

<b>Clinical Psychologist</b>		<b>Queensland</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 2514-11	April 2008	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment:</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

Clinical psychologists are trained in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and psychological problems, and may specialise in forensic, health or neuropsychology. They are employed predominantly in hospitals, medical services and private practice. Demand for clinical psychologists in Queensland has been advancing as the State's population continues to grow and age and as mental health problems gain focus and recognition. Recent Commonwealth Government reforms to Medicare funding for psychological services have also contributed to high demand for clinical psychologists, with the Australian Psychological Society reporting that 72 percent of the clients accessing this funding as first time users of psychology services.

### **Occupational supply**

Formal entry to this profession is via the completion of a four-year bachelor degree with a major in psychology, followed by an accredited two-year postgraduate qualification in clinical studies or two years supervised practice. Registration with the Psychologists Board of Queensland is mandatory. In June 2008, there were 4746 psychologists registered in Queensland, which is an increase of 377 registrations over the previous year. Data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations show that commencements in postgraduate clinical studies have been increasing steadily, growing from an intake of 77 in 2002 to 199 enrolments in 2006. Over the same period, completions grew from 50 to 78. To attract more graduates to this profession, the Commonwealth Government increased postgraduate clinical psychology allocations to Queensland universities by 45 in 2007, and expanded scholarship programs.

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

This year's survey shows 43 per cent of vacancies for clinical psychologists were filled within six weeks of advertising. Employers considered 83 per cent of the applicants to be unsuitable because they did not have the requisite experience for the advertised role or they did not have sufficient qualifications. In most cases, contacts from this study attributed the basis of the current shortage to the increasing propensity for clinical psychologists to be self-employed rather than be engaged as an employee. However, various sectors reported specific conditions that are compounding their difficulties. For example, employers from the community sector advised they are unable to compete with the conditions and level of remuneration offered in the public sector. Organisations aiming to employ graduates reported being restricted by a shortage of senior clinical psychologists to act as supervisors and employers who had previously sponsored clinical psychologists from overseas stated the cost and duration of the process failed to meet their immediate needs. Other respondents noted the educational requirements for clinical psychologists are considerable and this may be dissuading psychology undergraduates from further study. Contacts anticipate demand will increase and some foresee a change in emphasis from treatment to prevention, which may contribute to shortages due to the lack of clinical psychologists with this expertise.

### **Labour market outlook**

Given the ageing and growth of Queensland's population, strong and growing demand for clinical psychologists looks set to continue. While supply from education has increased steadily, the number of students entering the profession has failed to meet current demand. As such, the labour market for clinical psychologists in Queensland is in State-wide shortage and without significant increases in either student or immigration numbers, the shortage is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.