

Comments on “Guideline for Approved Training Program in Psychology Supervision”

The Griffith University Consortium, which has provided the Supervisor Training and Accreditation Program (STAP) for the Psychologists Board of Queensland, support the National Board’s guidelines for supervision training. In our view, the essential aspects of the program are: that there is a single national system with a single curriculum, that it includes systematic and comparable assessment, and that it includes regular requirements for updating and quality checks. Below we raise some issues that may be of value for the National Board in their consideration of supervision training.

1. The proposition to assess both supervisory knowledge and skills is to be commended. There cannot be an assumption that only attendance at a workshop will result in competence for participants, and as supervision is possibly the primary source of training of psychologists in Australia, it is essential that as much as can be assured, only competent supervisors are accredited. We would add to the suggested evaluation sources, an important component of assessment will be supervisee feedback. We thus suggest some form of information regarding supervisors is sought from their supervisees.

2. Although workshops currently conducted in Australia have tended to be 15 hours long, it must be noted that this is a relatively very short period. It is suggested that some requirements are made of participants for pre-workshop practice of supervision as well as reflection on the process of supervision. Provision for some closely supervised supervision practice by early professionals is likely to increase the learning from a two-day workshop. For example, it is not recommended that the first time a participant provides supervision is when they are doing their video for assessment to become an accredited supervisor.

3. The program should be standardised across Australia, i.e. that the content and process of training should be of a single curriculum, and that assessment content and process should be comparable. It is also suggested that Trainers

should be accredited once assessed (and possibly trained) for competence in delivery of workshops and knowledge and skills in supervision, and there should be regular quality checks regarding the delivery of workshops. Evaluators will similarly need to be trained and accredited, with regular moderation checks for comparability of marking.

4. The training programs will need to be carefully evaluated. If service providers are not systematically obtaining well above average scores for the training, they should not be permitted to continue training. Ineffective training will not assist the overall purpose of ensuring competence in supervision.
5. Supplemental funding of the supervision training may need to be considered to ensure that costs are not prohibitive for participants - although it is likely that for many participants, their costs may be paid by their employers.
6. It is suggested that the Refresher workshop should be more frequent than every five years, perhaps every 3 years, to ensure regular skills practice and feedback. It is suggested that there could be a range of formats in which ongoing supervision training could be conducted. For example, it could be required on some rounds that a video of supervision be produced, or attendance at a peer supervision meeting plus some form of assessment, or participation in another accredited supervision training activity. Variety in terms of Refreshers will be important, as long as standards are maintained.
7. Although there may be some components of the supervision training that could be done on-line, we suggest that skills training is best conducted in person. We suggest that face-face training is made available to individuals in rural / remote areas at least annually to provide opportunity for attendance.
8. The suggested supervisor competencies broadly capture some of the more important aspects of effective supervision, but there are a number of other topics we would suggest adding including:
 - Small group or team supervision.

- Contracting in supervision.
 - In addition to how to assess psychological competencies of the supervisee, consider effective means of training of these in supervision.
 - The harm that supervision can do and how to avoid this.
9. Training of supervisors is one part of the process to enhance supervisory standards in Australia, but will be limited without also training supervisees. For supervisees to be able to know what to expect from “good enough” supervision and where to get help if problems with supervision and what to do about it, will require training. Supervisees also need to know how to be effective supervisees and how to get the most out of supervision. We thus suggest that as a complement to supervisor training, the Board should also consider training for supervisees.