

From: Gavin Ivey [mailto:Gavin.Ivey@vu.edu.au]
Sent: Friday, 27 January 2012 11:09 AM
To: Psychconsultation
Subject: Response to draft document on supervision training

Attention: Chair, Supervisor Consultation

Dear Chair

In my capacity as Head of Discipline (Psychology) and Coordinator of Clinical Psychology training at Victoria University, I would like to respond to the Exposure Draft on guidelines for supervisor training (3 November, 2011).

Firstly, any initiative to improve the formal training of psychology supervisors is to be welcomed, and I congratulate your committee on the work done toward this end. However, it is important that the PBA understands some of the difficulties faced by training and placement organizations in implementing the proposed supervision training requirements. You will have received the Monash University submission response to the exposure draft, written by Professor Cornish et al (19th December, 2011). The Monash submission is comprehensive, and I would endorse the various concerns raised and recommendations proposed.

I would, however, like to alert you to the circumstances faced by Victoria University, which are certainly not unique, and which I hope you will consider. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing clinical psychology training programs in Victoria is finding suitable external placements in a competitive environment where this growing demand confronts limited placement availability. Because of this difficulty, it is impossible to have annual intakes into our clinical program (and other accredited professional masters/doctoral programs) and we are forced to have new intakes every second year only. A number of organizations that currently place our clinical masters and doctoral students have indicated that the cost and time implications of the proposed requirements will mean that they will not be able to offer clinical supervision. Thus an inadvertent consequence of your constructive initiative to improve supervision quality will be to aggravate the already dire placement availability situation.

With regard to our sport and exercise psychology placements, previously these were supervised mainly by university staff. However, the APAC ruling that only 33% of practica can be supervised by internal staff members now means that external supervisor will carry the bulk of this supervision responsibility. Once again this means that either placement agencies or individual supervisors will now be burdened with the cost of acquiring the mandated supervision training.

While it is obviously untenable and unethical to allow psychological professionals to supervise without any formal supervision training, the situation outlined above suggest that the proposed supervision requirements need to be revised to accommodate adverse placement realities. In this regard, I would like to propose the following:

1. That the PBA survey placement agencies to investigate the impact that the proposed supervisor training will have on them.
2. Given that a fair amount of supervision training involves learning about supervision models, ethical guidelines, etc, more flexible and less costly modes of supervision training than face-to-face instruction should be considered for part of the hour requirements. This could take the form of reading assignments and online assessment of theoretical knowledge.

3. That the proposed 14 hours of direct training be reduced and the impact of more modest supervision training on supervision practice be researched. I would predict that even reduced supervision training would substantially benefit supervisors and lead to acceptable supervision quality improvements.
4. That supervision training be staggered, thus spreading the immediate time and cost demands, for example, over two years.

I trust that these concerns and recommendations will receive a sympathetic hearing in your committee.

Kind regards

A/Prof. Gavin Ivey
Head of Psychology
Coordinator Clinical Psychology Training
St Albans Campus
Victoria University
PO Box 14428
Melbourne VIC 8001
Tel: (+63)99192138