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Graduates, fresh talent in demand

This year's graduates have a brighter outlook to secure work than their predecessors, writes CareerOne Editor Cara Jenkin.

EMPLOYERS are looking for fresh staff this year, providing graduates with a great opportunity to get their first job.

Graduates in the past two years have found it harder to get work straight out of university because of staff freezes and a lack of employers willing to take on inexperienced staff. But the outlook for 2011 is better, as the shortage of skilled workers is forcing employers to be more flexible and look for fresh, young talent.

Graduate Careers Australia research manager Bruce Guthrie says the global financial crisis had a greater effect on graduate recruitment than expected in the past two years, especially as the national labour market did not experience as high unemployment levels as predicted.

"Given the state of political uncertainty in 2010 and also concerns about a double-dip recession internationally, I think (employers) remained conservative in their recruitment plans," he says. The percentage of all

bachelor and postgraduates in a full-time job within four months of completing their degree fell from 85.2 per cent in 2008 to 76.2 per cent in 2010. A further 15 per cent were employed part-time and 8.6 per cent were unemployed, an increase from 5.2 per cent

in 2008. Mr Guthrie says mining, health, building and architecture graduates fared better than their business counterparts but reduced graduate hiring tended to occur across the board.

"It doesn't mean graduates can't find a job. They will find jobs eventually," he says. "It's taking new graduates just out of university a lot longer to find jobs than they were three years ago."

But AME Recruitment senior consultant Adam Kennedy says graduate recruitment has picked up this year.

He says it has taken the unusual step to advertise directly to universities this year because of client demand for fresh staff.

"Particularly if they have done a bit of postgraduate study," he says.

"People are asking for MBAs from time to time, which is pretty new in Adelaide. In some firms, they are identifying graduates for succession planning or thinking about their future planning."



BACHELOR DEGREE GRADUATES

(Percentage in 2010)
In or looking for full-time employment: 64.7
In full-time study: 19
In or looking for part-time employment: 10.7
Unknown or unavailable: 5.6
Had full-time work before May in final year of study: 15.7

Source: GRADUATE CAREERS AUSTRALIA

