

APS College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists
National Committee

25th January, 2012

Psychology Board of Australia
Level 8,
111 Bourke St,
Melbourne, Vic, 3000

Dear Chair, Psychology Board of Australia,
Re: Proposed Guideline for Supervisors and Supervisor Training Providers

Members of the National Committee of the College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists have substantial concerns about the specific Proposed Guideline for Supervisors and Supervisor Training Providers, while supporting the recognition of the important contribution supervisors make to the profession. The Committee members have raised the following concerns:

1. There are currently only 4 Academic programs offering training for Educational and Developmental Psychologists in Australia, 3 in Victoria and 1 in Queensland. There are also many psychologists working in schools, who are not members of our College but may have some affiliation with it.
2. There are high needs in the community for services to children and young people that are offered by members of the College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists.
3. The guideline restricts the numbers of possible supervisors available by requiring a Masters qualification and a lengthy and potentially costly training program, when there are many excellent and highly competent supervisors currently supervising psychologists in training who will be excluded by this Guideline.
4. The introduction of these changes will create an immediate and significant shortfall in supervisors available for training Educational and Developmental psychologists.
5. The new regulations will impose a financial and time value disincentive for supervisors to take on students on placements in academic programs and consequently may threaten their viability and thence the viability of the profession.
 - a. Supervisors work in schools, agencies and private practice with no remuneration for their service to the profession as supervisors
 - b. Expecting supervisors to make available or to be given 2 days out of their workload will be most difficult in both education and health systems that are stretched to meet demands
 - c. Workplaces are unlikely to make available funds for training as supervision of future psychologists has no direct benefit to the organisation. Supervisors should not be expected to privately fund training required by other organisations (Universities). Universities have no allocated funds for training supervisors and have not paid supervisors although in other professions this is common practice.

- d. The 7 hour post training revision requirement seems onerous, and it is not clear that there is evidence that it would be beneficial or necessary. This would be preferable as a CPD activity.
6. Psychologists who supervise are for the most part senior members of the profession, who are successful in their field of psychology. Training that would be useful to them in supervising trainee psychologists needs to be based on adult learning principles. It should not be assumed that supervisors need to relearn what they have learned already, and training needs to be based on the individual's area of practice.
7. There are very small numbers of endorsed Educational and Developmental Psychologists who have made themselves available for supervision. Of the 361 listed members of the College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists across Australia, only 74 are listed as supervisors, and it is not clear how many of these provide supervision to training psychologists. It is clear that there is already a shortfall of endorsed supervisors, and maintaining and extending this number is imperative to continuing the viability of academic programs. Any new initiatives must be introduced with the endorsement of the current supervising psychologists as a top priority.
8. The following changes to the Guideline need to be considered:
 - Priority accreditation be given to the current supervisors providing supervision for Higher Degree programs
 - Acknowledgement of a range of training experiences that can be used as part of the training package that supervisors can claim as their supervision training.
 - Funding options be considered prior to introduction of mandatory requirements
 - Extended time line for introduction of requirements to ensure the availability of supervisors over the next few years.

In conclusion, we are supportive of improvements to the skilled delivery of supervision training and support for supervisors in providing training to new psychologists. However the requirements need to be subject to workplace feasibility ensuring that new initiatives are enhancing supervision quality and opportunity, not creating a system that supervisors see as too hard to attain and too expensive, and not undermining specialisations that offer valuable services to the community.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide our College perspective on the proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Vicki McKenzie
Chair, Professional Development Committee,
College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists.

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