

PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SUPERVISION GUIDELINES FOR SPECIALIST TITLES

Information

The specialist titles currently approved by the Board are:-

Clinical Psychologist

Counselling Psychologist

Educational Psychologist (or Educational and Developmental Psychologist)

Forensic Psychologist

Clinical Neuropsychologist

Organisational and/or Industrial Psychologist

Sport Psychologist

A "*specialist psychology title*" describes a unique combination of specialist knowledge, skills and experience which equip a psychologist to practice optimally as a specialist with the public.

The Board may approve a specialist title upon application by a registered psychologist who is able to demonstrate that he/she possesses a two year full-time (or part-time equivalent) post graduate applied Masters degree in the relevant speciality of psychology which is recognised by the Board, followed by a minimum of two years full-time (or part-time equivalent) supervised relevant practice, which has been previously approved by the Board.

Prior approval of supervision arrangements is required for specialist supervision undertaken in Western Australia.

Psychologists who wish to commence supervision for the specialist title should submit:

- Details of the proposed supervision to the Board on Form 21.
- A copy of the objectives set for the first six month period. These objectives should be based on the Checklist of Specialist Skills;
- A Duty Statement evidencing the specialist nature of the employment position or a Duty Statement accompanied by an indication of specialist duties carried out within the position.

Supervision contracts (Form 21) should be submitted to the Board **prior** to the commencement of supervision (refer Clause 5.1.1 below). The Board will not count supervision undertaken prior to receipt of the supervision plan.

Changes in supervisor must be notified to the Board and a new Form 21 submitted. Where this is received within 14 days of the completion of the previous supervision arrangements, supervision will be regarded as continuous.

Please note that the supervisor will be required to hold the same specialist title as that sought by the applicant. In some cases, the Board may approve a supervisor who holds a different specialist title but is considered to have competencies in the area in which supervision is required. This will be considered by the Board on a case by case basis, but will be restricted to a maximum of 6 months only.

A *Form 22 (Progress Report)* should be submitted by your supervisor within seven (7) days of the end of the six-monthly period, together with the objectives of the next supervision period.

Following completion of the two year period of supervision, you may apply for the specialist title. A *Form 23* report from your supervisor should be submitted together with the completed *Checklist of Specialist Skills* achieved.

Please call our office should you require any further clarification.

PREAMBLE

The Board has established a policy which specifies that in order to use an approved specialist title, a psychologist on completion of his/her post-graduate applied training in the specialist area, must have then engaged in relevant psychological practice under supervision for a period of two years full-time, or the part-time equivalent. Supervision must be conducted by a registered psychologist who holds the relevant approved specialist title.

The purpose of the practice requirement is to ensure that, at the end of the two year period, the psychologist has successfully amalgamated general and specialist knowledge, skills and values and that he/she practices at a level commensurate with professional psychologists who have an approved specialist title.

The following guidelines have been designed to assist psychologists having a specialist post-graduate applied qualification and their supervisors to achieve this goal.

1. THE PRACTICE REQUIREMENT

- 1.1. For the present purpose, "psychological practice at a specialist level" is defined as: *the amalgamation and practical application of general and specialist psychological knowledge and techniques to the understanding, and possible modification, of behaviour.*
- 1.2. The applicant for approval to commence specialist title supervision must satisfy the Board that he/she is engaged in relevant psychological practice for at least 80% of his/her time.
- 1.3. The applicant's supervisor must be a registered psychologist who holds the same specialist title. The Board may approve a supervisor who holds a different specialist title, but this will be restricted to a maximum of 6 months only
- 1.4. The Board recognises that supervisors may need to make use of the expertise of registered psychologists having other specialist titles where this may enhance the training of applicants.
- 1.5. Applicants who seek credit for experience gained outside Western Australia will be required to demonstrate that such experience entailed psychological practice under appropriate supervision, and equivalent to that required in Western Australia. The Board will require applicants with interstate or overseas experience to undertake **at least** 6 months supervision in Western Australia. This is to ensure that applicants are able to familiarise themselves with local ethical and cultural issues, Code of Ethics and local Acts of Parliament relevant to their workplace.

2. SPECIALIST SUPERVISORS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1. The Board requires that the supervisor:
 - 2.1.1. be registered as a psychologist having held a relevant approved specialist title for at least 12 months;

- 2.1.2. shall usually supervise no more than two applicants for specialist titles concurrently; further applications to supervise will be considered by the Board where the circumstances of the supervision suggest this arrangement is the most favourable arrangement for the applicant and will not disadvantage existing supervision arrangements;
- 2.1.3. be accessible to the applicants throughout the supervisory period, and be in direct face-to-face contact with him/her for not less than four hours throughout the month. Observation of the applicant's client contact, preparation time for the applicant and phone calls related to the supervision are not included in this four hours. It is expected that the applicant and supervisor will negotiate arrangements which satisfy both as to the extra contact that will be required, depending on the experience of the supervisee, the familiarity of the supervisor with the applicant's work, the demands of the particular speciality and work circumstances;
- 2.1.4. shall bring to the attention of relevant others (eg employers), after discussion with the supervisee, any requirements, conditions or circumstances in the applicant's work situation that will facilitate or improve supervision and/or specialist professional practice;
- 2.1.5. negotiate a supervision agreement (Form 21) with the applicant. A copy of the initial and any updated agreements are to be submitted to the Board for approval;
- 2.1.6. ensure that at the start of the supervisory period, the applicant understands and thereafter adheres to the professional and ethical standards of psychological practice, which are based on the Code of Ethics of the Australian Psychological Society and the Psychologists Act 2005;
- 2.1.7. provide six-monthly progress reports (Form 22) throughout the supervision period. The supervisor and applicant should arrange to complete the six-monthly review process and the progress form at a supervision session on or before the due date and the Board must receive the form no later than seven (7) working days after the due date. The Board will acknowledge receipt of the progress form in writing. Failure to lodge the report with the Board may result in cancellation of approval of the supervision arrangement. The applicant is required to sight and sign the progress report and comment on its contents;
- 2.1.8. together with the applicant, inform the Board of any changes in supervision arrangements;
- 2.1.9. recommend, at the end of the supervisory period, that:
 - 2.1.9.1. the applicant's application for a specialist title be approved (in this case the supervisor will be required to complete a Supervision Declaration (Form 23) concerning the applicant's level of performance); or

- 2.1.9.2. the applicant be required to complete a further period of supervised practice, the conditions of which to be determined by the Board; or
- 2.1.9.3. the application to utilise a specialist title be refused.
- 2.1.10. keep records of the supervision process for a period of seven (7) years from the date on which supervision is terminated.
- 2.2. The Board will not approve supervision agreements where there is a potential for conflict of interest. The charging of supervision fees during the supervision period is not regarded as a conflict of interest regardless of whether the applicant is recommended.

3. THE NATURE OF SUPERVISION

- 3.1. The Board considers that effective supervision involves:
 - 3.1.1. assessing the specialist knowledge and skills of the applicant;
 - 3.1.2. identifying the objectives to be achieved in successive six-monthly periods;
 - 3.1.3. identifying a range of opportunities and experiences relevant to the development of a competent specialist professional psychologist;
 - 3.1.4. monitoring and evaluating performance, together with the provision of appropriate feedback to the applicant;
 - 3.1.5. modelling behaviour which is appropriate, responsible and ethical for a specialist professional psychologist;
 - 3.1.6. ensuring the applicant has made appropriate arrangements regarding legal responsibility for areas of specialist work in which the applicant is not yet competent or responsible;
 - 3.1.7. attending to any grievances on the part of the applicant which may arise with the supervision process.

4. THE APPLICANT'S PROGRAM

By the end of the supervision period, the applicant must demonstrate to the supervisor the knowledge and skills of a specialist psychologist, ie that he/she is a practitioner who can directly assist clients with their problems based on specialist knowledge and skills developed within the profession, and can contribute to the body of professional knowledge, thereby improving practice. An outline of specialist knowledge and skills required by the particular speciality must be sighted and signed by supervisor and supervisee as part of the supervision contract.

5. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE APPLICANT

5.1. The Board requires that the applicant:

- 5.1.1. negotiate an initial supervision agreement with a registered psychologist having a relevant approved specialist title, and have the agreement recorded with the Board prior to the commencement of supervision;
- 5.1.2. in conjunction with the supervisor, decide upon the objectives to be accomplished in each six-monthly supervision period;
- 5.1.3. record the activities undertaken throughout the supervisory period in accordance with the requirements of the particular speciality, and discuss these activities with the supervisor as part of the supervisory process and in particular as part of the six-monthly review;
- 5.1.4. consult with the supervisor about grievances which arise about supervision and co-operate with attempts to resolve these;
- 5.1.5. together with the supervisor, inform the Board of any changes in supervision arrangements.

6. TRANSFER OF SUPERVISION

Should it become necessary for supervision to be transferred, the applicant should advise the Board in writing as soon as possible. A new contract form should be negotiated by the new supervisor and the applicant and forwarded to the Board *within fourteen (14) working days* of the new supervision period. This will then be considered by the Board at its next meeting.

A progress report should be completed at the last supervision session with the current supervisor, along with the Checklist of Specialist Skills and a review of the Objectives. The progress report should be forwarded to the Board immediately and a copy of the reviewed Checklist and Objectives forwarded to the new supervisor by the commencement of the new supervision period. If the above process is satisfactorily completed, supervision will be regarded as continuous.

In the event of the new supervision arrangement not being approved by the Board, the applicant should retain the copies of the reviewed checklist and objectives. The applicant should seek advice from the Board as to what supervision arrangement would be considered appropriate.

7. EXTERNAL SUPERVISION

- 7.1. In exceptional circumstances where specialist supervision cannot be arranged within the applicant's employment, the Board may approve "external supervision" by a registered psychologist having a relevant approved title, subject to:
 - 7.1.1. the supervisor and applicant demonstrating that adequate supervision is viable;
 - 7.1.2. the supervisor demonstrating to the Board his/her acceptance of responsibility for supervision;

7.1.3 the Board would expect that the supervisor would, where possible (as would be expected in the vast majority of circumstances), visit the supervisee's workplace frequently to understand the workplace environment and conditions. This must be with the understanding and permission of the employer and management;

7.1.4 the Board would expect that the supervisor would initiate communication and meet, where possible, with the supervisee's line manager or work supervisor regularly to obtain feedback and reports on progress and any issues requiring attention early. Joint meetings would strengthen the supervision process.

8. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

It is a requirement of the supervision contract that the supervisor and the applicant define the processes of conflict resolution they would use in the event of a grievance between them during the supervision process. If use of the process proves unsuccessful either or both may contact the Board for assistance and intervention. The Board will then take whatever action it considers appropriate.

9. APPEALS PROCESS

In accordance with Section 99 of the Psychologists Act 2005, an applicant who is not granted a specialist title may apply to the State Administrative Tribunal for a review of the Board's decision.