

Policy on refusing or revoking Board-approved supervisor status

October 2013

Authority

Section 3(2) of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), states that an objective of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) is to 'provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered'.

Section 35(1)(b) of the National Law gives a National Board the power to decide the requirements for registration or endorsement of registration in the profession, including the arrangements for supervised practice.

The Psychology Board of Australia's (the Board) *Provisional registration standard* and the *Area of practice endorsement registration standard* require provisional psychologists and psychologists undertaking an internship or a registrar program to be supervised by a Board-approved supervisor.

The *Provisional registration standard* was approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) on 31 March 2010 under the National Law and took effect on 1 July 2010. The *Area of practice endorsement registration standard* was approved by AHWMC under the National Law on 17 February 2011, and took effect on 9 March 2011.

Consistent with Section 35(1)(c)(iii) of the National Law, the Board has established requirements relevant to supervision in the following guidelines and policies:

- *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers*
- *Guidelines for the 4+2 internship program: provisional psychologists and supervisors*
- *Guidelines for the 5+1 internship program* (in development)
- *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*, and
- *Policy on working in addition to placements*.

Summary

The Board's [Guidelines for Supervisors and Supervisor training providers](#) (the *Guidelines*) set out the requirements for gaining Board-approval as a supervisor, as well as how to maintain Board approval.

This policy sets out the circumstances when a Board-approved supervisor no longer meets the requirements for approval as set out in the *Guidelines*, and will have their Board-approval revoked.

Note: Psychologists undertaking any of the training mentioned above should ensure that their supervisor/s is approved by the Board. Supervision provided by a non-Board approved supervisor will not be recognised by the Board as suitable supervision in the above training pathways. If an application for provisional registration,

general registration or endorsement is made on the grounds that supervision was or will be provided by a non-approved supervisor, a proposal to refuse the application will be made on the grounds that the registration standard has not been met.

Supervisor training providers should review the [Policy on revocation of Board-approved supervisors training providers](#).

Responsibility

The Psychology Board of Australia is responsible for setting this policy. The regional boards of the Psychology Board of Australia are responsible for making decisions about individual health practitioners. AHPRA is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and effectively managed.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to psychologists with general registration who have been approved by the Board to act as a Board-approved supervisor for psychologists undertaking the 4+2 internship program, the 5+1 internship program, the registrar program, higher degree programs, or those working in addition to placements.

This policy does not apply to psychologists who provide supervision that is not required to be approved by the Board, such as supervision of a research dissertation, supervision for the purposes of continuing professional development, peer consultation, line managers, or supervisors who have been approved by the Board to provide supervision to psychologists practising under conditions arising from disciplinary action.

Refusal of an application to act as a Board-approved supervisor (form ABAS-76)

The Board may refuse an application to act as a Board-approved supervisor on the first application to become a supervisor, on the renewal of supervisor status every five years, or on an application for approval after a period of revocation or discontinuation.

The Board may refuse an application to act as a Board-approved supervisor when the applicant:

- does not hold general registration
- has not held general registration for the required period as outlined in the *Guidelines* (i.e. three years for principal supervisors and higher degree supervisors; two years for secondary supervisors).
Note: general registration does not have to be held in consecutive years
- has not successfully completed the required Board-approved supervisor training
- does not have an area of practice endorsement (for the registrar program or higher degree supervisors only)
- has conditions on their registration, or
- does not meet the recency standard.

In addition, the Board may refuse to renew an application to act as a Board-approved supervisor when the applicant:

- has not provided the completed documentation before the five-year anniversary of renewal, or
- does not meet the recency of practice standard.

In addition, the Board may refuse an application for supervisor status after a period of discontinuation or revocation when the applicant:

- has not successfully completed any remediation required by the Board (e.g. additional training), or
- does not meet the recency of practice standard.

Requirements for revocation of Board-approved supervisor status

Automatic revocation

Board-approved supervisor status will be automatically revoked by the Board when a supervisor's registration as a psychologist is:

- discontinued or lapsed
- no longer current
- changed to non-practising
- suspended
- cancelled, or
- surrendered.

The supervisor status of a psychologist will be revoked when a supervisor requests to discontinue their approved supervisor status in writing to the Board.

Supervisor status can be revoked by the Board, an Immediate Action Committee, a panel or tribunal.

Possible revocation

Board-approved supervisor status may be revoked by the Board, an Immediate Action Committee panel or tribunal when:

- an impairment is found to be affecting the psychologist's capacity to practise and supervise
- the Board has evidence that the supervisor has failed to adhere to their responsibilities as a supervisor as outlined in the Board's standards and *Guidelines*
- a supervisor's registration as a psychologist is subject to conditions that affect their ability to supervise
- there is a notification about the health, conduct or performance of the supervisor
- there is a notification about sub-standard conduct or performance as a Board-approved supervisor, or
- there is an adverse finding about the supervisor's conduct or performance (including actions taken under immediate action under Part 8, Division 7 of the National Law)

When there is a finding about a psychologist in relation to a health, conduct or performance matter, any conditions placed on the psychologist's registration will take into account the ability of the psychologist to supervise to the standard outlined in the Board's standards and *Guidelines*.

Conduct and/or performance as a Board-approved supervisor

A key objective of the National Scheme is to protect the public, including by ensuring safe and effective psychology practice. Supervisors who fall below acceptable standards will have their supervisor approval revoked. If the Board believes that a supervisor's conduct or performance in the course of practising their profession is significantly below a reasonable standard, the Board may initiate an investigation into the supervisor's professional conduct, performance or health.

A breach of the *Guidelines* may be considered conduct significantly below the standard reasonably expected, and lead to a notification. Once the notification is investigated and it has been determined that the supervising psychologist does not meet the requirements set out in the *Guidelines*, the Board may revoke its approval and remove that psychologist from the list of approved supervisors on the website.

The following is a list of breaches in supervisor conduct and performance that could lead to a notification being made about a Board-approved supervisor:

- supervisor qualifications are not met, including when the supervisor:
 - has continued to provide supervision when the individual is no longer registered as a psychologist in Australia
 - has not successfully completed Board-approved supervisor training as required
 - does not demonstrate the core-competencies required by Board-approved supervisors as outlined in the *Guidelines*
- does not meet the general requirements of supervisors (as set out in the *Guidelines*)
- does not meet the specific requirements of supervisors (as set out in the various training pathways). This may include, but is not limited to:
 - inadequate frequency of supervision
 - inability to meet the requirements of supervisors as outlined in the relevant training pathway
 - providing supervision that is not appropriate or evidence-based
 - directing the supervisee in practices that are not considered to be evidence-based
 - not managing psychological risk appropriately
 - not ensuring they are accessible to the supervisee
 - not following the Board-approved code of ethics
 - significant or repeated issues with not providing information regarding supervisees in a professional, competent and timely fashion
- has continued supervision when they are a member of the supervisee's immediate family/household, and/or is currently in a close personal or therapeutic relationship with the supervisee
- does not meet the Board's registration standards
- advertises that the psychologist holds Board-approved supervisor status when this is not the case.

Supervisor status can be revoked by the Board, an Immediate Action Committee, a panel or tribunal.

Revocation process

Board-approved supervisor status may be revoked through various pathways, as follows:

- immediate revocation due to a serious breach in supervisor performance or conduct as determined by the Board, immediate action committee or tribunal
- automatic revocation when a supervisor's registration as a psychologist is suspended, cancelled or surrendered
- revocation through the notification process when there is a notification about the health, conduct or performance of the psychologist, or when there is a notification about conduct or performance as a Board-approved supervisor, or
- revocation when a supervisor requests to discontinue their approved supervisor status in writing to the Board.

In most cases, a supervisor will retain their Board-approval throughout the assessment and any investigation of a notification, but may lose their approval after a decision is made at the conclusion of the notification process.

When the Board is considering revoking a psychologist's supervisor status, it may first:

- write to the supervisor about the issue, and remind them of their responsibilities
- write to the supervisor and give them a specified timeframe to rectify the situation
- require further training and education (e.g. mentoring with a senior psychology supervisor)
- require completion of an approved supervisor training program, and/or
- place conditions on the supervision status.

What happens when Board-approved supervisor status is revoked?

A breach in supervisor conduct or performance may result in:

- the psychologist's registration being suspended, cancelled or surrendered
- conditions being placed on the psychologist's registration
- losing supervisor approval, and/or
- a requirement for further training and education

Supervisors will be notified when their Board-approved status has been revoked. Supervisees will not be notified. Supervisors are responsible for informing their supervisees that their Board-approved status has been revoked.

A psychologist who is dissatisfied with the revocation of their Board-approved supervisor status may request a review of the Board's decision. The options are as follows:

- in the first instance, a request for a review can be made in writing to the Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia that made the initial determination
- in the second instance, a request for a review can be made in writing to another Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia that was not involved in the initial determination for revocation.

A panel or tribunal may also revoke Board-approved supervisor status. Panels and tribunals have a particular role and function under the National Law and their decisions are not subject to administrative review.

Practitioners can re-apply for approval as a supervisor when conditions are removed, when the revocation period is over, or on the successful completion of any remediation required by the Board.

Definitions

AHPRA means the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Area of practice endorsement is a means provided for by section 98 of the National Law through which additional qualifications and supervised practice recognised by the Board can be identified to the public, employers, and other users of the online national register of practitioners. Practitioners with an area of practice endorsement have the specific area of practice notated on the public register, and can use the title associated with that area of practice.

Board means the Psychology Board of Australia established under section 31 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

Board-approved accredited higher degree program refers to sections 48 and 49 of the National Law, which require that a course be accredited by the accreditation authority for the profession, and subsequently approved by the Psychology Board of Australia, before it can be accepted as a qualification suitable for the purpose of registration as a psychologist. Courses approved by the Board are listed on the Board's website under accreditation. Under section 50 of the National Law, the accreditation agency is required to monitor

the program to ensure the relevant courses and the academic organisational unit (AOU) continue to meet accreditation standards.

Board-approved supervisor means a supervisor approved by the Board to provide supervision to provisional psychologists in the 4+2 or 5+1 internship program, provisional and/or general psychologists in accredited higher degree programs, and general psychologists undertaking registrar programs leading to an approved area of practice endorsement.

Competency-based supervision means an explicit framework and method of supervision practice, and a consistent evaluative and outcome approach to supervision training.

Guidelines refers to the Psychology Board of Australia *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers*, and any subsequent amendments approved by the Board

Internship means a Board-approved supervised practice program for a provisional psychologist.

National Law means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory of Australia.

Provisional psychologist means a person registered as a provisional psychologist under section 62 of the National Law.

Psychologist means a person who holds general registration as a psychologist under section 52 of the National Law.

Registrar program means a Board-approved supervised practice program for the purpose of gaining an area of practice endorsement with a Board-approved supervisor.

Supervisee refers to a registered provisional psychologist undertaking the 4+2 or 5+1 internship program, or a general psychologist undertaking the registrar program, as outlined in the relevant *Guidelines*, or a provisional or general psychologist undertaking an accredited higher degree.

Supervisor refers to a registered general psychologist approved by the Board to act as a principal or secondary supervisor.

Review

This Psychology Board of Australia policy is in effect from October 2013. It will be reviewed by the Board at least every three years.