

SOCIAL WORK

Career Information

Graduate Opportunities

Social Workers aim to help people thrive in and with their environment, promote positive relationships and work towards creating a just and equitable society. They are concerned with the wellbeing of individuals, families, groups and communities, and they promote respect and diversity in our society.

Social Work career pathways are varied. Depending on the field of practice chosen, Social Workers utilise skills and experience in management, education, research, policy development, politics and community planning.



Services which Social Workers provide include therapy, casework, advocacy, mediation or group work to individuals, couples or families to address issues such as mental health, sexual assault, family violence, loss and grief, illness, separation, substance addiction. Social Workers may contribute to policy development and advise governments on welfare issues.

Social Workers may perform the following tasks:

- Counsel individuals through a crisis that may be due to death, illness, relationship breakdown or other reasons
- Provide clients with information about services that can assist them
- Help community groups plan and carry out programs to help themselves
- Research community problems, needs and solutions through client contact and records of welfare and health agencies
- Develop policy and evaluate programs¹

Social Work Positions

JCU Social Work graduates are employed in a diverse range of positions including:

Social worker, child safety officer, family counsellor, family response facilitator, senior adolescent support worker, mental health clinician, disability support worker, youth support coordinator, project officer, foster care case worker, senior policy officer, case manager, and personal support worker².

Social Work Employers

Social work graduates are employed in hospitals, community health centres, early intervention and child protection programs, family support services, schools, employment services, justice, housing, youth, women's refuges, local government, disability, aged-care and mental health services. An increasing number of social workers are now working in private practice.

Employers of JCU Social Work graduates include:

Queensland Health; Headspace; Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services; Department of Defence; Department of Education and Training; Mercy Community Services; Department of Human Services; Anglicare; Community Health Services; Queensland Corrective Services; Mission Australia; UnitingCare Community; Victim Assist Queensland²

Further information on careers in Social Work

- Careers and Study - the [Australian Association of Social Workers](#)
- Social Work Career Profile, Graduate Destination and Starting Salaries - [Graduate Careers Australia](#)
- Labour Market Information – [Job Outlook](#)

Membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)

A Bachelor of Social Work degree from an accredited course is required to become a professional Social Worker.

At present there is no legal registration for social workers in any Australian state or territory. However, the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the professional body that sets standards for social work in Australia, and many jobs require eligibility for membership of AASW.

Graduates of **JCU Bachelor of Social Work** or **JCU Masters of Social Work (Professional Qualifying)** degrees are automatically eligible for full membership of AASW³!

For comprehensive information on all pathway options to membership of the AASW go to [Australian Association of Social Workers](#) site.

Research Employer Expectations

Checking employer websites and online job boards provides you with an understanding of various job titles plus requirements and expectations for potential future positions.

You can then work towards filling any skills, knowledge or experience gaps that you identify so that you are competitive when entering the graduate labour market.

Australia

- [JCU Careerhub](#)
- [Seek social work vacancies](#)
- [Health and Community Jobs](#)
- [Australian Job Search](#)
- [Australian Public Service recruitment](#)
- [Queensland Government Jobs](#)
- [CareCareers](#)
- [Graduate Opportunities](#)

Enhancing Your Employment Prospects

Build Your Professional Networks

Building your networks will increase your knowledge of your profession, grow your reputation with potential future employers and help you identify opportunities.

Network with Professionals

Take advantage of every opportunity to meet professionals. You can ask questions about their work in Social Work and let them get to know you too, which is helpful when you start applying for jobs. Attend the annual JCU Careers Fair, JCU Market Day, Industry Panels, Information Sessions, etc.

Join Your Professional Association

Joining a Professional Association as a student member is an ideal way to gain valuable insight into your future profession, demonstrate interest and meet

people in your field who can support you in developing your career and exploring career and employment opportunities. Associations hold regular professional development and networking events and students are often welcome to join.

Here are some suggestions – there may be others suited to your interests – ask your lecturer.

- [Australian Association of Social Workers](#)
- [Allied Health Professions Australia](#)

Tip: Target potential future employers

Research potential employers, identify opportunities, determine expectations and develop connections. Begin by googling employer groups within your interest area– eg. Aged Care Facilities Australia; Disability Support Agencies in Australia; Drug and Alcohol Services Australia; Queensland Government Departments; Rehabilitation Support Service Providers Australia



Network via Social Media

Careful use of Social Networking – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter will expand your networks and lead to job opportunities. Not only is social media an ideal way to connect with your profession it is also now used by employers to recruit staff and research job applicants.

LinkedIn is fast becoming employers' recruitment hunting ground. In addition most employers will google you when considering you for a position. You need to ensure you maintain a professional online presence – a professional LinkedIn profile is the key way to achieve this.

Gain Career Relevant Experience

Gaining experience before you graduate is essential as employers want to know that you have put the skills and knowledge you have been developing into practice.

Employers are interested in application of your theoretical knowledge and also your **general skills** eg. interpersonal, communication, team skills.

The Bachelor of Social Work places a strong emphasis on professional practice experience, and practical skills are integrated from the third year onwards. In the third and final years of study students participate in **field placements**. However to maximize your graduate employment opportunities you may wish to **gain additional experience** to increase your knowledge and skills and further develop your networks. Think about areas of Social Work that interest you most and seek out **volunteer or paid opportunities** in that area. For example, if you're interested in working in health, you could volunteer with a patient support group. If you wish to develop your counselling skills you could be a Lifeline phone volunteer. [Lifeline](#) provides counselling training.

- [FNQ Volunteers](#)
- [Volunteering North Queensland](#)
- [My Community Directory](#)
- [Townsville City Council Community Directory](#)
- [Cairns City Council Community Directory](#)

Key Job Search strategies

- Be proactive - identify organisations you are interested in
- Check their websites for opportunities, follow their facebook page and if available twitter
- Actively participate on LinkedIn, join relevant groups, connect with professionals, develop an impressive profile

Show Initiative, Be Involved

Employers want to know you can offer more than your educational qualifications. Be proactive, get involved.

- Become a committee member of your local group – think hobbies, volunteer organizations, School P & C, charities, sporting clubs, service clubs etc.
- Undertake extra courses to build your knowledge – check out the [Mental Health Professional Network](#) seminars
- Become involved in community organisations such as [RSPCA](#), [SES](#), [Saint John Ambulance](#) and think about how this experience relates to social Work eg. How pet ownership reduces stress levels, how cyclone damage can have lasting effects on people's sense of security
- Become a **Student Mentor at JCU**
- Become a **JCU Student Ambassador**
- Volunteer at the annual **JCU Careers Fair**
- Volunteer to assist Post Graduate students with their research

Final Word

Graduate success is dependent on your active engagement with your future career throughout all of your degree.

Aim to develop your knowledge, skills, experiences and professional connections so that you can meet employer expectations and be ready to maximize opportunities when they arise.

Visit our website to jcu.edu.au/careers to explore...

Follow us on Facebook and subscribe to our newsletter

- Follow JCU Careers and Employment on Facebook for the latest news.
- Subscribe to the CareerHub Newsletter to be sent a range of job opportunities and news from JCU Careers.

Individual Support

- Our team supports students with their career planning, decision making and job applications. Contact our office to make an appointment.
- During semester visit our **Drop-in desk** on Level 1 in the Library. You can receive feedback on your resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile or ask us a career related question.
Townsville sessions are held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (2 - 3 pm),
Cairns sessions are held on Tuesday and Wednesday (2 - 3 pm)
- Phone and email support is available to external students or students unable to attend an appointment.

Career Action Plan

- The Career Action Plan is a checklist of actions you can take to increase your chances of graduate employment. We have developed specific plans relating to each stage of your student journey.
- The Career Action Plan is available on our website or call into our office for a copy.

CareerHub

- JCU's online job portal. It lists part-time, casual, vacation, volunteer and graduate opportunities. It also lists career events, news and resources.
- Use your JCU username and password to log in.

Career Development Program

- Develop the skills to increase your employability.
- The Program offers a range of self-help career management modules.

Big Interview

- Learn the best interview techniques.
- Practice just about every question you are likely to get in over 20 industries.
- Video your responses and get feedback from your peers.

Develop an Enterprising Mindset – Skills and Attributes for Career Success

- Job markets are becoming more complex and globalized, so employers now target graduates who are innovative thinkers and leaders. This program contains eight self-paced modules to help you gain these key skills and be competitive in the future job market.

Cairns Campus

Phone: (07) 4232 1150

Location: Level 1, Library

Monday to Friday 9 am – 4 pm

Townsville Campus

Phone: (07) 4781 4711

Location: Level 1, Library

Monday to Friday 9 am – 4.30 pm

Email careers@jcu.edu.au
Website jcu.edu.au/careers



References

1. Education Services Australia Ltd. (2016). *Social Worker*. Retrieved 9 January, 2018, <https://myfuture.edu.au/occupations/details?anzsco=271311A>
2. Graduate Careers Australia. (2015). *JCU 2015 AGS Employment Information*. Unpublished survey results.
3. James Cook University. (2016). *Bachelor of Psychological Science*. Retrieved 9 January, 2018, <https://www.jcu.edu.au/courses-and-study/courses/bachelor-of-social-work>