

AN AUSTRALIA WIDE COMPARISON OF SCHOOL COUNSELLOR / PSYCHOLOGIST GUIDANCE SERVICES 2008

Compiled by the AGCA National Executive

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Title

School Counsellor, Senior School Counsellor

Entry Requirements

Eligibility for registration as a psychologist in the ACT, a Dip Ed, successful teaching experience, personal suitability as demonstrated at interview.

Pre-Service Training

No training course is currently available in the ACT.

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

Regular training opportunities are offered by the counselling section of the Department.

Location

School counsellors are based in schools and senior counsellors are office based.

Tenure

Permanent, although 4 psychologists (without teaching qualifications) employed on contract in 2008.

Total Establishment

1 Assistant Manager, 5 Senior Counsellors, 45 FTE positions for School Counsellors (though not all positions are currently filled)

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

Approximately 1: 850

Salary

School Counsellors are paid up to \$71,700 (approx)

Senior School Counsellors up to \$83,500 (approx).

Conditions

School counsellors work school hours and conditions. Senior counsellors currently work office hours and have school holiday conditions.

Supervision Structure

School counsellors receive administrative and professional supervision from the senior counsellor in their district. Senior counsellors receive supervision from the assistant manager. There are no formal supervision arrangements for the assistant manager. Intern psychologists are supervised for registration purposes by a senior counsellor (usually of their choice if possible).

Comments

The ACT is having enormous difficulty attracting suitably qualified personnel to the school counselling service. In 2008, 4 psychologists with no teaching qualifications are being employed as a trial in an attempt to address this shortfall.

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Title

School Psychologist, Senior School Psychologist, School Counsellors

Entry requirements

School Psychologists: A teaching credential and at least 2 years of successful teaching experience; A four year Psychology degree; Registration with the Psychologist's Registration Board of the NT.

For School Counsellors: A qualification sufficient for registration with either the ACA, the Psych. Reg. Board, ASWA, etc.

Pre-Service Training

Nothing specific.

Professional Learning Offered by Employer.

Location

School Counsellor positions are school based.

Tenure

School Psychologist: All positions are now on contract. Some people hold permanent positions from previous employment conditions.

School Counsellors: Contract, usually for 3 years but negotiable within a 3 year period.

Total Establishment

19 School Counsellors, 2 Senior. School Psychologists, 8 School Psychologists (However, rarely are all positions filled)

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

Approximately 1:2500 when all positions are full

Salary

School Counsellor: up to \$71,933

School Psychologist: \$77,584

Snr School Psych.: \$81,204

Conditions

Public sector administrative hours and conditions apply.

Supervision Structure

No formal supervision structure. Snr School Psychs have some informal supervisory responsibilities.

Comments

A major challenge exists for the NT in attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff who have to be sourced from interstate as NT tertiary institutions do not offer training at the required level.

NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Title

School Counsellor (SC), District Guidance Officer (DGO), Principal Education Officer (PEO)

Entry Requirements

Teaching Qualifications and successful teaching experience, A degree with a major in psychology, Post graduate qualifications in school counselling, registration as a psychologist (currently desirable), personal suitability as demonstrated at interview

Pre-Service Training

Approximately 40-50 suitably qualified teachers are sponsored each year by DET to completed post graduate qualifications in school counselling respectively offered at the University of Wollongong and at the University of Western Sydney. Double degree courses in Psychology and Education are offered by Sydney University & Charles Sturt University, Bathurst.

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

Regular training & development opportunities are offered by both State & Regional Offices. Counsellors and DGOs are able to access school professional learning funds to attend these programs.

Location

School Counsellors and DGOs are school-based and have teacher hours and conditions. PEOs are non-school based, and have administrative hours and conditions.

Tenure

Permanent

Total Establishment

678 Counsellors 113 DGOs 1 PEOs (ie 1 per region across the state)

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

Counsellors provide service to a district of schools, usually a high school and feeder primary schools. The average ratio of counsellors to students is 1 SC: 1,050 students.

Salary

S C: up to \$85,000(approx)

DGO: up to \$95,000 (approx.)

Conditions:

School conditions, as relate to teaching awards

Supervision Structure

SCs and DGOs receive administrative supervision from the base school principal. Teams of up to seven SCs receive professional supervision/ support from DGOs. All DGOs in a region receive professional supervision/support from a PEO.

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Title

Guidance Officer and Senior Guidance Officer

Entry Requirements

Full registration as a teacher in Queensland. Minimum of 2 years full time, supervised experience with children/young people in education, child protection or counselling environment, and any one of the following:

(i) One year minimum full time or pt equivalent coursework Masters, majoring in guidance and counselling; or

(ii) Full registration as a psychologist within Queensland in accordance with the Psychologists Registration Act of 2001 or a fourth year qualification in psychology that will enable full registration within Queensland following completion of a Supervised Practice Program.

Pre-Service Training

Minimum full time (or p/t equivalent) Masters, majoring in guidance or counselling.

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

As part of their responsibility, GOs are required to participate in relevant professional development, and prepare and implement professional and personal skill development programs and in-service activities for administrators, teachers and parents.

Location

Education Qld prefers that school and regional based classified officers serve a minimum of two years from the date of appointment to the position and location.

Tenure

Persons having permanent positions are tenured. Contract and temporary positions are subject to discretionary appointment and do not always receive equivalent benefits as permanent staff

Total Establishment

There are about 350 combined GO and SGO positions across the state.

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

1:1,300 in secondary schools, which varies across primary school situations

Salary

General Teacher: Proposed Band 5 - guidance officer

Conditions

Normal School Hours

Supervision Structure

All GOs are required to participate in regular individual or group supervision sessions provided by SGO's or an appropriate officer nominated by the SGO.

Comments

The generic title is Guidance Officer, however, the following titles will be used on the HR data base: GO (P-12), GO (Psychologist) and GO (Intensive Behaviour Support) with GOs able to indicate a preference for working in Primary or Secondary sector.

QUEENSLAND NON-GOVERNMENT/INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Title

Until recently most used 'School Counsellor', however, within the Catholic System now 'Guidance Counsellor' is the designated title.

Entry Requirements

The Teacher's Award has an addendum which specifies mandatory requirement for appointment to School Counsellor positions which included a minimum (9 years) teaching (presumably preservice training years). A Master's degree in guidance and counselling is required as is eligibility for ordinary membership in QGCA or the APS. Registered Psychologist's without teacher training are employed but under the School Officer's Award with different conditions and salary.

Pre-Service Training

As with Ed. Qld. An entitlement covered by the Teacher's Award

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

Catholic System: Until recently, 10 days were set aside for professional development. This has recently been reduced to 4 days at which attendance is mandatory. Attendance at the Catholic School Counsellors' Conference is also mandatory.

Location

In schools

Tenure

As with Education Queensland

Total Establishment

100-150 (est.)

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

1 EFT position equates to 350-900 students at secondary level Over 900 students – additional positions appointed. Varies in primary schools. One person may also serve a cluster of schools.

Salary

Has parity with the state system

Conditions

Guidance Counsellors work normal school hours, psychologists without teaching training are employed under the School Officer's award and may be required to work 40 hours/48 weeks. (However, the latter is generally relaxed). The School Officer's award is significantly less in salary.

Supervision Structure

Within the Catholic system, 3 days per term are mandated to be provided for supervision: 2 are generally 'peer' supervision situations, and 1 involves a face to face discussion with a CEO supervisor.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Title

Guidance Officer - work predominantly in schools.

Psychologist, Early Childhood – work in preschools.

DECS also employs "school counsellors" in many primary and all secondary schools - all are teachers, many of whom have no formal training or qualifications in counselling or psychology

Entry Requirements

GO PO2* - eligibility for registration as a teacher; eligibility for registration as a psychologist.

GO PO3 - registration as a psychologist; two years teaching experience or equivalent

EC psych PO1 - registration as psychologist.

EC psych PO2 – registration as a psychologist; experience with young children.

*Professionals in the public service are classified from PO1 through PO5

Pre-Service Training

Eligibility requirements as above

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

On the job induction GO - PO2 supervision towards registration.

GO and ECP regular statewide PD program for 2 days a term; minimal subsidy for attendance at outside PD and conferences.

District PD events

Location

District Office based. Public Service Management Act employees and conditions for both,

Tenure

Permanent or temporary

Total Establishment

GO - 43.4 FTE in the field in 2008, with 3.1 FTE in specialist positions.

ECP - 8.9 FTE in the field

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

GOs and ECPs provide service to a district of sites (usually about 60 preschools and schools per district).

GO ratio - average is 1:3779

ECP ratio - average is 1:1944

Salary

PO1 - \$43470 - 55890

PO2 - \$58995 - 65723

PO3 - \$68310 - 72450

PO4 - \$75038 - 82024 (only one state-wide GO position has this classification)

Conditions

Public Service hours and conditions - 37.5 hour week, 20 days recreation leave a year.

Supervision Structure

As under Professional Learning

Comments

Recruitment and retention of staff remains a challenge with unfilled positions, particularly in the country. Limited professional support, particularly in the country. No career structure within school psychology work. No professional leadership positions exist within the bureaucracy, there is poor salary relativity compared to teachers given Guidance Officer dual qualifications and non-eligibility for school holidays.

The **Catholic Education Office** in S.A. buys in psychology services.

Independent schools have psychologists and counsellors employed under various conditions.

TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Title

Guidance Officer. The title will soon change to School Psychologist

Entry Requirements

1. Permanent employees must have teacher qualifications and be a state registered psychologist (or be under supervision for registration).

2. The requirement for 'non-permanent' staff is registration as a psychologist (or under supervision for registration) with teacher qualifications not being mandatory.

Pre-Service Training

1. For permanent employees, at least a four year degree in psychology, including honours plus teacher qualifications (B Teach or B Ed) plus registration as a psychologist.

2 For non-permanent employees, a M Psychology in addition to registration as a psychologist.

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

Non specific professional learning is offered, but psychologists can attend general teacher professional development activities. The AEU have offered 2 days of PL for school psychologists in 2007 and 2008. PL is usually offered after hours.

Location

School based: Teacher award and conditions apply.

Tenure

Permanent and temporary.

Total Establishment

36 school psychologists

8 senior school psychologists

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

76,000 students, which makes the psychologist student ratio approximately 1 :1,800

Salary

\$39,000: Non teaching psychologists

\$40,000 - \$65,000: Guidance Officers

\$70,000: Senior Guidance Officers

Conditions

Teacher award and conditions

Supervision Structure

Senior school psychologists are line managers to school psychologists. Managers of school support are line managers of senior psychologists.

Comments

The Tasmanian Department of Education has undergone structural changes and now operates with four Learning Services (geographically determined) Each Learning Service has two senior psychologists attached.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Title

Guidance Officer, SSSO (Student Support Services Officer), psychologists (outsourced).

Entry Requirements

Registration with Psychologists Registration Board (Vic)

Pre-Service Training

As required by Psychologists' Registration Board

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

Generally, this varies according to particular region - regional PD entitlement for one day a term + PD allowance (\$256-\$500 EFT). Tied to the Guidance Officer employee's annual Performance Plan.

Location

School based, mostly as individual workers in schools

Tenure

There are three principal modes: permanent, contract, and out-sourced. In 2008, all applications for special needs funding are out-sourced.

Total Establishment

Figures are unavailable and difficult to estimate partly because of the variety of employment modes, and negotiated arrangements across the state. There is currently no central state-wide coordinating agency with responsibility for school psychology, guidance and counselling services.

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

Not available

Salary

AH3 \$58,000-66,000, AH4, contract

Conditions

Public service conditions, based on the 4 weeks leave a year model. Additionally, there are some private arrangements made with individual schools or school clusters.

Supervision Structure

Professional, as is negotiated. Generally some 'ad hoc' peer professional supervision develops, but nothing is formalised. Line management supervision is to the principal in the host school, or a school principal panel.

Comments

The career structure for guidance officers continues to disintegrate, though the State Budget of 2008-2009 offers modest positive developments. For some years now, support services within school clusters have been managed by cost-sensitive principals with devolved global budgets, who can decide whether to employ a DE & ECD psychologist, to out-source the position (i.e. hire someone externally), purchase some specific services, or alternatively, to spend funds on some other pressing budget line instead. Conditions vary widely across networks on a regional and a state-wide basis. Experienced psychologists are seen as 'expensive'. In 2007, the Early Childhood Development area (includes pre-schools) was structurally transferred to the Department of Education (from the Health Department), but it is unclear what this might mean for guidance officers, or psychologists.

VICTORIAN NON-GOVERNMENT AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Title

Counsellor, educational psychologists, social workers

Entry Requirements

No uniform qualifications

Pre-Service Training

No uniform requirement

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

No uniform system, many schools are members of the Careers and Counselling association which provides PD for workers in private schools AISV, private schools association also provides some PD. Workers usually have a PD allowance.

Location

School

Tenure

Permanent, contracted for time period or outsourced

Total Establishment

Varies

Conditions

School conditions

Supervision Structure

Supervision may be expected and provided within negotiated work location arrangements.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Title

School Psychologist, Senior School Psychologist.

Creation of a new 'Advanced Skills School Psychologist' position is currently being negotiated.

Entry Requirements

A 4-year psychology degree plus a teaching qualification (eg Bachelor of Education or Graduate Diploma of Education). Eligibility for registration with the Psychologists' Board of Western Australia.

Pre-Service Training

Psychology degree offered at all W.A. universities. Graduate Diploma in Education (School Psychology major) offered only at the University of Western Australia, however teaching qualifications majoring in other areas are equally recognised.

Professional Learning Offered by Employer

Induction program offered to newly appointed school psychologists on commencement and during first 2 to 3 years of service. Includes suicide prevention, critical incident response, relevant policies and procedures, etc.

Location

School psychologists are located in Education Districts across W.A. and allocated a number of contact schools. Primary school psychologists tend to be based at the District Education Office while high school psychologists are usually accommodated at their contact high school.

Tenure

Permanent and fixed-term. Permanency generally gained following 3 years of satisfactory service in a country location.

Ratio by Numbers of Students Serviced

The agreed school psychologist: student ratio is 1:2000 (maximum). This varies, however, particularly according to distance/remoteness factors and school purchased time, so may drop to 1:1200.

Salary

School psychologist: \$50,655 - \$74,884.

Senior school psychologist: \$79,311-\$81,071.

Conditions

Employed under the School Education Act. Required to work 7.5 hours/day during normal teaching periods and 4 weeks per year when teachers are on vacation.

Supervision Structure

Line management is provided by a Student Services Manager (Public Service Level 7) – one per country district and two in each metro district. Also a Student Services Area Manager (Public Service Level 8) - one for each cluster area (metro district plus two or three country districts). Supervision for Psychologists' Registration is coordinated within service areas and generally provided by Senior School Psychologists.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA NON GOVERNMENT / INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Title

Non Government Schools Psychology Service (available to all Catholic and independent primary schools and high schools - though not all choose to use the service): Psychologist, Senior Psychologist.

Independent Schools: School Psychologist, School Counsellor.

Entry Requirements

As for government schools, however some independent schools do not require a teaching qualification.

Pre-Service Training

Similar to government schools school psychologists

Location

Non Government Schools Psychology Service: psychologists based at one of four metro office locations. One psychologist allocated to each of the following country locations: Broome, Kalgoorlie and Albany, with two based in Bunbury.

Independent Schools: psychologists based at their contact school.

Tenure

Non-Government School Psychology Services: Short term or 5 year contract.

Independent schools: Permanent or contract.