

27 January 2012

Professor Brin Grenyer, Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
G.P.O. Box 9958
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Prof Grenyer,

RE: Consultation Paper 12
Exposure Draft: Guideline for Supervisors and Supervisor Training Providers

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Draft Guideline for Supervisors and Supervisor Training Providers.

The Guideline was discussed at a recent meeting of the Course Advisory Committee for the postgraduate Counselling Psychology programs at La Trobe University. Committee members include external placement supervisors from six different placement settings. Thus they represent a good cross section of views of placement supervisors.

The committee strongly endorsed the principle of supervisor training but had a number of concerns about the current proposals. We urge the Board to take these into consideration in the finalisation of the Guideline.

- Supervisors and academic staff were particularly concerned about the impact of the requirement on the potential availability of suitable placements. It was noted that it was already difficult for academic staff to find suitable placements and for supervisors to provide the supervision time required. There was concern that under the new requirement, there would be fewer trained supervisors available and that this would lead to considerable difficulties, at least in the short term, in finding suitable supervisors for students already enrolled in their postgraduate psychology programs.
- Supervisors were concerned about the potential cost and time of the training program for supervisors and who would fund this. There was thought to be a strong possibility that this would reduce the pool of available supervisors, with serious consequences for training programs.
- Given that there are only two accredited training providers currently, there were concerns about the practical issues of how supervisors would get the appropriate training in a timely manner. It was suggested that a longer transition time may be required to ensure that supervised placements for students in training programs were not put in jeopardy.
- Some university programs already provide supervisor training free to their supervisors so that there is a close alignment between particular program needs and the training and skills developed in supervisors. This also served to build a productive relationship between university academics and the supervisors who work with their program. There were some concerns that the proposed accrediting of training programs would change the valuable and mutual relationship between academic program and external supervisors.

Once again, we acknowledge the potential value of supervisor training and ask that these concerns be considered by the Board to reduce any detrimental impacts on the supervised placement options for postgraduate students.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof Margot Schofield,
Head, Department of Counselling and Psychological Health
Chair, Course Advisory Committee for Counselling Psychology Programs