

SA sectors lacking critical skills

SEVERAL sectors in South Africa's economy are experiencing critical skill shortages, with information and technology, engineering, finance and health the most affected, a recent critical skills survey by Xpatweb shows.

The survey comes against the backdrop of the official unemployment rate rising to 29% in the second quarter of the year, according to Statistics SA, the highest it has been since the launch of a quarterly labour force survey 11 years ago.

The Xpatweb survey shows that the country is in desperate need of information and communications technology (ICT) specialists, engineers, artisans, senior financial executives, health sector workers, executive managers, specialists and academics, mining executives, risk managers and foreign language speakers.

"IT specialists and engineers remain top of the list of skills that are most difficult to find.

"Occupations in high demand in terms of the health sector, artisans, finance and ICT specialist have all increased this year," it said.

It cited World Health Organisation data showing South Africa had an average of one doctor and one nurse per 1 000 patients. Xpatweb said IT specialists were becoming highly sought after in the wake of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), with a report published by the World Economic Forum showing that 35% of skills considered important in today's workforce would have changed over the next five years.

"By 2020, the fourth industrial revolution will have brought us advanced robotics and autonomous transport, artificial intelligence and machine learning, advanced materials, biotechnology and genomics," it said.

Xpatweb said South Africa had a shortfall of about 40 000 qualified artisans in 2017. | African News Agency (ANA)