



**Psychology Board of Australia**

# GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS

1 August 2018

## 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 assist the Board to achieve this commitment through the development and assessment of Board-established competencies for those seeking general registration or area of practice endorsement.

Supervisors sign off on the competence of supervisees, conveying to the Board the individual is safe to practise independently. The requirements for supervisors set out in these guidelines recognise the significance of the role that supervisors play in facilitating the ongoing safe practice of psychology.

If you are a Board-approved supervisor or want to become one, you should be familiar with these guidelines, which outline the requirements for psychologists to obtain Board-approved supervisor (BAS) status, and to maintain that BAS status.

Information on the Board's requirements for supervisor training programs, as well as information about becoming a Board-approved supervisor training provider, can be found in the Board's [Guidelines for supervisor training providers](#).

## 2. What is a Board-approved supervisor?

Registered psychologists completing one of the following programs require supervision by a Board-approved supervisor:

- the [4+2 internship program](#)
- the [5+1 internship program](#)
- placements during an accredited [higher degree program](#)
- working in addition to higher degree placements (see [Policy on working in addition to placements](#))
- 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.

Supervision provided by someone who is not a Board-approved supervisor will not be recognised by the Board. Registered psychologists must not give the impression they are Board-approved supervisors when they are not. Those undertaking one of the programs mentioned above can check their supervisor has BAS status by searching the [list of Board-approved supervisors](#).

Supervision occurring in other settings does not need to be provided by a Board-approved supervisor, for example, line managers, supervision of a research dissertation, supervision for the purposes of continuing professional development, and peer consultation.

Where supervision is undertaken in compliance with restrictions imposed on a psychologist's registration (conditions or undertakings), approval of supervisors occurs outside the process described in this document (i.e. these supervisors do not need to be a Board-approved supervisor as that term is defined in these guidelines). Such supervision arrangements are approved by the Board on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the issues and circumstances of the particular matter.

The Board uses the term 'approved' in relation to supervisors not 'accredited' or 'endorsed' as those terms have specific meanings under the National Law (accredited refers to a program of study and endorsement refers to endorsement of registration in approved areas of practice).

## 3. Board-approved supervisor requirements

### Professional competence

To provide effective supervision, you need to have developed proficiency in the area(s) of professional practice in which the supervisee is engaged. For this reason the Board has set the following requirements:

1. Before applying to become a Board-approved supervisor you will need to have held general registration for at least three years (or equivalent overseas registration or licensure).
2. In order to be a principal supervisor of a psychologist in a registrar program you will need to hold an endorsement in the relevant area of practice and you will need to have held this endorsement (or equivalent overseas registration, licensure, or endorsement, as assessed by the Board) for at least two years.

You will not be granted BAS status unless the first requirement has been met. You will not be approved as a registrar program principal supervisor unless the second requirement has been met. You will need to apply to the Board if you already have BAS status and subsequently meet the second requirement (and you want to be a registrar program principal supervisor).

Supervision of students completing an accredited higher degree program will need to be provided in accordance with the requirements set out in the accreditation standards for psychology. Under section 50 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (National Law), the accreditation authority must monitor accredited programs and their providers to ensure [accreditation standards](#) continue to be met.

### Supervisor competencies

Board-approved supervisors must acquire and maintain competencies specific to providing supervision. The Board's supervisor competencies are as set out in [Table 1](#).

### Training requirements

Before applying to become a Board-approved supervisor, you need to complete full training with a Board-approved supervisor training provider. This requirement relates to the development of the supervisor competencies set out above. The full training consists of three parts to be completed in sequence:

- **Part 1 – Knowledge assessment:** Requires at least seven hours of preparatory work (self-study modules, reading and reflection) relating to knowledge of relevant Board codes, guidelines and policies, and knowledge of best-practice supervision. This part is completed by passing an online assessment.
- **Part 2 – Skills training workshop:** Requires at least 12 hours<sup>1</sup> of direct training focusing on the development of practical supervision skills that are relevant to all supervisee training pathways and reflective practice. This part emphasises the integration of knowledge and practical skills.
- **Part 3 – Competency-based assessment and evaluation:** Requires the submission of an electronic recording of a supervision session and a written reflection (including a self-evaluation) of that session. The recording and reflection must be submitted to the training provider within six months of completing Part 2.<sup>2</sup> Note that training providers are free to require participants to submit their recording within a shorter-time period (e.g. three months). The training provider will systematically assess the demonstration of supervisor competencies and provide a pass or fail grade and feedback. You may be given three attempts to pass Part 3 before you will be advised to re-complete Parts 1 and 2.

You should not begin the full training program until you have held general registration for two and a half years, as you cannot apply for BAS status until you have held general registration for three years.

A list of Board-approved supervisor training providers and their contact details are available on the [Board's website](#).

[Section 4](#) of these guidelines contains information about applying for BAS status after you have completed the training. You will need to complete refresher training every five years in order to maintain your BAS status (see [Section 5](#) for details).

1 As set out in the *Guidelines for supervisor training providers*, some providers may choose to run the workshop on non-consecutive days.

2 Individual training providers may allow extensions to this timeline in certain circumstances, in accordance with their business policies.

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Table 1: Supervisor competencies

Competency	Description
<b>1. Knowledge of and skills in effective supervision practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of learning processes in supervision, including models, theories and methods of supervision.</li> <li>• Establishing competency-based goals and objectives, including contracting, agenda setting, engaging, monitoring, evaluation and record keeping.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Knowledge of and ability to develop and manage the supervisory relationship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing and strengthening the supervisory relationship, including knowledge of the stages and development of the supervisory relationship.</li> <li>• Reflective supervision practice, including openness to feedback and using peer consultation and supervision of supervision.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Interpersonal competence, including communication skills and demonstrating empathy and respect.</li> <li>• Acknowledging and effectively managing the power differential in the supervisory relationship.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Ability to assess the psychological competencies of the supervisee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively monitoring, assessing and evaluating competencies of the supervisee on an ongoing basis, including knowledge of effective evaluation methods.</li> <li>• Encouraging the supervisee's self-reflectivity and attention to the development of meta-competence in the supervisee.</li> <li>• Providing effective feedback to the supervisee, including demonstrated skills in communication and critical feedback.</li> <li>• Addressing problems related to the supervisee not meeting minimal core competencies.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Capacity to evaluate the supervisory process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the supervisory process, including identifying expectations and responsibilities of both the supervisor and supervisee.</li> <li>• Encouraging and responding to supervisee and peer feedback to improve supervisory practice.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Responsiveness to cultural and social diversity in supervision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsiveness to cultural and social diversity in the supervisory process and supervisory relationship.</li> <li>• Awareness of the impact of diversity when working with a range of clients in a range of services.</li> <li>• Attention to the development of responsiveness to diversity in the supervisee.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Ability to address legal and ethical considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding ethical principles and regulatory requirements and how they are used to guide professional practice and supervision to protect the public.</li> <li>• Knowledge of limits of competence and how they should be managed.</li> <li>• Awareness of personal limitations and biases that may affect supervision practice.</li> <li>• Attention to and support of self-care.</li> </ul>

## Other requirements

Knowledge of the Board's standards, guidelines and policies

All psychologists have an obligation to ensure they are familiar with, and practise in accordance with, the Board's [standards, codes, guidelines and policies](#) (including the Board-adopted APS Code of Ethics). As a Board-approved supervisor, this is important as you will be responsible for ensuring your supervisees understand the requirements set out in these documents. Depending on the training pathway(s) being undertaken by your supervisee(s), you will need to understand and adhere to the supervision requirements set out in the relevant documents, for instance:

- Guidelines for the 4+2 internship program
- Guidelines for the 5+1 internship program
- Policy on working in addition to placements
- Guidelines for the National Psychology Examination
- Guidelines on area of practice endorsements
- Policy for recency of practice, and
- Guidelines: transitional programs for overseas qualified applicants.

## Mandatory reporting

As a registered health practitioner you have a mandatory reporting responsibility under the National Law. If in the course of practising your profession 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](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

## Supervisor responsibility

As a Board-approved supervisor, you are responsible for your supervisee's practice as outlined in these guidelines and other applicable Board guidelines, and as set out in your arrangement with your supervisee. If the Board is concerned about the health, conduct or performance of the supervisee, the Board may investigate the supervisor if it believes the concerns relate to insufficient or inadequate supervision. The [Appendix](#) sets out circumstances under which BAS status may be revoked by the Board.

## Managing conflicts of interest

As a Board-approved supervisor, you must be able to provide an independent report of supervision outcomes and be willing to report to AHPRA immediately if any practice of the supervisee is placing the public at risk. Therefore, you should not provide supervision where any actual or perceived conflicts of interest may undermine the independence of your reporting.

A conflict of interest occurs when a fair-minded observer might reasonably think that your interest may result in a conflict with the proper performance of your duties and responsibilities. Examples of situations that may result in a conflict of interest for Board-approved supervisors include:

- The supervisee is your employer and/or has the ability to direct the supervision.
- You have a shared financial or other interest with the supervisee or your friends or relatives have such an interest.
- You accept a gift or benefit that may be seen as intending to influence how you act as a supervisor.
- You have personal, philosophical, religious, moral or political beliefs or attitudes that could be seen to affect your impartiality.
- You have, or are developing, a personal relationship with the supervisee or their friend or relative that goes beyond the level of a professional working relationship.
- You have been, or are currently, engaged in a close personal or therapeutic relationship with the supervisee.
- Providing reports to the Board or to AHPRA results in your personal gain or advantage (other than receipt of appropriate payment for supervision).

## General duties

As a Board-approved supervisor, you must undertake supervision in good faith, in a financially responsible manner, and with a reasonable degree of care, diligence and skill.

You must not use your position as Board-approved supervisor, or the information that comes to you through this position, to gain an advantage for yourself or someone else. Receipt of appropriate payment for supervision is allowed.

## Duty of confidentiality

Protected information is information that comes to your knowledge through your role as a Board-approved supervisor. You must not disclose protected information unless:

- it is necessary to carry out the supervision and fulfil your obligations as a Board-approved supervisor
- it is required by law, or
- the person that the information relates to consents to the disclosure.

All information provided to you, as a Board-approved supervisor, should be securely stored to ensure confidentiality is maintained and destroyed when it is no longer needed to carry out the supervision (unless you are legally required to keep it).

## 4. Applying for BAS status

Once you have completed full training and you have held general registration for three years, you can apply to become a Board-approved supervisor using the *Application to act as a Board-approved supervisor form (ABAS-76)* on the Board's website. You will need to supply evidence of completing full training, for example, a copy of your certificate of completion.

If approved, you will be granted BAS status for five years. The five years will be calculated from the date you passed component 3 of full training, not from the date you applied for or were granted BAS status.

The Board's policy for refusing or revoking BAS status is set out in the [Appendix](#) of these guidelines.

### List of Board-approved supervisors

The Board publishes a [list of Board-approved supervisors](#) on its website. This allows others to confirm your BAS status. Once you have been granted BAS status, your name, registration number, principal place of practice (suburb and postcode), and BAS expiry date will appear on this list. If you are approved as a registrar program principal supervisor, this will appear on the list, along with your area(s) of practice endorsement. Users can search for a supervisor by name, location and whether or not they are approved as a registrar program principal supervisor for their selected area of practice endorsement.

## 5. Maintaining your BAS status (refresher training)

To maintain your BAS status, you'll need to complete refresher training every five years. The minimum requirement is the completion of a master class with a Board-approved supervisor training provider.

If you do not meet refresher training requirements your BAS status will lapse and you will need to complete a Board-approved full training program before applying to have your BAS status reinstated. Any supervision provided while not a Board-approved supervisor will not be recognised by the Board as suitable supervision in the training pathways listed in [Section 2](#). Supervisors are responsible for informing supervisee(s) that their BAS status has lapsed.

A master class is a competency-based supervisor training workshop requiring at least six hours of direct training and including an assessment component.<sup>3</sup> Master classes may focus on specific topics relevant to supervision, or to supervision in particular areas of practice.

The following training also meets (and exceeds) the Board's refresher training requirement:

- more than one master class
- Part 2 of full training
- Parts 1 and 2 of full training
- Parts 2 and 3 of full training, or
- all three parts of full training.

When deciding whether to complete a master class (the minimum requirement) or training that exceeds the requirement, you may wish to consider the following:

- self-assessment, noting any changes to current work, interests, etc.
- self-assessment against the supervisor competencies
- length of time since you completed full training
- your knowledge of changes to the Board's registration standards, guidelines and policies
- learning outcomes noted in your learning plan for continual professional development (CPD)
- feedback from supervisees and peers, and/or
- location and content of supervision being provided.

A list of Board-approved training providers can be located on the [Board's website](#). Please contact the training providers directly for information about the dates and location of training.

Once you have completed refresher training, apply to the Board to maintain your BAS status using the *Application to maintain Board-approved supervisor status form (MBAS-76)*. You will need to supply evidence of completing training that meets the Board's refresher training requirements listed above, for example, a copy of your certificate of completion.

If approved, your BAS status will be extended for five years from the date you completed your refresher training, not from the date you applied to maintain your BAS status.

As set out in the Board's [CPD Guidelines](#), it is recommended that Board-approved supervisors include some additional professional development activities relevant to supervision skills at least every two years, such as peer consultation on supervision, workshops on supervision, or other activities that improve knowledge and skills in relevant areas such as supervision, learning, teaching or mentoring.

### Requesting an extension to your refresher training deadline

The Board will only consider requests for extensions from individuals who were unable to complete refresher training due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control. You may be asked to provide relevant documentary evidence to support your application for extension.

The Board considers that five years is a generous period that allows sufficient opportunity for individuals to take time out of the workforce and still complete the minimum requirement of a six-hour workshop. Planned leave (e.g. parental leave, long service leave, travel) taken during the five years is generally not considered a sufficient reason to request an extension.

Extension requests should be submitted to AHPRA in writing via the [online web enquiry form](#).

<sup>3</sup> As set out in the *Guidelines for supervisor training providers*, providers may choose deliver workshops in two sessions on different days.

## 6. Cancelling your BAS status

If you believe you do not meet the requirements set out in these guidelines, or you otherwise no longer wish to be a Board-approved supervisor, you should cancel your BAS status by writing to AHPRA. You can use the [web enquiry form](#) to do this.

Discontinuing BAS status has significant implications for supervisees. Any supervision provided while not a Board-approved supervisor will not be recognised by the Board as suitable supervision in the training pathways listed in [Section 2](#). Supervisors are responsible for informing any supervisee(s) that their BAS status has been cancelled.

## 7. Review

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

## 8. 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 notated 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.

**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 practise 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 may refer to 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 doing 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 practise.

**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 refusing or revoking BAS status

### Refusal

The Board can refuse an initial application for BAS status, an application to maintain BAS status, or an application to reinstate BAS status after a period of revocation, if the psychologist:

- has not held general registration for three years (or equivalent overseas registration or licensure)<sup>4</sup>
- does not meet the recency of practice standard
- has not provided sufficient evidence of completing the required Board-approved supervisor training
- has conditions or restrictions on their registration (the Board will consider if the conditions or restrictions, or the relating notification, complaint, or disciplinary matter relates to or affects the provision of supervision), or
- has not completed any remediation required by the Board (e.g. additional training) in the case of a period of BAS-status revocation.

### Revocation

A psychologist's BAS status will automatically be revoked by the Board when their registration is:

- discontinued or lapsed
- no longer current
- suspended
- cancelled, or
- surrendered.

A psychologist's BAS status may be revoked by the Board when:

- A panel or tribunal requires or recommends the psychologist does not provide supervision, or recommends that the Board revoke BAS status.
- An impairment is found to be affecting the psychologist's capacity to practise and/or supervise.
- The psychologist fails to meet the requirements or fails to demonstrate the supervisor competencies set out in these guidelines.
- The psychologist has failed to adhere to their responsibilities as a Board-approved supervisor, as outlined in the Board's standards, guidelines and policies. Examples include:

- inadequate supervision, including insufficient supervision
  - inability to meet the requirements of supervisors as outlined for the relevant training pathway
  - providing supervision that is not appropriate or evidence-based
  - directing the supervisee in practices that are not considered to be evidence-based
  - not managing psychological risk appropriately
  - not ensuring they are accessible to the supervisee
  - not following the Board-adopted code of ethics, and
  - significant or repeated issues with not providing information to the Board or AHPRA regarding supervisees in a professional, competent and timely fashion.
- The psychologist does not meet the Board's registration standards.
  - There is a notification relating to the psychologist's sub-standard conduct or performance as a Board-approved supervisor.
  - There is a notification made about the psychologist's health, conduct or performance. The Board's decision will take into account the likely impact on the psychologist's capacity or ability to provide supervision. The Board may wait until the conclusion of the notification process before revoking BAS status.
  - The psychologist's registration is subject to conditions or restrictions that relate to, affect or are likely to affect their capacity or ability to provide supervision.
  - There is an adverse finding about the psychologist's health, conduct or performance, including actions taken under Part 8, Division 7 of the National Law (the Board will take into account the likely impact on the psychologist's capacity or ability to provide supervision).

The Board may revoke BAS status for a set period of time. The Board may require the psychologist to undertake remedial supervision training instead of, or in addition to, revoking their BAS status. When BAS status is revoked, the practitioner is required to complete a

<sup>4</sup> Note that registration does not have to be held in consecutive years.

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Board-approved full training program before applying to have that status reinstated unless the Board determines at the time of revocation that other remedial training is sufficient, for instance, a master class or one or two components of full training.

When the psychologist's BAS status is revoked, they will be removed from the list of Board-approved supervisors. Supervisors will be notified when their BAS status has been revoked. Revocation of BAS status has significant implications for supervisees. Any supervision provided while not a Board-approved supervisor will not be recognised by the Board as suitable supervision in the pathways to registration or endorsement, as listed in [Section 2](#) of these guidelines. Supervisors are responsible for informing their supervisee(s) that their BAS status has been revoked, and for advising AHPRA when they have done so. Supervisees can check a supervisor or prospective supervisor has BAS status by searching the [list of Board-approved supervisors](#).

Psychologists who have had their BAS status revoked may re-apply for BAS status when conditions or restrictions on their registration are removed, when the revocation period is over, or when they have completed any remediation required by the Board.

A psychologist who is dissatisfied with the revocation of their BAS status may request a review of the decision. A request for a review can be made in writing to AHPRA, and this will be considered by the board that made the revocation determination. If the psychologist is not satisfied with that Board's response, they can request a second review in writing which will be considered by a board that was not involved in the initial revocation determination.