



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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25th January, 2012

Psychology Board of Australia
Level 8,
111 Bourke St,
Melbourne, Vic, 3000

Dear Chair, Psychology Board of Australia,
Re: Proposed Guideline for Supervisors and Supervisor Training Providers

The purpose of this letter is to express significant concerns that the proposed guidelines for supervision and supervisor training that are intended to be implemented in July 2013. As proposed, these changes will create an immediate and significant shortfall in supervisors available to our Master of Educational Psychology program, will create a disincentive for supervisors to take students on placement, and consequently threaten the viability of the training program. The following points explain these concerns.

1. In the past the Victorian Registration Board did not require specific supervision training, and psychologists were able to supervise if they were in good standing with the Board, had a number of years of experience, and for specialisation were eligible to join the relevant APS College. Our program has a well established group of supervisors who met the criteria, but were not all members of the APS and, although well experienced and would have met eligibility for CEDP membership, were not necessarily graduates of a post-graduate program in Educational and Developmental Psychology. They are for the most part senior members of the profession with many years of successful practice, who are well-equipped to initiate Masters students into the field of Educational and Developmental Psychology. There are currently only 4 Academic programs offering training for Educational and Developmental Psychologists in Australia, three of which are in Victoria. It is important that sufficient time is given to this State to introduce new systems so that the scarce resources are not reduced further, and that no more academic Educational and Developmental programs are lost to the community.
2. Our course requires on average 74-78 placements each year. In Victoria there are 111 CEDP members, with 38 identified as offering supervision. Of these members there are 7 who are part of our supervisors program. It is clear that this will present immediate problems if changes are introduced in 2013.
3. As we understand that high quality supervision is imperative in producing well prepared graduates, our program offers training sessions for the supervisors undertaking supervision for us, which is offered at no cost. Even so some supervisors often find it difficult to gain time release to attend these sessions, hence requiring greater time release for training will present a barrier to supervisors offering to supervise.



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4. We believe that the requirement that supervisors undertake training prior to June 2013, will result in a reduction of available supervisors for our program. Supervisors are not paid by the University to supervise and do it in good will in an effort to improve the profession. It is very unlikely that schools and agencies will offer financial support for training, and provision of supervision. Supervising students is not perceived by schools and agencies as priority business. It will be up to the individual supervisor to finance their own training which many are saying they would not be prepared to do. Hence, putting in financial and time obstacles will make engaging supervisors a more difficult task as the available group will be far reduced.

Establishing an accessible and fair cost structure should be a key component of any changes.

5. Should the results of this initiative have the feared outcomes, the University may not be able to fulfil its obligations to currently enrolled students, and would have to restrict places drastically in the future. Given the need for psychologists in schools, and that there are only 4 programs in Australia, this would severely limit the provision of quality services to children and young people.

6. We suggest the following changes to the Guideline:

- Retrospective accreditation be given to the current supervisors providing supervision for Higher Degree programs
- Reduced new training requirements for those who have been providing supervision already
- Acknowledgement of a range of training experiences that can be used as part of the training package that supervisors can claim as their supervision training.

In conclusion, we are supportive of improvements in the skilled delivery of supervision training and support for supervisors in providing training to new psychologists. However we would hope that the requirements are carefully tested against the workplace needs, in order to ensure that supervision is an attractive and valued professional responsibility and not an onerous task that is difficult to manage for all concerned.

Yours sincerely,

Vicki McKenzie

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Associate Professor Esther Care

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