

## Fact sheet for the 5+1 internship program

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### Managing supervisory disputes

In the context of the 5+1 internship program, supervision is the process of acquired learning between a provisional psychologist and a supervisor. It is an interactive process that provides the provisional psychologist with a professionally stimulating and supportive opportunity for growth.

It is a specific type of professional relationship in which there is supportive direction, facilitative activities, and instructive critique given by the supervisor to help the provisional psychologist to ensure effective and safe psychological services are provided.

Supervision should ensure that a provisional psychologist:

- practices within accepted professional standards
- provides evidence-based assessments and interventions
- engages in professional reflexivity
- works within the limits of their skills and competence.

### What to do if a dispute occurs

Where there is a dispute between the supervisor and the provisional psychologist, an initial consultation to discuss any grievances should occur. Both parties should work towards settling the dispute by negotiation, to be carried out in good faith.

Ways to navigate the dispute in a professional and proactive way<sup>1,2</sup>:

- create a positive environment by selecting a mutually suitable time and agree on ground rules, including listening with respect
- acknowledge any power imbalance that may be present
- be clear on what the dispute is about – identify the source of the conflict, core issues and points of view
- allow both parties to share their perspective without interruption and recognise any shared frustrations
- discuss what a positive outcome would look like for each party – what are possible solutions or, if necessary, compromises?
- select an agreed upon solution and identify any actions each person will take.

Either party may also consult with a senior colleague, or a professional association, for advice. Referring to the signed internship plan may be helpful to remind both parties of the supervisory agreement, work roles of provisional psychologist and the plan for competency development.

### What to do if no mutually agreeable solution is found

The provisional psychologist and supervisor can choose to terminate the supervision arrangement. The provisional psychologist will need to organise a new supervision arrangement if they wish to continue the internship.

Details on how to change principal supervisors are found in the [Guidelines for the 5+1 internship program](#) (the Guidelines).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.clinedaus.org.au/topics-category/conflict-resolution-in-student-placements-141>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/898806/Conflict-Resolution-Supervisors-and-Supervisees\\_July-2025\\_final.pdf](https://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/898806/Conflict-Resolution-Supervisors-and-Supervisees_July-2025_final.pdf)

While the Guidelines promote a respectful, professional relationship between the supervisor and the provisional psychologist, allegations relating to the conduct of the supervisor or the provisional psychologist may become the subject of a notification to the Psychology Board (the Board).

Either party can make a [formal notification](#) to the Board if there are grounds under section 144 of the [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law](#) (the National Law).

Grounds for a notification about the conduct of a registered psychologist or provisional psychologist may include failure to comply with the requirements of the:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Guidelines for the 5+1 internship program](#), or
- [Guidelines for supervisors](#).

If the Board receives a complaint (notification) about disputes in connection with the internship, the Board may decide:

- the complaint is not a matter for the Board, or
- the matter be considered as a notification about the health, performance or conduct of the registrant.

If the subject of the notification is the supervisor, the Board may also review their Board-approved supervisor status.