

Industrial and Organisational Psychology

Industrial and Organisational (I-O) psychology is the scientific study of the behaviour of people in workplaces and organisations. Research methods in psychology are applied to issues of critical relevance to organisations, including careers, talent management, coaching, assessment, selection, training, organisational development, person-machine interface (ergonomics) organisational design, change management, performance, behavioural economics, job stress management and work-life balance. Theory and practice are both involved.

I-O psychologists are dedicated to applying psychology to people in the workplace. They work with leaders, teams and individuals to enhance the understanding and measurement of human behaviour to improve engagement, employers' ability to select and promote the best people, and to generally make the workplace better for the people who work there. They do this by creating processes, including surveys and tests, and by designing products such as learning interventions, selection procedures, organisational development methods and frameworks for enabling change. They also help people use these processes and products in practice.

I-O psychologists lead consulting and executive search firms, and work in a range of settings including leadership centres, corporations, public sector agencies, and companies as well as private practice and universities. Their work affects the way people work, together and alone, and makes contributions through improvements in human performance that are vital to organisational success. In both public and private sectors, I-O psychologists are in a position to play major roles in helping organisations and agencies to manage their workforces. They also facilitate partnerships between organisations.

I-O practitioners conduct a wide range of research and interventions designed to provide information and change in all aspects of the workplace. Some areas of I-O research include; stigma in organisations (e.g., weight, physical attractiveness, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, ethnicity); sexual harassment; the role of personality traits in the hiring process; barriers to successful employment of workers with disabilities; workplace culture, particularly when organisations merge; selection of personnel for specialized roles; employee engagement, reducing absenteeism; alleviating workplace incivility, aggression and bullying; what attracts individuals to certain organisations; and the leadership behaviours of managers are just a few of the issues being addressed by I-O psychologists.

I-O Psychologists require a minimum of a Masters degree in Psychology with a specialisation in I-O psychology, from an accredited educational organisation, or an equivalent qualification. This training includes a practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice, which is approved by the Psychologists Board. To use the title of "psychologist" practitioners must also be registered with the New Zealand Psychologists Board under the general scope of psychology.

To find out more about registering in the General Scope of Psychology go to:

<https://psychologistsboard.org.nz/want-to-register/scopes-of-practice/>

To find out about universities offering post-graduate programmes in I-O psychology go to the following links.

Massey University: <https://www.massey.ac.nz/study/courses/organisational-psychology-175345/>

University of Canterbury: <https://uonline.ac.nz/courses/master-of-organisational-psychology>

University of Auckland: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/study/study-options/find-a-study-option/master-of-organisational-psychology-morgpsych.html>

University of Waikato: <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/papers/psych317/2025/>