Victorian Employer Skills Survey 2021 Wholesale Trade

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) asked businesses about their skills, recruitment and training needs for the Victorian Employer Skills Survey 2021.

Findings from the survey will help the Victorian government identify areas of skills demand, drive innovation across the VET sector and better plan for Victoria’s future training needs.

The VSA conducted the survey between August and December 2021. It approached 70,000 businesses and achieved a response rate of 20.5%, with coverage across all industries, business sizes and regions in the state.

*The statistics below reflect the experience of employers across the five key survey domains:*

#### Business climate | Skills | Recruitment | Training | Apprentices, trainees and work placements

## Business climate

#### **Despite the global pandemic, many employers adapted to maintain or grow their workforce. Employers had a mostly positive outlook for the year ahead.**

#### Workforce

More employers reported growing their workforce over the past 12 months (compared to the Victorian average).

**Grew**

Wholesale Trade 20%

Vic Avg 19%

**Contracted**

Wholesale Trade 15%

Vic Avg 19%

**Remained the same**

Wholesale Trade 64%

Vic Avg 61%

#### Outlook

Employers in the industry were confident about their business outlook. More were expecting their workforce to grow or remain the same size.

**Predict growth**

Wholesale Trade 35%

Vic Avg 33%

**Remain about the same**

Wholesale Trade 56%

Vic Avg 56%

**Predict contraction**

Wholesale Trade 4%

Vic Avg 5%

#### Impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 skills-related challenges experienced by employers in the industry were lower than the state average.

**Skills-related challenges**

Wholesale Trade 50%

Vic Avg 57%

**Adapted new ways of working related to COVID-19**

Wholesale Trade 39%

Vic Avg 45%

**Staff retention challenges**

Wholesale Trade 18%

Vic Avg 26%

## Skills

#### **Finding candidates with the right skills presented the most common skill challenge in the past year. More employers are expecting skills shortages in 2022 than in 2021**

#### Skills shortages

Around one in five employers in the industry expect to face skills shortages in 2022. This was similar to the state average.

**Last 12 months**

Wholesale Trade 16%

Vic Avg 16%

**Next 12 months**

Wholesale Trade 22%

Vic Avg 21%

#### Skills challenges

The top skills challenges reported by employers were the same across all industries. They were

**Finding candidates with the right skills**

Wholesale Trade 45%

Vic Avg 47%

**Adapting to the new ways of working due to COVID-19**

Wholesale Trade 39%

Vic Avg 45%

**Finding job-ready candidates**

Wholesale Trade 33%

Vic Avg 37%

#### Skills needs

Fewer employers in the industry reported needing technical/job-specific skills or workers with the right attitude or mindset compared to the state average.

**Technical/job-specific skills**

Wholesale Trade 62%

Vic Avg 73%.

**The right attitude/mindset**

Wholesale Trade 48%

Vic Avg 50%

**Job-ready skill**

Wholesale Trade 39%

Vic Avg 47%

## Recruitment

Most employers in the industry had undertaken some recruitment activity over the past year and the majority reported experiencing challenges.

Recruitment need

More employers in the industry undertook some form of recruitment over the past 12 months, compared to the state average.

Wholesale Trade 63%

Vic Avg 62%

Recruitment challenges

Fewer employers in the industry reported having difficulties recruiting for particular roles compared to the state average.

Wholesale Trade 72%

Vic Avg 76%

Type of challenge

The most common challenges faced by employers were related to the number, experience and job-specific skills of candidates.

**Few applicants**

Wholesale Trade 63%

Vic Avg 63%

**Candidates lacked relevant experience**

Wholesale Trade 49%

Vic Avg 50%

**Candidates lacked relevant technical/job-specific skills**

Wholesale Trade 50%

Vic Avg 47%

## Training

More than half of employers in the industry engaged in some form of staff training.

**Engagement in training**

More employers in the industry used internal training or both internal and external training (41% compared to 37% state average). Fewer used external training only.

**Internal training**

Wholesale Trade 20%

Vic Avg 17%

**External training**

Wholesale Trade 38%

Vic Avg 45%

**Satisfaction with training**

Satisfaction levels were higher than the state average for improved staff performance, but lower for industry knowledge and price.

**Helped staff do their job better**

Wholesale Trade 83%

Vic Avg 81%

**Trainers had good industry knowledge**

Wholesale Trade 68%

Vic Avg 80%

**Training was high quality**

Wholesale Trade 76%

Vic Avg 76%

**Training was reasonably priced**

Wholesale Trade 69%

Vic Avg 71%

**Skillsets**

Three in five employers said they would consider a skillset (micro-credential or part qualification) rather than a full qualification to upskill their staff.

Wholesale Trade 61%

Vic Avg 61%

## Apprentices, trainees and work placements

Employers continue to make use of apprentices, trainees and work placements to assist them in filling the skills pipeline.

**Apprentices and trainees**

Uptake of apprentices and trainees over the past 12 months was lower than the state average.  
 **Apprenticeship**

Wholesale Trade 13%

Vic Avg 24%

**Traineeship**

Wholesale Trade 13%

Vic Avg 18%

**Challenges**

More employers in the industry reported that there were no barriers to uptake or they did not need any more apprentices or trainees.

**Lack of suitable applicants/people**

Wholesale Trade 13%

Vic Avg 20%

**There are no barriers/challenges**

Wholesale Trade 16%

Vic Avg 17%

**You don’t need more apprentice(s)/trainee(s)**

Wholesale Trade 15%

Vic Avg 13%

**Work placement students**

Fewer employers in the industry took on work placement students (13% compared to 21% for Victoria). The most common type of work placement students were

**University student**

Wholesale Trade 54%

Vic Avg 49%

**Secondary school student as part of work experience**

Wholesale Trade 47%

Vic Avg 41%

**Secondary school student as part of a VET qualification**

Wholesale Trade 18%

Vic Avg 22%

**A VET student**

Wholesale Trade 7%

Vic Avg 19%

**View the complete report here or visit** [Victorian employer skills survey | Victorian Government (www.vic.gov.au)](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-employer-skills-survey)