

# Hiring Difficulties Study: Information Technology

**D**EED's Hiring Difficulties Study looks at select occupations to determine why employers may or may not be having difficulty filling open positions. The first round of the study last fall looked at six occupations.

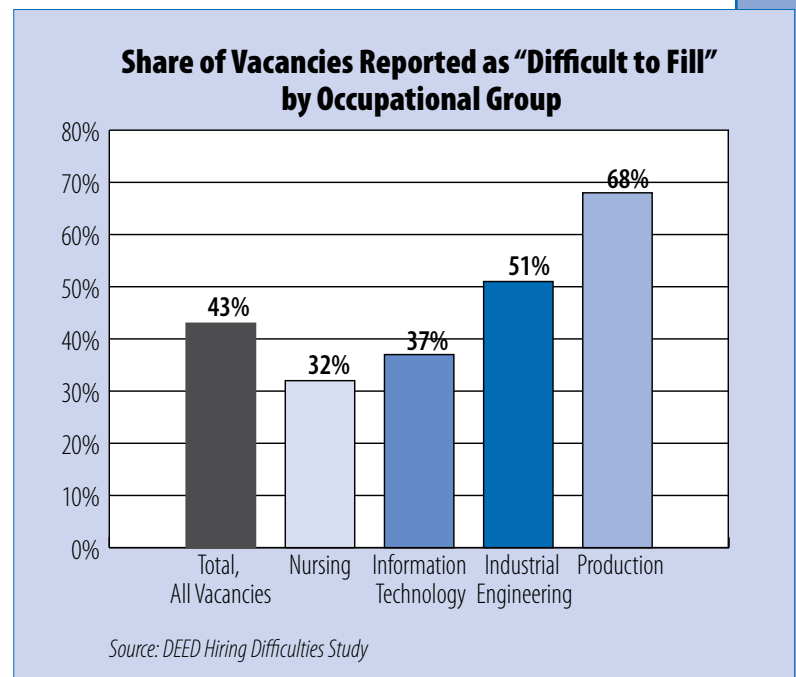
In the latest round, employers were asked about their experiences filling jobs in information technology (IT). Previously, results were obtained for certain engineering, nursing and production occupations. Figure 1 shows the percentage of positions in those fields that were considered difficult to fill by employers.

Hiring difficulties impacted 37 percent of vacancies in IT occupations. The reasons for the difficulties were fairly equally split between those due exclusively to skills deficiencies (37 percent), exclusively to unattractive demand such as uncompetitive wages or other factors (32 percent), or a mix of skills deficiencies and unattractive demand (31 percent).

IT employers said the main supply-side problem was work experience and, importantly, the skills obtained through that experience. The following quotes from employers illustrate that point:

- “It is hard to find people with mainframe skills [older skills like COBOL that are no longer taught]. Also, many people with skills aren't interested in working with older technologies.”
  - “Low unemployment in the IT field creates a lot of competition, therefore — despite the huge response to the ads — we are not getting the right type of candidate. We are either getting candidates with too much experience [overqualified] or zero experience.”
  - “We're looking for someone with specific technical skills and experience in Window Installer, Install, Shield, Visual Studio, and familiarity with image editing. We haven't been able to find anyone who has all of those.”
- “The applicant pool ... is often very small because people tend to have more of a general skill set compared to the specialized skill set that we need.”

FIGURE 1



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- “We're looking for someone with specific technical skills

### Survey Quick Facts for IT Occupations

- Period: Based on vacancies open during fall of 2012
- Response rate: 70 percent (122 establishments with 559 estimated vacancies responded to the phone survey).
- Occupations surveyed: software developers (systems software), software developers (applications), computer user support specialists, computer network support specialists.



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