



Information sheet for supervisors of psychologists receiving supervision under a restriction

Introduction

This information sheet is to help you, as an approved supervisor, better understand your role and responsibilities in providing supervision to a registered psychologist and guiding professional development in accordance with restrictions on their registration.

The National Board, panels and tribunals can place restrictions (conditions and undertakings) on a psychologist's registration when they consider it necessary to protect the public, such as during an investigation or at the end of a hearing.

Supervision undertaken in compliance with restrictions on registration is designed to address particular deficiencies identified in a registered psychologist's practice and/or their conduct which may place the public at risk. Supervision as a result of restrictions is usually undertaken in addition to the professional supervision required as part of an individual's continuing professional development.

Agreeing to supervise the professional development of a registered psychologist with a restriction is an important responsibility. The Board, panel or tribunal has delegated responsibility to you, to ensure the psychologist you are providing supervision to overcome these deficits and integrates professional knowledge and skills into demonstrated competencies that meet the standard of performance outlined in the Board adopted code of ethics.

Your service to the community and support of your colleague, by undertaking the supervision, is appreciated.

When should I decline to act as a supervisor?

A supervisor must be able to provide an independent report of the supervision outcomes and must be willing to report to Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) immediately if any practice of the psychologist is placing the public at risk. Therefore, you must declare to AHPRA any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that 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 are:

- The psychologist being the employer of the supervisor and/or having the ability to direct the supervision.
- Having a shared financial or other interest with the psychologist being supervised or if your friends or relatives have such an interest.
- Accepting a gift or benefit that may be seen as intending to influence how you act as a supervisor.
- Having a personal, philosophical, religious, moral or political belief or attitude that could be seen to affect your impartiality.
- Having or developing a personal relationship with the psychologist being supervised or their friend or relative that goes beyond the level of a professional working relationship.
- Having been, or being currently engaged in a close personal or therapeutic relationship with the supervisee
- Providing reports to the National Board that result in your personal gain or advantage other than receipt of an appropriate payment for supervision.

What is a supervisor expected to do?

In undertaking the supervision, the National Board expects that you will:

- develop a written supervision plan for Board approval outlining the form the supervision will take and how the area of concerns for the Board, panel or tribunal will be addressed in the supervision
- undertake the supervision as per the approved plan
- immediately inform AHPRA of any significant concerns identified through the supervision where any of the practitioner's practice is placing the public at risk
- provide written reports of the supervision to the Board, and
- notify the Board if you intend to withdraw from the role of supervisor.

What information is to be included in the supervision report?

Written reports are to be provided in accordance with the restrictions on registration and until such time as you are advised by AHPRA that the Board has removed the restriction requiring supervision.

An example of what should be included in a report is as follows:

- dates and duration of the supervision
- whether the supervision was face to face or what technology was used
- progress of the supervision in accordance with the supervision plan
- confirmation of the supervision activities detailed in the approved supervision plan that have been completed
- whether the psychologist's professional development has or has not been satisfactory and additional information in support of this assessment
- whether there were areas for improvement noted and the feedback provided to the psychologist
- any concerns you have regarding the psychologist's practice, and
- any recommendations for the Board to consider, for example, changes required in how the practitioner practises the profession, education or upskilling.

A written report of the supervision is to be provided at the conclusion of the minimum period of supervision provided for in the restrictions. The information in the report should be sufficient for the Board to determine whether or not the issues which gave rise to the imposition of the restriction requiring the supervision have been addressed.

Reports are to be forwarded to the Board via AHPRA (addressed to the compliance case officer, whose name and contact details will be provided to you).

How will supervision reports be used?

The supervision report will be used by the National Board to determine whether the psychologist has overcome the identified deficits and successfully developed their practice by integrating professional knowledge and skills into demonstrated competencies that meet the standard of performance outlined in the Board adopted code of ethics.

The reports will not be routinely released to the practitioner. However, if the National Board relies on any of the reports to take further regulatory action in relation to the psychologist, they will need to release the report. AHPRA and the Board may also have to disclose a report if this is required by law.

All costs associated with the supervision and the provision of the report is the responsibility of the supervisee

Further information regarding AHPRA's privacy policy is available at www.ahpra.gov.au: *Freedom of information and privacy*. The privacy policy explains:

- how you may access and seek correction of your personal information held by AHPRA or a National Board
- how to complain about a breach of your privacy, and
- how your complaint will be dealt with.

What are my rights and obligations as a supervisor?

As a supervisor you are performing an important function for the purposes of the National Law and this brings with it responsibilities and protections. In agreeing to undertake the supervision, you are confirming that you are aware of the following rights and obligations, and that you must notify AHPRA and withdraw from the supervision you cannot meet these obligations. You may also, for any other personal reason, withdraw from the supervision at any time by notifying AHPRA.

General duties

You must undertake the 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 supervisor or the information that comes to you through this position to gain an advantage for yourself or someone else or to cause damage to the operation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

Duty of confidentiality

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

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

All information provided to you, as a supervisor, must be:

- securely stored to ensure confidentiality is maintained
- securely returned to AHPRA when asked, or
- destroyed when it is no longer needed to carry out the supervision unless you are legally required to keep it (such as record keeping obligations).

Protection from personal liability

AHPRA provides protection from personal monetary liability for anything done or omitted to be done in good faith by an approved supervisor in carrying out the supervision of registered psychologists under restrictions.

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 by registered health practitioners 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), 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.

Definitions

Approved supervisor – A registered psychologist approved to act as a supervisor for the purpose of restrictions imposed by the Board (other than restrictions associated with provisional registration status), a panel or tribunal

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, provisional psychologists and/or psychologists in accredited higher degree programs, a provisional psychologist/psychologist with overseas qualifications undertaking the transitional program, and psychologists undertaking registrar programs leading to an approved area of practice endorsement.

National Law means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory of Australia and as amended from time to time.

Provisional psychologist means a person registered as a provisional psychologist under section 62 of the National Law.

Psychologist means a person who holds general registration as a psychologist under section 52 of the National Law.

Registered psychologist in this document includes a Psychologist or a Provisional psychologist

Supervisee - refers to a registered provisional psychologist undertaking the 4+2 or 5+1 internship program, or a psychologist undertaking the registrar program, as outlined in the relevant guidelines, or a provisional psychologist or psychologist undertaking an accredited higher degree, or a psychologist with overseas training who is undertaking a transitional program. A supervisee can also be a registered psychologist or provisional psychologist who has restrictions on their registration.

For more information

- on notifications - www.ahpra.gov.au
- on competencies expected of Board-approved supervisors – see the [Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers](#)
- on competencies for psychologists holding general registration – see the [General registration standards](#)
- on competencies for psychologists holding provisional registration – see the [Provisional registration standard](#)
- on competencies for psychologists holding an area of practice endorsement – see the [Area of practice endorsement registration standard](#)