Qualifications and registration

Organisational psychologists have usually completed six years full-time university training. This includes, but is not restricted to, postgraduate study in a recognised organisational psychology training program, plus further supervised practice as an organisational psychologist. A list of accredited organisational psychology courses is available at www.apac.psychology.org.au.

All practising psychologists are legally required to be registered with the Psychologists Registration Board in their State or Territory. As of 2010, they will be required to be registered with the Psychology Board of Australia. This is to ensure they meet specified standards of competence and ethical practice.

In addition, psychologists follow strict guidelines for professional conduct that cover client privacy and confidentiality. Ethical codes are set and monitored by the APS and have been developed to safeguard the welfare of recipients of psychological services and the integrity of the psychology profession.

Locating an organisational psychologist

- Use the APS online referral service ‘Find a Psychologist’ (www.findapsychologist.org.au) to locate an organisational psychologist by performing a search and selecting issues most commonly found in the ‘work/community’ category.
- Look for the APS listing under ‘psychologists’ in the Yellow Pages.

APS College of Organisational Psychologists

The APS College of Organisational Psychologists focuses on the dual goals of promoting organisational effectiveness and employee wellbeing. The College seeks to achieve these goals through providing ongoing professional development activities, developing resources and guidelines, helping psychologists with issues that affect their practice, and maintaining standards that are used as part of accreditation processes.

Membership of the College is restricted to psychologists who have completed specialised training and experience as outlined above. To retain College membership, practitioners are required to undertake regular professional development activities in the area of organisational psychology.

For information regarding the College go to www.groups.psychology.org.au/cop.
What is an organisational psychologist?

Organisational psychology is the science of people at work. Organisational psychologists analyse organisations and their people, and devise strategies to recruit, motivate, develop, change and inspire.

Organisational psychologists work with organisations, teams and individual employees to improve their performance and increase effectiveness and productivity in the workplace. They strive to enhance people’s wellbeing by improving their experience at work.

Organisational psychologists base their practice on science, drawing on psychological research and tested strategies to influence how people act, think and feel at work. This scientific approach provides confidence that methods produce measurable, replicable and often more cost-effective results.

In the workplace, organisational psychologists can play a number of critical roles generally associated with employee performance, including Organisational Development (OD) Manager, Human Resource (HR) Manager, HR Consultant, Personnel Director, Learning and Development Manager, Trainer, OD Consultant, and Researcher.

Organisational psychology covers a broad range of disciplines including industrial and organisational psychology (I/O psychology), work psychology, occupational psychology, personnel psychology, human resource management and development, ergonomics, human factors, vocational psychology, managerial psychology, coaching, and consumer psychology.

Areas of specialisation
Organisational psychologists have specialised skills and knowledge in the following areas.

Workforce planning and role definition
- Identification and planning of workforce requirements
- Structuring divisions, departments and teams to suit the organisation’s goals
- Systematic identification of the knowledge, skills and abilities required for specific jobs

Recruitment and selection
- Development of selection criteria for jobs and identification of the best assessment tools
- Assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities, and potential and personal fit for specific jobs using techniques such as assessment centres, psychological testing and behavioural interviewing

Leadership and talent management
- Provision of advice and support to organisational leaders in relation to how they lead, engage and motivate their people
- Establishment of a talent management framework, including succession planning, to identify and better manage critical roles, critical people, strengths and gaps
- Introduction of programs to develop and retain top performers and next generation leaders

Coaching, mentoring and career development
- Provision of individual assistance, coaching and mentoring to improve work performance
- Design and implementation of career development processes for an organisation, along with individual career planning and vocational assessment

Workplace advice and advocacy
- Provision of advice to government, employers, employees and unions on social psychological aspects of issues such as industrial relations, human resources and occupational health and safety

Change management
- Design, implementation and evaluation of people-related change management
- Development of programs to help leaders better manage change and drive performance improvement in their part of the organisation e.g., handling change fatigue, building resilience

Organisational development
- Design, implementation and evaluation of programs to improve organisational performance and employee experiences
- Design of organisational structures, processes and incentives to fuel organisational prosperity

Measuring employee opinions and other workplace research
- Development and analysis of surveys of employees or clients/customers
- Research such as identifying which work behaviours predict future success

Performance management
- Design, implementation and evaluation of performance management systems that link in with business strategies
- Development of employee incentive programs to drive desired behaviours and results

Wellbeing, stress and work-life balance
- Development of programs to improve employee wellbeing, commitment and engagement
- Development of policies and practices to enable better management of the work-home interface

Occupational health and safety
- Development of policy and programs in employee assistance, rehabilitation, stress management and health promotion

Human resources program evaluation
- Evaluation of an organisation’s people-related programs and practices to assess operational and strategic impact

Consumer behaviour and marketing
- Application of customer behaviour insights to improve business processes and systems
- Development of branding and communications to align an organisation’s processes, culture and values with the external brand message