



Guideline for Approved Training Programs In Psychology Supervision

Consultation Paper

Issued by the Psychology Board of Australia under the authority of Associate Professor Brin Grenyer, Chair, 17 May 2010.

If you wish to provide comments on this paper, please lodge a written submission in electronic form, marked 'Attention: Chair, Psychology Board of Australia' to chair@psychologyboard.gov.au by close of business on Monday 14 June 2010. Please note that your submission will be placed on the Board's website unless you request otherwise.

Introduction

This consultation paper has been developed to meet a requirement of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law). Under s. 39 of the National Law, the Board is empowered to develop and approve codes and guidelines to provide guidance to psychologists and about other matters relevant to the exercise of its functions.

Pursuant to s. 40 of the National Law, national boards are required to ensure there is wide-ranging consultation on proposed registration standards, codes and guidelines.

The Board has previously consulted on proposed registration standards and codes and guidelines to apply from 1 July 2010. Those registration standards, codes and guidelines are available on the Board's website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

This consultation paper invites comment on the following proposed guideline on Approved Training Programs in Psychology Supervision.

The proposed guideline will be finalised after the consultation feedback has been considered by the Board. The Board considers that this guideline should be in place prior to commencement of the national registration and accreditation scheme on 1 July 2010.

Additional information

From 1 July 2010, the Psychology Board of Australia will commence registering psychologists under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law). Psychologists already registered by State and Territory psychologist registration boards will transition to registration under the National Law. A link to the National Law is available at www.ahpra.gov.au.

The Board is progressively releasing consultation papers on issues relating to the new scheme. Previous consultation papers have addressed the registration standards and codes and guidelines required for commencement of the new scheme on 1 July 2010.

What happens next?

The above proposal for training programs in supervision is for consultation and the Board seeks the views of interested parties. Once established, the Board will invite applications from psychologists to provide supervisor training, and a process of review and approval by the Board will occur. Approved supervisor training programs will be listed on the Board's website. The Board will also separately list the names of psychologists who have successfully completed a training program and are approved to provide supervision.



Guideline: Approved training programs in psychology supervision

Introduction

This draft guideline has been developed by the Psychology Board of Australia (Board) under section 39 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (Qld) (National Law). The guideline supplements the requirements set out in the Board's:

- General Registration Standard;
- Area of Practice Endorsement Standard;
- Provisional Registration Standard; and
- 4+2 Internship Program: Guidelines for Provisional Psychologists and Supervisors (currently being finalised¹)

The relevant sections of the National Law are set out in [Attachment A](#). The relevant Psychology Board of Australia Standards are provided in [Attachment B](#).

Who needs to use this guideline?

This guideline applies to individuals and organisations seeking Board approval to provide supervision training programs. A Board-approved supervision training program must be successfully completed by generally registered psychologists wishing to be eligible to provide supervision for the purpose of meeting the Board's requirements for provisional registration or an area of practice endorsement.

¹ As the 4+2 Internship Program: Guidelines for Provisional Psychologists and Supervisors are not yet finalised, an extract of their content on supervision has not been included in this draft. However, once the 4+2 Internship Program: Guidelines for Provisional Psychologists and Supervisors are finalised, relevant extracts will be provided in [Attachment C](#).

Summary of guideline

- Board-approved supervisor training should equip supervisors with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop and assess the competencies required to be eligible for either full registration or an area of practice endorsement.
- Supervision in other settings, such as that provided to meet the Compulsory Professional Development requirements, does not need to be provided by a Board-approved supervisor, except when directed by the Board.
- Supervisor training should train potential supervisors in a competency-based approach to supervision. The training must develop and assess the following competencies:
 - Understanding of the fundamental principles of competency-based supervision
 - Knowledge and skills in effective supervision practices
 - Ability to assess the psychological competencies of the supervisee
 - Ability to develop and manage the supervisory alliance, including addressing personal factors such as countertransference and self-disclosure
 - Ability to address the legal and ethical considerations related to the professional practice of psychology
 - Capacity to evaluate the supervisory process
- Board-approved supervisor training must consist of 15 hours of direct instruction combined with 15 hours of preparatory work (e.g. reading relevant material, reflection on practise). A 7 hour revision course must be completed by all Board-approved supervisors within 5 years of approval.
- All trainers must be psychologists who hold general registration and have endorsement in at least one area of practice.
- Supervisor training is to be delivered in a workshop format. However, the training may be broken in to distinct modules to enable on-line delivery and to provide flexible learning arrangements.
- Potential supervisors must be assessed across a number of domains using a range of techniques, including multiple choice and short answer examination, written responses to case studies and vignettes, and assessment of supervision sessions submitted on videotape or equivalent
- Providers of Board-approved supervisor training programs will be required to engage in research in this area.

Body of guideline

Background

The objective of the national registration and accreditation scheme is to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only psychologists who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered. Supervision is a critical mechanism in the training and on-going safe practice of psychology. Although the Psychology Board of Australia establishes the standard of psychological competencies required for registration as a general psychologist and area of practice endorsements, supervisors play a key role in training and assessing these competencies.

In order to provide effective supervision, supervisors must have demonstrated proficiency in the areas of professional practice in which the supervisee is engaged, as well as possessing demonstrated skill in the provision of supervision. The Board is of the view that these are best developed through the means of Board-approved supervision training courses. Such courses not only ensure that core supervision competencies are taught, but also provide a mechanism for assessing the attainment and demonstration of the competencies at the required level.

Over the past two decades, a growing body of expert opinion has argued that supervisor training is necessary for the development of supervisory competence (Borders & Brown, 2005; Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Falender & Shafranske, 2004; Milne 2009; Watkins, 1997). This position is neatly summarised by Watkins (1997) who points out that ‘We would never dream of turning untrained therapists loose on needy patients, so why would we turn those untrained supervisors loose on those untrained therapists who help those needy patients?’ (p.604). In response, some professional bodies such as the British Psychological Society (2006) require clinical psychology supervisors to undertake regular supervision training over the course of their career. Such requirements are supported by empirical evidence demonstrating that for the most part supervisor training is effective (Barrow & Domingo, 1997; Busari et al., 2006; McMahon & Simons, 2004). However, it is noted that this area is poorly researched and one Australian study demonstrates that supervisor training produced only limited benefits (Kavanagh et al, 2008).

Current requirements in Australia

Psychologists providing supervision to provisional psychologists to meet the requirements for full registration via an internship program (also referred to as a supervision pathway or 4+2 pathway) are required to complete existing State Board-endorsed supervision training workshops in only two states. Two other states require completion of relevant training and professional development in supervision and/or adult learning principles. The remaining three states require eligible supervisors to have held full registration for a specific period. In all states and territories supervision is considered psychological practice and thus supervisors fall under the respective state and professional codes of professional conduct and ethics that require psychologists to practice within their competencies. This view is consistent with the APS Code of Ethics Section B1.

Supervisor requirements for higher degree programs are established by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council. Psychologists providing supervision to provisional psychologists to meet the requirements for full registration via an accredited higher degree program must be eligible for membership of the appropriate college of the Australian Psychological Society and have at least two years full-time relevant experience. Training in supervision is not specified. However, in Queensland, ALL supervisors require training.

Approaches to supervision

Falender and Shafranske speculate that ‘there are probably as many approaches to supervision as there are supervisors’ (2004, p.7). Each of the major theoretical orientations towards psychotherapy have established supervision models that focus on the acquisition and development of the relevant theory and skill in each area. By contrast, developmental approaches to supervision propose that therapists progress through sequential stages. Such approaches have application regardless of the theoretical orientation of the therapist or supervisor. Process-based approaches provide a further dimension focussing on the component roles, tasks and processes within supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Falender & Shafranske, 2004). However, what is common to all approaches to supervision is the intention to develop competence in the supervisee (Falender & Shafranske, 2004). Competence in this context is defined as:

the professional’s overall suitability for the profession, which is a reflection of the individual’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes and their integration. Competence is both developmental and incremental in that what is expected of the professional differs depending on the individual’s stage of professional development and subsequent functioning. Additionally, competence is context-dependent, specifically meaning that different competencies, aspects of each competency, and execution of each competency varies depending on the setting. (American Psychological Association, 2006; p.11)

The Board is of the view that the critical competence required of supervisors in credentialing settings is the ability to develop and assess the necessary competence in supervisees for both registration and area of practice endorsement. Although the board recognises that there may be any amount of other useful material that might be covered, for the Board’s purposes supervisor training at a minimum must develop this core competence.

Purpose of supervisor training

Board-approved supervisor training is for the purpose of equipping supervisors with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop and assess the competencies required to be eligible for either full registration or an area of practice endorsement. Although the competencies required of supervisees for either of these tasks differ in scope, the general supervisory competencies required of supervisors apply in both scenarios. As such, potential supervisors will only be required to complete one Board-approved training course, as well as any revision course required to maintain and update knowledge and skill. Supervisors involved in either the internship (4+2) or university-based

postgraduate pathways to registration will be required to complete the training program, as currently occurs in Queensland.

Supervision in other settings, such as that provided to meet the Compulsory Professional Development requirements, does not need to be provided by a Board-approved supervisor, except when directed by the Board.

Supervisory competencies

The required supervisory competencies are drawn from current research and theory in the field of competency-based supervision (American Psychological Association, 2006; Falender & Shafranske, 2004; Milne, 2009; Roth & Pilling, 2007, 2008). On successful completion of Board-approved supervisor training, supervisors should be able to adequately demonstrate the following competencies:

- Understanding of the fundamental principles of competency-based supervision
- Knowledge of and skills in effective supervision practices
- Ability to assess the psychological competencies of the supervisee
- Ability to develop and manage the supervisory alliance, including addressing personal factors such as countertransference and self-disclosure that effect the alliance
- Ability to address the legal and ethical considerations related to the professional practice of psychology
- Capacity to evaluate the supervisory process

Length

There is significant variation in the length and intensity of supervisor training currently provided. For example, supervisor training provided under the Improved Access to Psychological Therapies program in the United Kingdom is offered over seven days over a number of weeks (Roth & Pilling, 2007). By contrast, both current State Board-approved training programs in Australia are offered over two consecutive days. As there is currently only very limited research into the optimal length of training required to produce sufficient supervisory competencies, the Board is proposing that Board-approved supervisor training consist of 15 hours of direct instruction combined with 15 hours of preparatory work (e.g. reading relevant material, reflection on practise). All Board-approved supervisors will need to complete a 7 hour revision course within 5 years of gaining approval.

Providers

It is envisaged that supervisor training could be provided by individuals or by a consortium and that a number of providers may be approved to enable psychologists across Australia to receive training.

However, all trainers must be psychologists who hold general registration and have endorsement in at least one area of practice. The Psychology Board of Australia will put in place an application form and approval process for programs once the consultation period is over.

Delivery

Supervisor training is to be delivered in a workshop format. However, the Board is aware that many psychologists face difficulties completing training requirements due to time and distance constraints. As such, the training may be broken in to distinct modules to enable on-line delivery and provide flexible learning arrangements.

Assessment

Thorough assessment of supervisory competence is necessary to ensure supervisors are adequately equipped to provide supervision in a credentialing environment. Currently, prospective supervisors in New South Wales complete a short written knowledge test that relates specifically to the administrative requirements of the internship program. In Queensland, prospective supervisors must submit a videotape of a supervision session for assessment. Given the role of supervision, the Board is of the view that potential supervisors must be assessed across a number of domains using a range of techniques, as follows:

- Knowledge of supervision principles is to be measured through either multiple choice or short answer examination
- Decision-making skills in the supervisory context is to be measured through written responses to case studies and vignettes
- Supervisory performance is to be measured through assessment of an actual supervision session submitted on videotape or equivalent.

The training providers will be responsible for the administration and scoring of the assessment to a standard approved by the Board.

Research

Supervisor training is a developing field requiring more research to establish a substantial evidence base (Milne, 2009). Providers of Board-approved supervisor training programs will be required to engage in research in this area.

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Attachment A:

Extract of relevant provisions from the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*

General provisions

Division 3 Registration standards and codes and guidelines

39 Codes and guidelines

A National Board may develop and approve codes and guidelines—

- (a) to provide guidance to the health practitioners it registers; and
- (b) about other matters relevant to the exercise of its functions.

Example. A National Board may develop guidelines about the advertising of regulated health services by health practitioners registered by the Board or other persons for the purposes of section 133.

40 Consultation about registration standards, codes and guidelines

- (1) If a National Board develops a registration standard or a code or guideline, it must ensure there is wide-ranging consultation about its content.
- (2) A contravention of subsection (1) does not invalidate a registration standard, code or guideline.
- (3) The following must be published on a National Board's website—
 - (a) a registration standard developed by the Board and approved by the Ministerial Council;
 - (b) a code or guideline approved by the National Board.
- (4) An approved registration standard or a code or guideline takes effect—
 - (a) on the day it is published on the National Board's website; or
 - (b) if a later day is stated in the registration standard, code or guideline, on that day.

41 Use of registration standards, codes or guidelines in disciplinary proceedings

An approved registration standard for a health profession, or a code or guideline approved by a National Board, is admissible in proceedings under this Law or a law of a co-regulatory jurisdiction against a health practitioner registered by the Board as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct or practice for the health profession.

Attachment B: Relevant Psychology Board of Australia Standards

General Registration Standard

Area of Practice Endorsement Standard

Provisional Registration Standard

General Registration Standard

Psychology Board of Australia General registration standard



Authority

This standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (2009)* (the National Law) with approval taking effect from 1 July 2010.

Summary

The Board has determined that the qualifications that lead to general registration are:

- a). an accredited Master's degree; or
- b). a five year accredited sequence of study followed by a one year Board approved internship (5+1); or
- c). a four year accredited sequence of study followed by a two year Board approved internship (4+2); or
- d). a qualification that in the Board's opinion is substantially equivalent to either (a), (b) or (c).
- e). In addition to the completion of an approved qualification the Board may require the passing of an examination prior to accepting an application for general registration.

Scope of application

This standard applies to all applicants for general registration.

Requirements

To be eligible for general registration an applicant:

- a). must have successfully completed a Board-approved qualification
- b). must meet the eligibility requirements of the legislation, including any registration standard set by the Board; and
- c). may be required to submit evidence of completion of a Board-approved examination.

Review

This standard will commence on 1 July 2010. The Board will review this standard at least every three years.



Area of Practice Endorsement Standard

Psychology Board of Australia Area of practice endorsements registration standard



Authority

This standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (2009)* (the National Law) with approval taking effect from 1 July 2010.

Summary

Registered psychologists who practice in certain areas of psychology may be eligible for endorsement in an approved area of practice.

The approved areas of practice for endorsement of registration are:

- a). clinical psychology
- b). counselling psychology
- c). forensic psychology
- d). clinical neuropsychology
- e). organisational psychology
- f). sport and exercise psychology; and
- g). educational and developmental psychology.

Scope of application

This standard applies to all applicants for general registration and registered psychologists who have general registration. It does not apply to any other category of registration.

Requirements

To be eligible for endorsement in one of the approved areas of practice a registered psychologist must have:

- (a) an accredited doctorate in one of the approved areas of practice, and a minimum one year of approved supervised full-time equivalent practice with a Board approved supervisor; or
- (b) an accredited Masters in one of the approved areas of practice, and a minimum of two years of approved supervised full-time equivalent practice with a Board-approved supervisor; or
- (c) another qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to (a) or (b).

References

Psychology Board of Australia Endorsement Guidelines are available on the Board's website.

Review

This standard will commence on 1 July 2010. The Board will review this standard at least every three years.



Psychology Board of Australia Provisional registration standard



Authority

This standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (2009)* (the National Law) with approval taking effect from 1 July 2010.

Summary

An applicant for provisional registration as a psychologist must have completed an accredited four-year sequence of psychology study, or a sequence of study that in the opinion of the Board is substantially equivalent. Provisional registration is granted to enable an individual to complete years five and six of supervised practice as part of a minimum six-year sequence of study approved by the Board in order to become eligible for general registration.

The Board has determined that the qualification that leads to registration as a general psychologist is a six-year accredited sequence of study, comprising a Master's degree minimum qualification or equivalent. The Board will recognise the following six-year sequences of study as equivalent:

- a). (a) a five-year accredited sequence of study followed by a one-year Board-approved internship (5+1); or
- b). (b) a four-year accredited sequence of study followed by a two-year Board-approved internship (4+2).

A provisional psychologist may not undertake dual pathways, that is, mixing components of two different pathways to make up a six-year sequence of study will not be accepted as completing an approved qualification leading to general registration.

Scope of application

This standard applies to all applicants for provisional registration and registered provisional psychologists. It includes students undertaking practical placements as part of an accredited six-year sequence of study and registered as provisional psychologists.

Requirements of the 4+2 internship program

1. The core capabilities and attributes of the two-year internship program that must be achieved by the provisional psychologist are:
 - a) knowledge of the discipline
 - b) ethical, legal and professional matters
 - c) psychological assessment and measurement

- d) intervention strategies
- e) research and evaluation
- f) communication and interpersonal relationships
- g) working within a cross-cultural context; and
- h) practice across the lifespan.

2. A provisional psychologist undertaking the Board-approved two-year internship must successfully complete the internship in accordance with the Board's internship guidelines, which include:
 - a) a minimum two-year program based on a 35 hour week and seven hour day, totalling a minimum of 3080 hours
 - b) a minimum of 17.5 hours per week internship
 - c) a maximum eight-week provision for annual and personal leave per year
 - d) one-on-one supervision with a Board-approved supervisor at a ratio of one hour of supervision to 17.5 hours of supervised practice. Two-thirds must be individual supervision, with the rest either being individual or group supervision; and
 - e) a minimum of 60 hours of professional development per full-time year designed to meet the eight competencies of the internship program. The pro rata equivalent applies to part-time practice.
3. The program must consist of 40 per cent client contact and 60 per cent client related activities.
4. The program must be completed within a maximum of five years from commencement.
5. All work roles/placements (internship program only) must be approved by the Board prior to commencement.
6. Six monthly progress reports must be submitted by the supervisor and the provisional psychologist.
7. At the completion of the internship program a final assessment of competence form signed by the supervisor and case studies completed by the provisional psychologist must be submitted with an application for general registration.

Requirements of the 5+1 internship program

1. This standard will be updated to provide the requirements of the one-year internship program once the program becomes available.



Requirements of the accredited professional degree

1. An applicant for provisional registration must provide evidence of current enrolment in an accredited professional degree leading to general registration.
2. A provisional psychologist undertaking an accredited professional degree leading to general registration must be registered from the commencement of enrolment and for the duration of enrolment.

Definitions

Client-related activities for the purposes of the internship program means activities including reading and researching to assist problem formulation and diagnosis, case consultation with colleagues, formal and informal reporting, and professional development.

Internship means a supervised practice program approved by the Board.

Client contact, for the purposes of the internship program, means direct client contact, which includes performing specific tasks of psychological assessment, intervention and prevention.

Supervisor means a registered general psychologist approved by the Board to act as principal supervisor to a provisional psychologist undertaking an internship program. A supervisor must have a minimum of three years experience as a registered general psychologist and have completed a Board-approved training program in psychology supervision prior to applying to act as a Board-approved supervisor.

References

Psychology Board of Australia Internship Program Guidelines are available on the Board's website.

Review

This standard will commence on 1 July 2010. The Board will review this standard at least every three years.



**Attachment C: Relevant sections of the draft 4+2 Internship Program:
Guidelines for Provisional Psychologists and Supervisors**

Draft 4+2 Internship Program: Guidelines for Provisional Psychologists and Supervisors are available in the Board's March Consultation Paper on Codes and Guidelines available on the Board's website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au . The draft Guidelines are in the process of being finalised and are expected to be published on the Board's website in June 2010. Once finalised, an extract will be included in this attachment.