BECOME A SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

Work with students, parents and teachers to look after young people’s welfare and wellbeing

School counsellors enjoy a unique role in the school community. They can make a meaningful difference to a student who may be experiencing challenges at school or home. Overall, they are instrumental in creating a secure and successful learning environment for all students.

If you have a compassionate, empathetic nature and enjoy a genuine rapport with students, teachers and the community, you may thrive in the role of school counsellor.

School counsellors normally work across primary and secondary schools with students from preschool to Year 12, collaborating with teachers to enhance learning outcomes. They also provide counselling and psychological assessment of students with specific needs.

As a school counsellor, you would:

• assess students’ needs using psychological and educational tests, rating scales and observation, and report the results to parents and teachers
• counsel students individually and in groups in a range of educational and mental health areas
• participate in the work of school student welfare and learning support committees
• provide advice to review committees concerning the education of students with special needs
• refer students or their families to other appropriate health and/or welfare agencies as required
• work with parents focusing on the welfare needs of their children
• respond, as part of a team, to calls from schools experiencing major critical incidents
• report and make recommendations when students have received a long suspension from school.

Getting there

To become a school counsellor, you must have:

• completed training as either a primary or secondary teacher
• a current full-time approval to teach with the Department
• undertaken a four year sequence of studies in psychology which is approved by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)

• completed a Department approved school counsellor training program which includes psychological assessment of school-aged students, child and adolescent psychology and a Department approved practicum in schools
• eligibility for registration (full or provisional) as a psychologist in NSW
• the equivalent of 2 years / 400 days of successful classroom teaching
• demonstrated, at interview with the Department, successful teaching experience and personal, professional and academic suitability to work as a school counsellor
• cleared probity checks to work with students in a school setting.

You may be employed as a school counsellor if you fulfil all the above or are able to demonstrate equivalent training and experience.

Other pathways to becoming a school counsellor are available for suitably qualified teachers who wish to undertake further training through a Department sponsored training programs.

• Experienced teachers who have completed an APAC approved psychology major may be sponsored to undertake postgraduate psychology study prior to appointment to school counsellor positions in areas of staffing need in metropolitan or rural NSW.
• Experienced teachers who have completed their first year of an APAC approved psychology course may be sponsored to undertake the remainder of the course and the required postgraduate psychology study prior to appointment to school counsellor positions in areas of staffing need in metropolitan or rural NSW.
• Graduates who have completed a NSW Institute of Teachers approved teaching qualification and an APAC approved psychology major may be sponsored to undertake postgraduate psychology study prior to appointment to school counsellor positions in rural NSW.

Achievement of undergraduate results at the level required by the delivering universities for entry to postgraduate programs is a condition of sponsorship.

Further information about the requirements to become a teacher in NSW, including approved initial teacher education programs, can be found on the NSW Institute of Teachers website at www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au.

Contact the Retraining Unit on 1300 300 634 to find out more information about School Counsellor Retraining Programs or visit www.teach.nsw.edu.au/retraining.