

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Student Counsellor | | Queensland |
| ASCO Code: 2513-19 | April 2007 | |
| Labour market rating | No Shortage | |
| Comment: | | |

Occupational demand

Student counsellors provide counselling assistance to students in areas such as planning their studies and future careers, dealing with their personal and family problems, and overcoming learning-related and behavioural issues. They can be employed in public or private schools, government departments, and vocational or higher education institutions and are employed as consultants in some cases. Industry contacts indicate that demand for student counsellors has grown in recent years, along with increasing community expectations of support for students. Information from government sources and Independent Schools Queensland indicates that there are more than 1800 education institutions at all levels operating in the State. The number of employed student counsellors is considerably less than that, with the 2001 Census recording a total of 772 in Queensland, 74 per cent of whom were employed in the public sector. Census data also show that 60 per cent of Queensland's employed student counsellors were aged 45 years or more, indicating that demand may increase sharply in coming years as retirees need to be replaced.

Occupational supply

There are several entry paths to this occupation. Some student counsellors have formal qualifications in psychology, social work or other social welfare and have subsequently specialised in counselling students. More commonly, student counsellors have a bachelor degree qualification in education and an appropriate postgraduate qualification in counselling. Given this situation, new supply to the profession through local education is hard to quantify. Direct international migration to Queensland does not appear to be a significant source of supply, with overseas arrivals and departures data indicating a net gain to the State of only seven self-identified student counsellors in 2005-06. Student counsellors who perform any teaching activities in Queensland are required to be registered with the Queensland College of Teachers, and the College advises that some schools consider only candidates who are registered teachers.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

Very few vacancies for student counsellors were advertised in Queensland within the target period for this year's survey. Employers stressed that recruitment often relies on internal staff development, 'word of mouth' and attracting student counsellors from other employers. Among those vacancies that were included in the survey, one third were filled within six weeks of advertising. More than 70 per cent of the applicants for these vacancies were considered unsuitable, mainly because of their lack of specific skills or workplace experience needed to undertake the role properly. However, general canvassing of potential employers indicated a much more positive outlook, with nearly all contacts confident of meeting any need for skilled student counselling through a combination of recruitment, staff allocation and the use of external resources. Industry contacts said that experienced teachers who have additional qualifications in student counselling are especially valuable in schools.

Labour market outlook

Student counsellors form a small but growing occupation in Queensland. The number of students in the Queensland education system should continue to increase over the next few years, especially as Queensland's population is expected to continue growing strongly. Demand for student counsellors is expected to increase in line with this, and demand growth may pick up in coming years as more retiring counsellors need to be replaced. However, shortages in this profession are not apparent at present and are unlikely to emerge over the coming year.