

Revised guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers

5 March 2018

Response from the APS National Committee of Educational and Developmental Psychologists

The College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists welcomes the initiative to review and revise the guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training. Our various experiences over the past 8 years since the introduction of mandated supervision offers a timely basis for reflection and review. We appreciate the opportunity for public and sector consultation and review.

The College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists welcomes and supports most of the proposed changes. In particular recognising there has been an urgent issue emerging that too few psychologists are both board-accredited supervisors and hold area of practice endorsement, so that our sector would be in crisis with insufficient trainer and endorsed supervisors without a change in the regulations.

We have over the last few years become deeply concerned of the serious impact the Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative has had on the numbers in our area of endorsement. We see the p[roblem as resulting from what we consider the unjustified and unsustainable two-tiered remuneration model applied to the Better Access Initiative. The result has been a lack of perceived value for graduates interested in post-education supervision in areas of endorsement with the exception of course of practitioners who have completed training in clinical psychology. Feedback from our members and from graduates of Educational and Developmental psychology programs with who we have discussions is that they have elected to not undertake a registrar program due to thigh cost of time and money with no benefits. Then, the further requirement of two years post endorsement experience prior to psychologists being eligible to provide supervision of both those completing higher degrees and those who might otherwise be planning their endorsement, has significantly contributed to the short supply of Educational and Developmental supervisors.

While recognising the urgent need to provide for more supervisors, we do not believe it is in the community's interest for the solution to be one which compromises standards of training. We are gravely concerned about the proposed easing of the requirement of area of endorsement for supervisors of students completing a 5+1 Master's Degree in Educational and Developmental Psychology. Our view is that such will mean that supervisors cannot be guaranteed to have the necessary expertise in the advanced competencies that make up the specialism area of the Educational and Developmental Psychologist training. These competencies focus on:

1. Learning, education, and development across the lifespan. Educational and Developmental Psychologists apply evidence-based strategies to identifying barriers and supporting positive development and learning through all stages of life.

2. An educative context and environment and interdisciplinary work, particularly with educators and also speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and paediatricians. Educational and Developmental Psychologists work holistically and within a multidisciplinary framework to foster adaptive developmental trajectories.
3. Prevention, promotion and positive solution focused psychology. Educational and Developmental Psychologists work in a variety of contexts, and specifically within early intervention settings and schools, to prevent the later development of complex psychopathology and promote positive mental health.
4. Infants, children, adolescents, adults and older adults with learning challenges and disabilities including those with particular learning profiles such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Specific Learning Disorders, Dementia, and other cognitive deficits. Educational and Developmental Psychologists have significant experience and competence in supporting many of the most vulnerable individuals within our society.
5. The types of assessments, interventions and reviews most appropriate for the above areas of professional practice. Educational and Developmental Psychologists have significant experience and competence in evidence-based psychological, psychometric, and educational assessment; as well as significant experience and competence in delivering evidence-informed interventions.

We consider that in order to benefit from the necessary constructive critique in the process of gaining the required competencies, training should be under the supervision of board-approved supervisors with endorsement in the area of Educational and Developmental Psychology. We would therefore like to propose a change to the new proposed standards, that is: at least 50% of the supervision provided in the sixth year of an accredited 5+1 degree being required to be from an endorsed Educational and Developmental Psychologist supervisor.