GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISOR TRAINING PROVIDERS

1. Introduction

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) is committed to protecting the public by ensuring that only practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology competently and ethically are registered. Supervisors play a crucial role in helping the Board achieve its commitment through the development and assessment of Board-established competencies in those seeking general registration or area of practice endorsement.

The Board’s requirements for supervisors, as set out in the Guidelines for supervisors, recognise the important role that supervisors play in facilitating the ongoing safe practice of psychology. The Board requires psychologists to complete competency-based supervisor training before applying for Board-approved supervisor (BAS) status, and refresher training every five years to maintain that BAS status.

Who are these guidelines for?

These guidelines set out the requirements for Board-approved supervisor training providers to obtain and maintain Board approval. If you are a supervisor training provider or wish to become one, you should be familiar with these guidelines. These guidelines support the supervisor requirements set out above by facilitating the provision of high-quality, competency-based training to supervisors.

2. Purpose of supervisor training

This training is to be delivered in the context of psychology regulation in the public interest. The aim is to ensure that developing psychologists receive high-quality supervision and that the public receives psychological services that are safe and of adequate quality.

The purpose of supervisor training is to equip supervisors with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide high-quality supervision to psychologists completing one of the following programs:

- the registrar program leading to endorsement in an area of practice
- the re-entry program after a period of not practising (see Policy for recency of practice), and
- the transitional program for overseas-qualified applicants.

Supervisor competencies

The competencies required of supervisors apply regardless of the pathway their supervisees are enrolled in. The Board’s supervisor competencies are set out in Table 1 below.

3. How to become a Board-approved supervisor training provider

The Board will periodically conduct expressions of interest seeking written applications from suitably qualified individuals, consortiums or organisations to provide supervision training in Australia. The Board will assess applications against the requirements outlined in these guidelines and more detailed requirements set out in the application documents made available at the start of the expression of interest process (the ‘application pack’).

If deemed appropriate, the Board may limit the number of supervisor training providers it approves and will typically approve providers for a set period of time (usually for five years). Providers will need to re-apply after this time if they wish to maintain approval.

The Board uses the term ‘approved’ rather than ‘endorsed’ or ‘accredited’ to ensure that there is no confusion with area of practice endorsement or accreditation functions under the National Law.

Information on the ongoing management of approved providers, including additional guidance and detailed reporting requirements, is made available to approved providers. Providers must remain compliant with these guidelines for the duration of their approval period or the Board may revoke its approval (refer to Policy for revoking approval of supervisor training providers in the Appendix).
Table 1: Supervisor competencies

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<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| 1. Knowledge of and skills in effective supervision practices | • Knowledge of learning processes in supervision, including models, theories and methods of supervision.  
• Establishing competency-based goals and objectives, including contracting, agenda setting, engaging, monitoring, evaluation and record keeping.  
• Facilitating the ongoing development of the supervisee’s competencies through a range of interventions including observation, modelling, feedback, micro-skills training and relationship skills training. |
| 2. Knowledge of and ability to develop and manage the supervisory relationship | • Establishing and strengthening the supervisory relationship, including knowledge of the stages and development of the supervisory relationship.  
• Reflective supervision practice, including openness to feedback and using peer consultation and supervision of supervision.  
• Ability to identify and manage personal factors, self-disclosure and other issues that affect the supervisory alliance, including addressing problems or ruptures in the supervisory relationship.  
• Interpersonal competence, including communication skills and demonstrating empathy and respect.  
• Acknowledging and effectively managing the power differential in the supervisory relationship. |
| 3. Ability to assess the psychological competencies of the supervisee | • Effectively monitoring, assessing and evaluating competencies of the supervisee on an ongoing basis, including knowledge of effective evaluation methods.  
• Encouraging the supervisee’s self-reflectivity and attention to the development of meta-competence in the supervisee.  
• Providing effective feedback to the supervisee, including demonstrated skills in communication and critical feedback.  
• Addressing problems related to the supervisee not meeting minimal core competencies. |
| 4. Capacity to evaluate the supervisory process | • Knowledge of the supervisory process, including identifying expectations and responsibilities of both the supervisor and supervisee.  
• Encouraging and responding to supervisee and peer feedback to improve supervisory practice. |
| 5. Responsiveness to cultural and social diversity in supervision | • Responsiveness to cultural and social diversity in the supervisory process and supervisory relationship.  
• Awareness of the impact of diversity when working with a range of clients in a range of services.  
• Attention to the development of responsiveness to diversity in the supervisee. |
| 6. Ability to address legal and ethical considerations | • Understanding ethical principles and regulatory requirements and how they are used to guide professional practice and supervision to protect the public.  
• Knowledge of limits of competence and how they should be managed.  
• Awareness of personal limitations and biases that may affect supervision practice.  
• Attention to and support of self-care. |
4. Board-approved supervisor training provider requirements

Supervisors must be able to effectively develop and assess the competencies of their supervisees for general registration and/or for area of practice endorsement. Supervisor effectiveness helps the Board achieve its commitment to protect the public by ensuring only those with suitable training and qualifications are able to practise psychology.

Supervisor training must therefore develop discrete abilities that incorporate specific knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform high-quality professional psychology supervision. The supervisor competencies that supervisor training providers are required to develop in their training programs are set out in Table 1. Supervisor training must adhere to a competency-based model within a framework of best-practice supervision.

Board-approved supervisor training providers deliver:

- full training: initial supervisor training for psychologists wishing to become a Board-approved supervisor for the first time, and
- master class: refresher training for supervisors who wish to maintain their BAS status (required at least every five years).

Full training

New supervisors are required to complete full training consisting of three parts completed in sequence, detailed below. Different training providers may be approved by the Board to provide some or all of the three parts. This means that psychologists going through full training may enrol with multiple providers to complete the three required parts. This allows choice and flexibility for psychologists, particularly those in regional or rural areas.

The Board requires psychologists hold general registration (or equivalent overseas registration or licensure) for at least 2.5 years before starting full training, as they need to hold general registration for three years before applying for BAS status.

Part 1: Knowledge assessment

This part is primarily focused on knowledge acquisition. It will comprise of self-study modules and should require at least seven hours of preparatory work including reading relevant materials and reflecting on practice.

Content must include an overview of the administrative requirements of supervision for all pathways to registration and area of practice endorsement (listed in Section 2), including knowledge of relevant Board standards, guidelines and policies. This component should also assess the understanding of legal and ethical issues relevant to psychology practice and supervision, including the requirement for supervisors to act in accordance with the Board-adopted Code of ethics.

The primary aim of the knowledge assessment is to ensure the new supervisor is aware of the context for supervision within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. However, the provider should also use this part to introduce the participant to best-practice supervision readings relevant to skills training.

At the end of Part 1 the participant is required to pass a formal online assessment (e.g. a multiple-choice test) of the self-study modules. This component must be completed and passed before doing the skills training component with the same or different provider.

Part 2: Skills training

The focus of Part 2 is on the development of supervision skills applicable to all supervisee pathways, including practical skills for evaluating competencies (e.g. using active feedback exercises), and developing reflective supervision practice.

The skills training will comprise a minimum of 12 hours of direct training, typically in the form of a two-day workshop. Providers may choose to run the workshop on non-consecutive days, as long as the workshop is completed within one month. The workshop should not be a vehicle for knowledge acquisition, which occurs during Part 1, but should integrate knowledge and practice. For example, a focus on how to evaluate competence in practice and how to address concerns with supervisee competence or issues arising in the supervisory relationship. The training should allow for live practice of supervision skills, immediate trainer and peer feedback, and peer interaction and sharing of experience.

At the end of Part 2 the participant should be prepared to complete the competency-based assessment.
Part 3: Competency-based assessment and evaluation

To complete the full training program the psychologist needs to submit an electronic (video or audio) recording of a supervision session to the training provider for evaluation and feedback, along with a written reflection (including a self-evaluation) of their demonstration of supervisor competencies (as relevant) in that session.

Providers must conduct a systematic assessment and evaluation of the psychologist’s demonstration of supervisory competence and provide feedback on the session and reflection. The provider should only pass participants who have satisfactorily demonstrated the supervisor competencies, as relevant to the session. Providers may give participants a maximum of three attempts to pass this part of the training before failing them and advising them to complete Parts 1 and 2 again before attempting Part 3 again.

The participant must submit their recording and reflection to the provider within six months of completing the skills training, in the form required by the provider. Board-approved supervisor training providers may decide to require participants to submit their recording within a shorter time period (e.g. three months). Providers are required to have policies in place for approving extensions to the six-month deadline in special circumstances (e.g. participant illness or personal leave).

Assessment of participants

Thorough assessment of supervisory competence is necessary to ensure that new supervisors are adequately equipped to provide supervision in a credentialing environment. Given the important role of Board-approved supervisors in protecting the public, new supervisors must be assessed across a number of domains using a range of techniques. For the full training, supervisors must be assessed as follows:

- Understanding of administrative, legal and ethical responsibilities of supervisors measured through short answer and/or multiple choice questions at the end of Part 1.
- Knowledge of supervision principles measured through either multiple-choice test, short-answer examination, interview, or in-class exercises at the end of Part 1 and during Part 2.
- Supervisory performance measured through assessment of an actual supervision session submitted electronically (Part 3).

Potential supervisors must receive supervision of their supervision, including direct observation and critical feedback through role plays or similar in Part 2, and through feedback on submitted materials in Part 3.

Master classes

To maintain BAS status, supervisors must complete Board-approved refresher training every five years. The minimum requirement is the completion a master class in supervision. Master classes must:

- run for a minimum of six hours (providers may deliver the workshop in two sessions, as long as it is completed within one month)
- include systematic assessment, and
- focus on specific, relevant topics.

Examples of master class topics include:

- dealing with difficult supervision situations
- enhancing supervisee reflective practice
- reflective supervision
- ethical issues in supervision [or ethical issues in supervision in rural settings]
- supervisor legal and regulatory responsibilities
- parallel processes in the supervisory alliance
- evaluating supervisee competence in a specific area of practice endorsement
- providing and receiving feedback
- advanced cultural competency in supervision
- remedial supervision, and
- supervision of supervision.

Assessment of participants

For the master class training, participant knowledge of supervision principles and/or supervision skills relevant to the topic of the master class are to be assessed and measured through either multiple-choice or short-answer questions, or interview or in-class exercises involving active participation.
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Updating course content

Board-approved providers of full training and master classes are responsible for the ongoing maintenance and update of course content, including reading, presentation and assessment materials. They are required to monitor and incorporate changes to Board standards, guidelines and policies, and take into account advancements in the field of psychology supervision and supervisor training.

Outcome reporting

Board-approved supervisor training providers are required to provide evaluation and outcome data to the Board through regular reports and an annual report. Reports must include:

- the name, registration number, and assessment outcome for each participant
- the total number of participants who passed, failed or withdrew
- the date and location/mode of delivery for each workshop
- an evaluation of the training (i.e. strengths and areas to improve) including a consideration of participant feedback and details of any formal complaints received, and
- details of any curriculum updates.

The Board provides further guidance on these requirements, including reporting templates, to approved supervisor training providers.

Outcome data may be used by the Board to:

- evaluate each training provider against the Board’s requirements in these guidelines and in the application documents
- compare training providers to investigate consistency of standards across providers, and
- examine broader issues related to the effectiveness of supervisor training, including commissioning research in this area.

Location of training

The Board is committed to ensuring national coverage of workshop delivery in both metropolitan and regional areas. The Board encourages applications from providers who are committed to providing full training and master class workshops in regional locations.

The Board will consider approving the delivery of master class training to rural/regional/overseas-based participants using videoconference technology if the provider is able to demonstrate that the requirements set out in these guidelines can be met, including the effective systematic assessment of participants.

Credentials of trainers

All trainers must be approved by the Board before they can be involved in course/curriculum development, delivering workshops or assessing competencies of participants.

To be approved, trainers are required to demonstrate theoretical and practical knowledge of current developments in the delivery of supervision, competency-based training, and the Board’s standards, codes, guidelines and policies. Trainers must:

- hold general registration as a psychologist
- have qualifications and/or experience in training, and
- demonstrate skills and competence in providing high-quality supervision (the Board will be looking for approximately five years’ experience as a Board-approved supervisor).

The Board may approve non-psychologist trainers to deliver master classes where supervision and/or training skills are exemplary, such as supervisors from related professions or trainers with learning and development qualifications. The Board may approve a trainer who is not a Board-approved supervisor or who does not hold registration as a psychologist but has particular expertise in the specific topic covered by the master class. Depending on the circumstances, the Board may choose to require a Board-approved trainer who is a psychologist to be present during session/s delivered by trainers who are not psychologists.

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1 Excluding work in preparing an application to the Board for approval as a training provider.
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General requirements

In addition to developing and delivering competency-based, best-practice supervision training, providers must have adequate resources and processes to deliver, monitor, manage, and report on supervisor training courses. The Board requires supervisor training providers to meet the following general requirements concerning their operations:

- having processes in place that support quality assurance, customer service, confidentiality, privacy, and handling of conflict of interest issues
- secure data management systems and adequate technical capacity
- adequate administrative processes and resourcing – capacity to deliver courses; secure payment capability; and applicant screening, enrolment and support
- sophisticated and timely approach to delivering outcome data to the Board
- operating as a business entity (e.g. have a valid ABN/CAN and meet tax requirements)
- financial viability and pricing that is competitive, provides value for money to participants, and is commensurate with the costs of providing training
- the sustainability of the program for the approval period (usually five years), and
- informing the Board of any significant events that could have an impact on operations over the approval period and affect the provider’s ability to comply with these guidelines.

The results of all individual assessments and submitted test and electronic materials should be retained by training providers for five years and made available upon audit or request by the Board. This applies to providers who are no longer approved by the Board.

All Board-approved training providers must act in accordance with the Board’s standards, codes, guidelines, and polices, including the Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services.

The above requirements are general only. The application pack will provide more detail on the requirements that training providers will need to meet during their approval period, with further information and guidance provided to Board-approved providers.

Mandatory reporting

Registered health practitioners have a mandatory reporting responsibility under the National Law. If in the course of practising your profession (for instance, in delivering training) you form a reasonable belief that another registered health practitioner has behaved in a way that constitutes notifiable conduct, you must notify AHPRA. Notifiable conduct is defined as:

- practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs
- sexual misconduct in the practice of the profession
- placing the public at risk of substantial harm because of an impairment (health issue), and/or
- placing the public at risk because of a significant departure from accepted professional standards.

Further information on what constitutes ‘notifiable conduct’ and about how to make a mandatory report can be found at www.ahpra.gov.au.

5. Maintaining Board approval

Throughout the approval period, the Board monitors the performance of training providers and changes made to their supervisor training program. Performance will be monitored through:

- regular outcome and annual reporting by approved providers (the annual report will require providers to declare they are continuing to meet the requirements set in these guidelines and the selection criteria for approval set by the Board during the provider application process)
- requests for major project changes made by approved providers, and
- complaints from participants (direct to AHPRA or notified by the approved training provider).

The Board monitors the performance of each provider throughout the approval period to evaluate each training provider against the requirements in these guidelines and in the application documents. The Board may revoke a provider’s approval in accordance with its Policy for revoking approval of supervision training providers, set out in the Appendix of these guidelines.
Changes to training program

The Board monitors changes that an approved supervisor training provider wishes to make that would result in their training program being different from the description provided in their application. Providers must inform the Board of major changes to the approved program relating to course development, course delivery or organisation capability.

A change to the approved supervisor training program is considered a major change when it does (or could) adversely affect the approved training provider’s ability to meet the requirements set out in these guidelines or the selection criteria detailed in the application pack. The following are examples of major changes that must be reported to the Board before implementation:

- a major change to the curriculum to reflect a change to the framework and/or methods of supervision practice
- adding new training, either full training (or part of) or a master class topic that was not previously approved during the application process
- ceasing to provide a previously approved training program, either full training (or part of) or a master class
- addition of a trainer
- removal of a trainer
- change to program lead (the Board’s key contact)
- a change to the financial viability of the training provider such that ongoing provision of training to the same standard is in doubt, or
- an increase in training fees in excess of 10 per cent.

These changes must be communicated to the Board in writing, and must not take place until the Board has approved them in writing. The Board will make available additional guidance on applying for changes to approved providers.

The Board does not need to be informed of minor changes in the course development, course delivery or organisational capability of the approved training provider. A change to the approved supervisor training program is considered minor when it could not adversely affect the approved training provider’s ability to meet the requirements set out in these guidelines or the selection criteria detailed in the application pack.

6. List of Board-approved supervisor training providers

The Board’s supervisor training webpage will list all approved supervisor training provider names, contact details (contact email, phone number and website), types of training they are approved to deliver, and the effective date of the Board approval. Any changes to contact details for the approved training provider must be made in writing to psychologychair@ahpra.gov.au.

7. Discontinuing supervisor training

If a Board-approved supervisor training provider considers they no longer meet the requirements set out in these guidelines, or no longer wants to be a Board-approved provider, they should notify the Board immediately. The provider should also inform any enrolled participants and issue refunds for any training not completed.

The Board will not recognise training delivered while not a Board-approved provider as suitable training for individuals applying for or maintaining BAS status.

8. Review

These guidelines will be reviewed as required, generally every five years.
9. Definitions

**AHPRA** means the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency established under section 23 of the National Law.

**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 public online register of practitioners. Practitioners with an area of practice endorsement have the specific area of practice noted on the public register, and can use the title associated with that area of practice.

**Board** refers to the Psychology Board of Australia established under section 31 of the National Law. The Board delegates some decision making powers to committees, state and territory or regional boards, or AHPRA.

**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, registered psychologists in accredited higher degree programs, psychologists doing registrar programs leading to an area of practice endorsement, or registered psychologists doing a transitional or re-entry program.

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

**National Law** refers to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory in Australia.

**Provisional psychologist** means a person registered as a provisional psychologist under section 62 of the National Law to enable that individual to complete a mandatory period of supervised practice to become eligible for general registration as a psychologist.

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

**Registered psychologist** in this document includes a psychologist or a provisional psychologist.

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

**Supervisee** means a provisional psychologist undertaking a 4+2 or 5+1 internship program; a registered psychologist undertaking an accredited higher degree; a psychologist undertaking a registrar program; a registered psychologist with overseas training undertaking a transitional program; or a registered psychologist undertaking a re-entry program after a period of limited or no psychological practice.

**Supervision** is an interactive process between a supervisee and a supervisor. It provides the supervisee with a professionally stimulating and supportive opportunity for growth. Supervision involves a special type of professional relationship in which supportive direction, facilitative activities, and instructive critique is given by the supervisors to help the supervisee achieve their professional goals.
Appendix: Policy for revoking approval of supervisor training providers

This policy applies to individuals, organisations and consortiums that have been approved by the Board to act as a Board-approved supervisor training provider. It sets out the circumstances when a Board-approved supervisor training provider no longer meets the requirements for approval set out in these guidelines and will have their Board approval revoked.

The Board may revoke the approval of a supervisor training provider when the provider has demonstrated sub-standard performance in one or more of the following areas:

1. **Guidelines** – a lack of understanding of the Board’s approach to supervisor training and the requirements of these guidelines or the Guidelines for supervisors, including the role of psychology supervision within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

2. **Course content development and delivery**
   a. Inadequate course content and development, such as:
      i. course content does not meet the requirements established in these guidelines, or
      ii. full training is not facilitating learning in each of the supervisor competencies.
   b. Inadequate course delivery – for example, the structure, length, frequency and delivery of training does not meet the Board’s requirements.
   c. Inadequate assessment and evaluation of training participants – for example, participants are not receiving adequate assessment; the assessment is too easy or too difficult to pass.
   d. Inadequate trainer performance (as demonstrated by participant evaluation).

3. **Professional registration standards**
   a. The provider not acted in accordance with the Board’s Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services.
   b. The provider not acted in accordance with the Board-adopted Code of ethics.
   c. The provider not acted in accordance with professional registration standards.\(^3\)

The Board’s approval of an individual trainer may be revoked if the trainer is a registered health practitioner and has an adverse finding against them, either as a service provider or as a supervisor, after a notification or an immediate action matter and on recommendation of the Board, a panel or tribunal. A training provider that is an organisation or consortium will not necessarily have its approval revoked if one trainer’s approval is revoked, but the organisation will not be able to use the services of that trainer in any capacity.

4. **Organisational capability**
   a. The provider cannot meet the necessary organisational capability – for example, the provider cannot demonstrate:
      i. adequate administrative processes and resourcing
      ii. secure data management systems and adequate technical capacity
      iii. adequate systems to support customer service
      iv. processes and policies concerning confidentiality, privacy, or conflict of interest, or
      v. that trainers meet the standard for qualifications.
   b. There is a problem with the status of the business entity (e.g. ABN/ACN no longer valid, entity does not meet tax requirements, entity has engaged in sub-contracting, issues with budget, no longer competitively priced).

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\(^3\) A provider may have Board-approval for exemption of a professional registration standard. For example, a provider may have Board-approval to employ a trainer that is not a psychologist and therefore does not meet the General registration standard.
5. **Reporting** – Feedback and evaluation reporting back to the Board does not meet requirements. For example, both regular reporting and annual reporting must be provided in a timely manner and include complete and accurate information.

6. **Other**
   a. The provider receives a poor evaluation and review from the Board.
   b. The provider has altered major components of the training without approval from the Board (e.g. changed pricing structure, employed new trainers, or added new courses).
   c. The provider has not met another requirement set by the Board.

**Revocation process**

The process of revoking approval of a Board-approved supervisor training provider may start when:

- the provider demonstrates sub-standard performance in one or more of the areas listed above
- the Board has reviewed and evaluated the performance of the provider and determined that the performance does not meet the standards required, or
- the Board receives complaints about sub-standard performance of the training provider.

When the Board is considering revoking a training provider’s approval, it may first:

- write to the provider about the issue and advise them of their responsibilities
- request to audit feedback and evaluation data
- write to the provider and give them a specified timeframe to rectify the situation
- write to the provider and request a meeting to identify and explore the issues identified
- request a report from the provider about how they intend to remediate unsatisfactory performance, and/or
- work with the provider to develop a remediation plan that requires them to perform certain activities or meet certain conditions. The provider and the Board may agree on a revised reporting schedule to ensure compliance and restore performance to an acceptable level (not to exceed one year).

Revocation will begin when the training provider has not made efforts to sufficiently remedy the performance issues identified by the Board, or when remediation is not possible in the circumstances.

A notice revoking the Board’s approval of a supervisor training provider will be sent to the provider’s nominated lead and will state: the reasons for the revocation; the effective revocation date; and that any supervisor training provided after the revocation date will not be considered Board-approved training and may not count towards the requirement to become or maintain BAS status.

After receiving the revocation notice, the training provider must provide clear public statements (for example, on the provider’s website) about when their training was considered to be Board-approved and on what date the Board’s approval was revoked. The provider must end their interactions with current and active participants in their formerly approved training programs in a professional manner.

The supervisor training provider’s details will be removed from the Board’s list of approved providers after the revocation date.

The Board’s decision to revoke a training provider’s approval status is final and not appealable. Supervisor training providers are eligible to re-apply for approval as a supervisor training provider in the next round of applications.