

SOCIAL WORK CAREER SNAPSHOT

BOOST YOUR EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

Explore your options, clarify your career goals

Build your networks

Gain course relevant experience

Fine tune your job application skills

Show initiative, engage in extra-curricular activities and stand out

For further ideas access [Career Ready Plan](#)

Graduate Opportunities

'Social Workers assess the social needs of individuals, families and groups, assist and empower people to develop and use the skills and resources needed to resolve social and other problems and further human wellbeing and human rights, social justice and social development'.

Source: [Labour Market Insights](#) December 2022.

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, group work to individuals, couples or families to address issues such as mental health, sexual assault, family violence, loss and grief, illness, separation and substance addiction. Social Workers may contribute to

policy development and advise governments on welfare issues.

The **Australian Association of Social Workers** provides a thorough explanation of the scope of social work practice. Check:

- [AASW Careers in Social Work](#)
- [AASW The scope of Social Work Practice](#)

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 worker.

JCU Employment Outcomes

JCU Alumni (graduates) on LinkedIn

The James Cook University LinkedIn page provides information on over 1500 JCU Alumni who have listed Social Work in their **LinkedIn** profiles.

Investigate their LinkedIn profiles to identify their career paths following completion of their studies, including job titles and current and past employers.

The top employers of JCU Social Work graduates listed on LinkedIn include: James Cook University; Queensland Health; Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, Queensland Department of Education; Neami National and Centacare North Qld.

Source: [JCU Alumni LinkedIn](#) December 2022.

The Australian government [ComparEd](#) site provides graduate outcome information for the JCU Bachelor of Social Work and all other Australian Social Work degrees.

Graduate Employment Bachelor of Social Work

	James Cook University	National Average
Full-time employment	83.5% 91 responses	69.4%
Found employment	91.4% 105 responses	84.9%
Continues to full-time study	7.9% 101 responses	9.3%

Data source: Graduate Outcomes Survey 2019-2021
Source: [ComparEd](#), retrieved December 2022

Professional Membership

The JCU Bachelor of Social Work and the JCU Masters of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) degrees are accredited by the [Australian Association of Social Workers \(AASW\)](#). Graduates are eligible for full membership of AASW.

AASW is the professional body that sets standards for social work in Australia, and many jobs require eligibility for membership of AASW.

Consider applying for **student membership** of the AASW whilst at university.

This 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.

Student members have access to industry news and trends, professional development, and networking events.

For information on membership options go to the [Australian Association of Social Workers](#).

Job Opportunities

Currently the **highest ranked industry for employed people** in the Cairns and Townsville regions is **Health Care and Social Assistance**.

12,800 (f/t) 9,500 (p/t) people in the Townsville region and 13,300 (f/t) 8,500 (p/t) people in the Cairns region are employed in this industry area.

Source: *Labour Market Information Portal, Employment by Industry December 2022.*

Researching job vacancy listings will give you an understanding of the range of employment **opportunities** available for Social Work graduates and an insight into employer expectations.

You can **work towards filling skills, knowledge and experience gaps you identify** to ensure you are competitive when entering the graduate labour market.

Job Sites:

- [JCU CareerHub](#)
- [Seek](#)
- [APS Jobs Australian Public Service](#)
- [Smart Jobs Queensland Government](#)
- [CareCareers](#)
- [Queensland Health](#)
- [LinkedIn Jobs](#)
- [CareerOne](#)

Graduate Recruitment Sites

- [Queensland Government Graduate Portal](#)
- [Australian Public Service Graduate Portal](#)
- [GradAustralia](#)
- [GradConnection](#)

Employers' Websites and Social Media

Employer websites, Facebook pages and LinkedIn accounts provide information on job opportunities and current topics of interest for Social Work professionals.

Research employer groups and fields of interest on **LinkedIn** e.g. Aged Care Facilities Australia; Disability Support Agencies in Australia; Drug and Alcohol Services Australia, or Social Work, Community Development, and Mental Health.

Career Relevant Experience

The JCU Social Work program places a strong emphasis on **professional practice experience and skill development**.

Maximize every opportunity presented in your degree to develop your skills, knowledge and expertise.

Reflect on your experiences and keep records of tasks tackled and skills developed. This will greatly assist your future job applications and interview responses.

In addition to your field placements, it is recommended you actively **seek additional social work-related volunteer or paid opportunities** to expand your experience and professional networks.

Volunteer Work

Volunteering is an opportunity to give to the community, grow your professional and community networks and demonstrate extra commitment to future employers and clients.

You could start with volunteering on campus as a [Student Mentor](#). Think of areas of Social Work that interest you and seek out volunteer 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 or crisis support experience, you could be a [Lifeline Crisis Supporter](#).

Volunteering opportunities are available through the Red Cross, Beyond Blue, Cancer Council, Centacare, Vinnies, Food Rescue Initiative, Orange Sky, Indigenous Community Volunteers, Lifeline, and PCYC,

Further opportunities are advertised through:

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

Graduate Programs

Graduate programs are paid structured professional development positions offered by large organisations and government departments to recent graduates.

Successful applicants are provided on the job training and mentoring within the organisation. Candidates are usually **recruited throughout their final year of study** for commencement in the following year.

While many graduate programs will be tailored towards a particular degree, a number of organisations will run graduate programs recruiting from a wide variety of degrees.

Investigate deeper and you may discover an exciting opportunity not previously considered.

Graduate programs are advertised through employers' websites and social media (e.g. the Australian, Queensland and other state government graduate portals) and through the graduate recruitment sites:

- [GradAustralia](#)
- [GradConnection](#)

Competitive Edge

Employers are interested in what you can bring to the position and the organization that will set you apart from other applicants.

Be proactive, get involved and stand out from the crowd.

- Become involved in community activities, organisations, and events. Employers value community engagement.
- Undertake extra courses to build your knowledge. Check out the [Mental Health Professional Network](#) seminars or the professional development offered by AASW, e.g. [Social Work Online Training \(SWOT\)](#) modules. Keep a record of your training on your LinkedIn and resume
- Consider joining [JCU Social Work students](#) or [JCU Cairns Social Work Students](#).