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Attention: Chair, Supervisor Consultation
Psychology Board of Australia

27 January 2012

Dear Sir or Madam

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. I am writing in my capacity as placement coordinator for the UWS Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology) program, which is based in Greater Western Sydney in NSW.

The introduction of a framework for supervisor training is a positive step, and I support this unreservedly. Adopting an evidence-based, competency based framework, consistent with the general shift in this direction within the profession in Australia and internationally, is also to be commended.

The degree of flexibility inherent in the supervision training model being proposed is noted, however I have some concerns that the burden on supervisors who undertake supervision across different pre-registration training models and for area of practice endorsement the burden may be quite high if programs which combine these are not readily available. This may reduce their willingness to participate in supervision in some sectors.

I note the minimum of 14 hours direct face to face instruction, and wonder whether there may be some opportunity to develop novel methods using distance learning methods which would benefit both those prospective supervisors for whom travel to participate in face to face instruction would be problematic or for those whom taking time away from their workplace may limit their ability to participate. I note the Board's commitment to ensuring that training is available to those in rural and remote settings, and it is positive to see this addressed from the outset.

In relation to the Board-approved supervisor competencies put forward in Section 4, some further clarification about the extent to which the first competency needs to be addressed by the supervisor training would be helpful. This cluster of competencies is identified as the 8 competencies approved by the Board for internship and registrar training and I would take this to mean that these competencies should be assumed in supervisors having completed such training.

In relation to the assessment of those completing training courses, it may be helpful to consider using a standardised set of competency assessments across all of the courses. This will assist with consideration of the outcomes of the courses as a whole.

It is not entirely clear to me what the requirements for the structure and content of the revision courses are, and whether these will require approval or if continuing professional development activities related to supervision will fulfil this requirement. I note the references

to this in Attachment B, which may imply that this is a program requiring approval and only being available through approved training programs.

It is of note, that there is relatively little research undertaken in this area and strategies which support such research would be extremely helpful in ensuring an ongoing enhancement of evidence-based supervision standards. I note the intention to require training programs to provide outcome data to the Board annually, and this provides a good initial step, as well as to commission research in the longer term.

Although perhaps not strictly of relevance to the current task, I would make the following salient observation. In the higher education sector, where there has previously been no requirement for supervisors to be Board approved in many States and Territories, there exists some confusion among supervisors about the requirements. While higher education institutions will no doubt undertake education regarding the changes with those supervising their students, additional communication regarding the changes would be most helpful. I am somewhat concerned that given the low rate of completion of Board-approved training in this sector, and relatively short period of time remaining until the end of the transition period within which to finalise the guidelines in this area and for training programs to be developed and approved, that supervisors in this sector may struggle to have completed the training in time. This has the potential to affect the availability of supervisors for higher education courses.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any clarification.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathryn Perry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathryn Nicholson Perry
Senior Lecturer / UWS Psychology Clinic and Placement Coordinator