropolitan	10%	16%	22%
NT: Regional or remote	0%	6%	11%
QLD: Metropolitan	28%	14%	11%
QLD: Regional or remote	18%	10%	11%
SA: Metropolitan	5%	12%	22%
SA: Regional or remote	0%	6%	11%
TAS: Metropolitan	0%	0%	0%
TAS: Regional or remote	0%	0%	0%
VIC: Metropolitan	40%	47%	44%
VIC: Regional or remote	13%	8%	11%
WA: Metropolitan	18%	10%	11%
WA: Regional or remote	5%	2%	3%
International	3%	8%	11%

Table 7: Which locations have been hardest to find and place employees in the last 12 months?

9. Experience levels with staffing problems

The demand for staff with extensive experience continues to be by far the greatest in this year's survey results, with staffing problems at the senior/principal level growing by 19 per cent from last year's results to 60 per cent. We also see a four per cent increase for graduate and junior level roles in this year's results.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate results
Graduate	8%	4%	4%
Junior level	18%	14%	10%
Mid-level	78%	84%	85%
Senior/principal level	60%	41%	39%
None	8%	8%	7%

Table 8: At which of following levels is your firm experiencing staffing problems?

Response of our industry to current skill challenges

10. Actions and strategies of firms in response to current skill challenges

Firms continue to be active in responding to the current skills situation facing our industry. This year, more firms are increasing their training and professional development opportunities for staff (65 per cent from 49 per cent), and positively many are focusing on increasing the gender diversity of their workforce as a long-term strategy to address skill shortages (doubling to 53 per cent).

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The 2019 survey results also see a return to the 2017 aggregate result for firms increasing salaries further to attract and retain employees, perhaps demonstrating this is no longer a viable long-term response to addressing skill shortages due to limited headroom and other commercial challenges.

The percentage of firms who will consider mergers and acquisitions with other companies in this year's survey results is also of note. 43 per cent of firms indicating this is a consideration in 2019, which is a sharp increase from the past few years. Industry trends, such as the number of mega projects across Australia, are perhaps increasing this interest in consolidation.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Increase our salaries further to attract and retain employees	48%	61%	50%
Increase our recruitment from overseas	25%	29%	32%
Increase our budget spend on human resources	15%	20%	21%
We will pass on costs to clients	18%	25%	21%
Extend our project delivery times	8%	10%	14%
We will diversify the firm into other services	25%	47%	50%
We will consider mergers and acquisitions with other companies	43%	31%	29%
Reduce wages for our new employees	0%	4%	7%
Increase training and professional development opportunities	65%	49%	50%
Limit the amount and scale of our tender bids	10%	8%	7%
We will close our firm	0%	2%	0%
Reduce our hours of employment for current employees	3%	2%	0%
We will focus on increasing the gender diversity of our workforce	53%	25%	-
None	3%	-	-

Table 9: What actions and strategies in response to your current skills situation will your firm take in the next 12 months?

11. Optimism of finding the skills necessary to be competitive over the next three years

This is the first year in some time that we have seen a significant movement in the percentage of survey respondents who are no longer 'very optimistic' that their firms will find the necessary skills to be competitive over the next three years. It is also the first year in many that any survey respondents have indicated that they are 'not at all confident' that they will find these skills (with 13 per cent).

This year's results perhaps suggest that ongoing broader concerns about skill shortages and changing skill demands in our industry are starting to have an impact on many firms.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Very	25%	44%	46%
Somewhat	62%	56%	54%
Not at all	13%	0%	0%

Table 10: How optimistic are you that your firm will find the necessary skills to be competitive over the next three years?

Job-readiness of graduates joining our industry

12. In general job-readiness of graduates when joining our firms

There appears to be a decisive shift in our industry's view on the job-readiness of graduates when joining the workforce, with a 15 per cent increase in the number of firms who believe graduates are not job-ready. Practical experience and soft skills (particularly communication, attention to detail and client interactions) were highlighted by respondents as key areas of concern, in addition to limited training in project management and modelling. It was also noted that graduates tend to be heavily reliant on computer software to carry out engineering tasks without a base understanding of what the software is doing.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Yes	51%	66%	67%
No	49%	34%	33%

Table 11: Are graduates in general at a level of job-readiness when they join your firm?

Future skill requirements of our industry

13. Disciplines that will not be required in the next ten years

As has been the case over previous years, most firms (85 per cent) believe the majority of known disciplines will continue to be required in the next ten years. This perhaps indicates that while some skill demands will change, our industry's core employment disciplines are unlikely to change.

Different types of drafting were identified as no longer being required by the firms who indicated there will be employment disciplines that are no longer required in a decade. The move to Building Information Modelling (BIM) was flagged as a reason for this shift.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Yes	15%	16%	14%
No	85%	84%	86%

Table 12: Thinking about your firm's future skill requirements, are there any disciplines that will not be required in the next ten years?

Recruitment activities

Recruitment activities of our industry

14. Average employee turnover (voluntary and involuntary)

The average employee turnover in our industry has kept on trend with previous results. However, there has been a significant decline over the past two years for firms with an average employee turnover of more than 21 per cent, suggesting a return to more sustainable levels.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
0-5%	23%	25%	14%
6-10%	23%	25%	29%
11-15%	28%	24%	25%
16-20%	23%	14%	14%
More than 21%	5%	12%	18%

Table 13: What is your firm's average employee turnover (voluntary and involuntary) in Australia for the last 12 months?

15. Percentages of total turnover spent on recruitment activities by firms

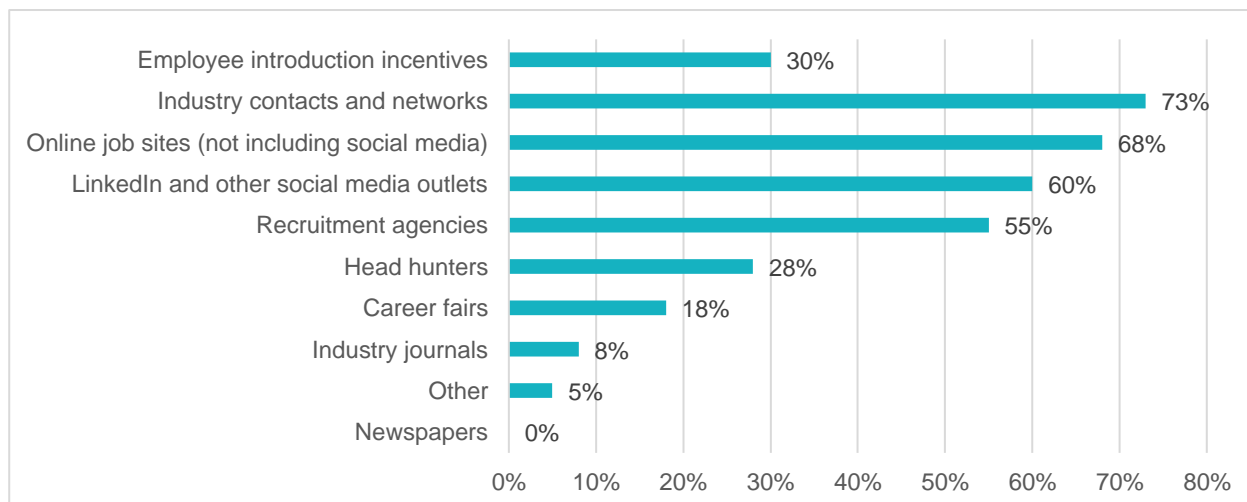
The vast majority (96 per cent) of firms in our industry are spending less than five per cent of turnover on recruitment activities, with 78 per cent of those spending less than two per cent. Of concern, the cohort of firms spending between three and five per cent has grown from seven per cent to 18 per cent over recent years. This indicates that some firms are having to work harder and spend more resources to recruit staff in a tightening labour market.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
0-2%	78%	80%	89%
3-5%	18%	16%	7%
6-8%	3%	2%	4%
More than 9%	3%	2%	0%

Table 14: What percentage of your firm's total turnover do you spend on recruitment activities

16. Recruitment mediums that best meet the needs of firms

Employee introduction incentives, online job sites (including LinkedIn and other social media outlets), and recruitment agencies are by far the preferred recruitment mediums of our industry. The option to select multiple preferred recruitment mediums was new for the 2019 survey, and Consult Australia will monitor any changes to these responses going forward.

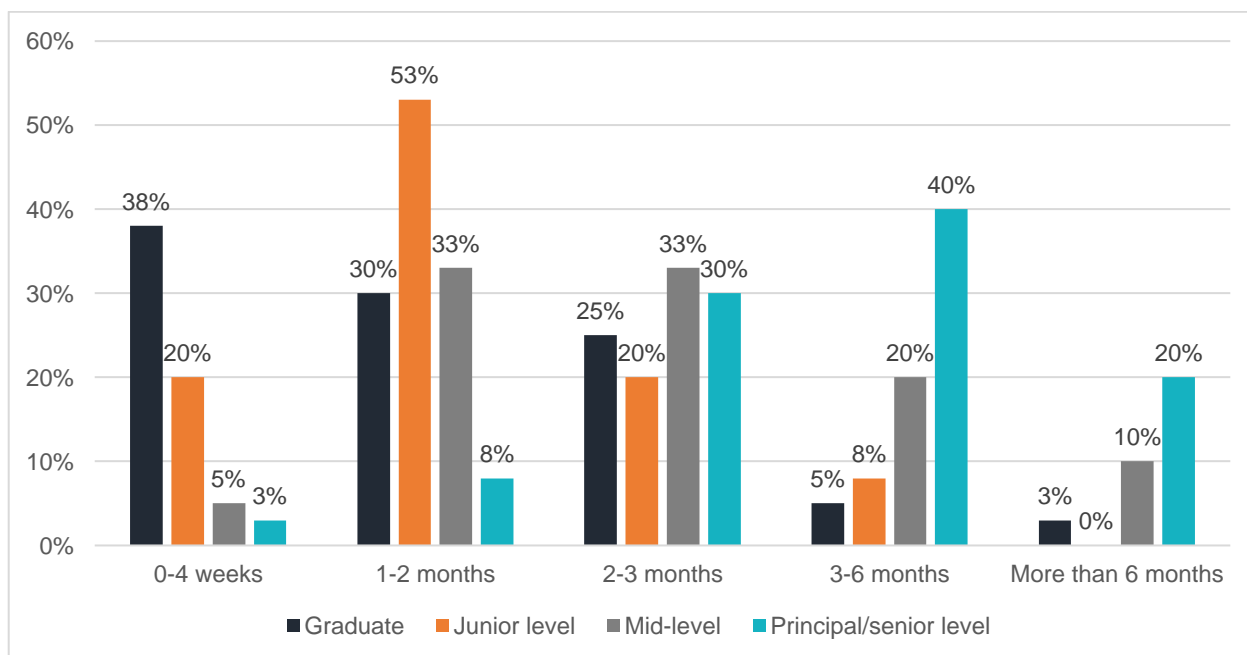


Graph 4: What recruitment medium(s) best meets the needs of your firm? (2019 aggregate result)

17. Average length of time spent recruiting for a senior/principal level role

As the survey questions on the average time to recruit for roles at different experience levels has been reformatted and cannot be compared with previous surveys, it is difficult to draw too many conclusions from this year's results. However, they do provide data to demonstrate the well-known experience that additional time is required to recruit for more senior roles, and to provide a baseline for firms to compare their own results.

The results below for the related four survey questions will also provide the baseline for Consult Australia to monitor industry-wide changes against in future survey.



Graph 5: What is the average length of time spent recruiting for different experience level roles at your firm? (2019 combined aggregate result)

Graduate recruitment activities of our industry

18. Number of graduates that firms expect to employ next year

On the whole, next year our industry is expecting to recruit about the same number of graduates as this year (58 per cent). 30 per cent of firms are planning to recruit more graduates than this year. This result likely reflects the earlier mentioned challenge facing firms of meeting skill demands in an industry that requires a top-heavy workforce.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
More than this year	30%	30%	33%
About the same as this year	58%	63%	56%
Fewer than this year	12%	6%	11%

Table 15: How many graduates does your firm expect to employ next year?

19. Issues firms encounter when recruiting graduates

Our industry has previously had no difficulties recruiting graduates with 78 per cent of firms agreeing with this statement in 2017. However, this result has declined around 20 per cent year-on-year and now only 40 per cent of firms agree that they have no difficulties recruiting graduates.

This year's results also highlight an insufficient number of graduates in specialist areas and of female graduates across the broader market. Competition from other sectors may be a factor in creating a reduced talent pool for our industry.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Our firm has no difficulties recruiting graduates	40%	59%	78%
There are insufficient numbers of graduates in the market	0%	10%	4%
There are insufficient graduates in the specialist areas we require	20%	-	-
Graduates believe there are higher salary options elsewhere	23%	27%	22%
Graduates have low opinion of a career in engineering	0%	8%	0%
There is competition from other sectors for graduates	33%	16%	15%
Our firm is unable to compete with the graduate programmes of other firms	20%	12%	4%
There are insufficient numbers of female graduates in the market	50%	29%	26%
Graduates want to do other things before commencing work	0%	2%	4%

Table 16: What issues does your firm encounter when recruiting graduates?

Skilled migration demands

New employees joining our industry from overseas

20. Percentage of employees joining firms from an overseas location

Last year, our industry has reduced the number of employees it is taking in who are from overseas locations. 43 per cent of firms did not recruit any staff from overseas, only 14 per cent of firms had more than five per cent of employees in this category. In the context of domestic skill challenges outlined in earlier sections, this decline may be due to additional skilled visa requirements and costs that reduce the business case for firms or because firms are placing a greater value on localised experience and training.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
0%	43%	35%	28%
1-4%	45%	49%	54%
5-10%	8%	12%	14%
11-15%	3%	1%	4%
More than 15%	3%	2%	0%

Table 17: In the past 12 months, what percentage of your firm's new employees have been recruited from overseas?

21. Expected percentage of employees joining firms from an overseas location

Our industry next year expects to recruit around the same number of employees from overseas locations as last year. However, based on previous results for this question, this does represent a 22 per cent increase in firms expecting to recruit one to four per cent of new employees through this approach. This year's alignment between the forecast percentage and the actual percentage (section 20) suggests firms are taking a more proactive approach to overseas recruitment rather than responding based on individual applications.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result
0%	40%	47%
1-4%	48%	26%
5-10%	10%	13%
11-15%	0%	8%
More than 15%	3%	4%

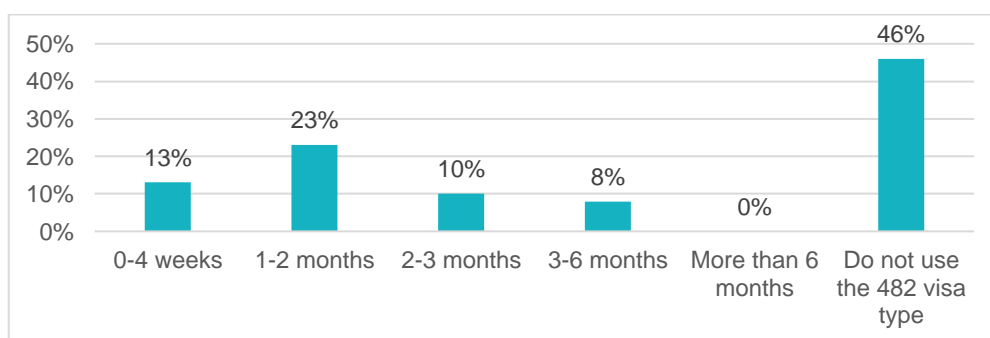
Table 18: What percentage of your firm's new employees are likely to be recruited from overseas in the next 12 months?

Our industry's experience of the new temporary skill shortage visa

22. How long it typically takes to complete requirements prior to submitting a nomination application for the 482-visa type (temporary skill shortage)

The time requirement to prepare applications for the 482-visa type (temporary skill shortage) is considerable for many firms. While this is a new survey question and there is no historical comparison, anecdotal feedback suggests this has extended considerably through the introduction of reforms such as labour market testing. This year's results highlight that while the Department of Home Affairs is focusing on reducing application processing times, the additional requirements put in place by the Department has likely extended the end-to-end experience for our industry.

Consult Australia will be monitoring any impact future skilled migration reforms have on the time needed to submit visa nomination applications for the 482-visa type in future surveys.



Graph 6: If your firm uses the 482-visa type (temporary skill shortage), how long does it typically take to complete all requirements prior to submitting a visa nomination application to the Department of Home Affairs? (2019 aggregate result)

Development and retention approach

Retention activities of our industry

23. What firms are doing to retain professionally qualified employees

This year's results indicate that our industry is becoming more active in how we retain professionally qualified employees. There has been an eight per cent increase of firms focusing on training and development opportunities for staff and a 17 per cent increase of firms with staff incentive schemes. A return in this year's results to the 2017 findings on the percentage of firms paying salaries above market rates (35 per cent) again suggests the viability of this approach to retain talent is unsustainable in the longer-term.

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
We conduct regular staff appraisals	75%	75%	82%
We offer ongoing training and development opportunities	90%	82%	82%
We pay salaries above Award rate	65%	47%	54%
We pay salaries above market rates	35%	45%	29%
We conduct staff satisfaction surveys	45%	45%	39%
We offer staff benefit packages (e.g. gym memberships)	38%	39%	46%
We offer flexible working arrangements	83%	80%	71%
We have staff incentive schemes	58%	41%	39%
We allow staff to work in our overseas offices	28%	24%	29%
We recognise and reward high achievers (i.e. industry awards)	40%	49%	54%
Our firm doesn't have a retention strategy	0%	8%	11%

Table 19: What is your firm doing to retain professional qualified employees?

Our industry's training and professional development costs

24. How much firms spend on training and professional development as a percentage of total payroll expenditure

In line with the above results, the percentage of firms spending less than one per cent of their total payroll expenditure has reduced considerably (from 12 per cent last year, to three per cent this year). We are also seeing a 14 per cent increase in firms who are spending one to 1.9 per cent (45 per cent in total). Interestingly, the percentage of firms who are paying more than two per cent has reduced this year (from 57 per cent to 53 per cent), suggesting that our industry may be starting to consolidate how much it spends on these opportunities for staff.

Consult Australia's 2019 skills survey
Results summary report

Response	2019 aggregate result	2018 aggregate result	2017 aggregate result
Less than 1%	3%	12%	14%
1-1.9%	45%	31%	36%
2-2.9%	20%	27%	25%
3-3.9%	13%	18%	14%
4-4.9%	10%	2%	4%
More than 5%	10%	10%	8%

Table 20: How much does your firm spend on training and professional development as a percentage of your total payroll expenditure?

Contact us

We would welcome any opportunity to further discuss the issues raised in this report. To do so, please contact:

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