

Supervision Policy

30 June 2021



The Financial Counsellor's Association of NSW has adopted the National Professional Supervision Policy in its entirety - with the following two (2) exceptions:

1. FCAN Required Number of Hours of Supervision:

The number of hours of supervision required for NSW financial counsellors are:

- employed 20 hours or more per week – 20 hours per membership year
- employed less than 20 hours per week – 10 hours per membership year

2. FCAN recognition of existing long term Supervision arrangements:

Continued supervision relationships may remain in the instance where the Supervisor has been chosen by the supervisee in a demonstrated long term (5 years or more) arrangement.

Implementation

The FCAN Policy will be implemented on 1 July 2021.

To assist with implementation, FCAN has developed the following guidelines for NSW members to be read in conjunction the National Professional Supervision Policy.

Compliance

All Supervision arrangements are required to comply with the FCAN Policy on or before 30 June 2022.

Supervision Guidelines

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Requirements to be a Supervisor

FCAN Supervisors must be accredited members of FCAN, with a minimum of three years full time experience, including working for 1 year as an Accredited member.

Accredited financial counsellors wishing to become supervisors are required to complete an FCAN approved supervision course or other similar accredited training, and then make an application the FCAN Board to be recognised as an Approved Supervisor.

In some circumstances where an FCAN Accredited member does not meet the minimum eligibility requirement of three years fulltime experience, the FCAN Board may consider approving an application where the applicant demonstrates the experience and skills required.

Members are not permitted to undertake the role of a Supervisor until they have completed a Supervision course and had their application to become an Approved FCAN Supervisor accepted by the FCAN Board.

Ongoing requirements for FCAN Supervisors

FCAN Supervisors need to be subject to supervision themselves and FCAN Supervisors are required to undertake suitable refresher courses at least every three (3) years.

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List of accredited supervisors

FCAN maintains a list of approved supervisors who are accredited financial counsellors. FCAN will review and update the list regularly.

Supervision Agreements

It is best practice for there to be a written agreement between:

1. the Supervisor and the Supervisee; and
2. if Supervision is being provided by an external Supervisor there should be a written agreement between the Agency and Supervisor (regardless of whether a fee for service is charged or not).

Refer Appendix 2 and 3 of the National Professional Supervision Policy for draft agreements.

External Supervision – further guidelines for Agreements

Agreements for external Supervision can be between:

- the financial counselling agency that employs the financial counsellor that will be providing external supervision as part of their job role and the agency employing the Supervisee; or
- the financial counsellor providing supervision (if this person is conducting the external Supervision outside their usual working relationship with their employer agency) with the financial counselling agency that employs the supervisee; or
- a professional (other than a financial counsellor) who will be providing supervision (limited to 50% of the required supervision hours) as outlined in Appendix 1 of the National Professional Supervision Policy.

Anything outside the above which is believed to fulfil the supervision requirements as set out in the National Professional Supervision Policy should be referred to FCAN Board for clarification/approval prior to the Agreement being made.

Insurance (Professional Indemnity Insurance) for external supervision

a) External Supervisor employed by an agency

Where there is an agreement between one agency and another agency for their financial counsellor employee to provide external supervision (the Supervisor) as part of their job role (regardless if a fee is charged or not), it is the responsibility of the agency who employs the Supervisor to have appropriate insurance coverage.

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Agencies should check with their Insurer about coverage for their financial counsellors who will be providing external supervision.

b) External Supervisor working outside their employing agency relationship

A Supervisor who provides external Supervision outside of their employment relationship to another financial counsellor is required to hold appropriate insurance coverage in professional indemnity and public liability.

c) FCAN arrangement for insurance cover for external Supervisors

FCAN has arranged coverage with an insurance broker and supports external supervision by reimbursing costs for this insurance, should there be no coverage provided by the Supervisors employer and, providing there is no fee charged for these supervision sessions by the Financial Counsellor or its employing agency.

Supervisors wishing to apply for this insurance coverage are to contact FCAN to request a copy of the insurers proposal form, complete the insurance proposal and lodge the form with the insurer. FCAN will determine if the cost will be reimbursed by FCAN or if the cost is the responsibility of the Supervisor.

Line Management

Supervision is not a performance management tool. It is not best practice for a Supervisor to be the financial counsellor's direct line manager or another manager/team leader within the same line management structure.

Exception:

The exception to the above is only where all of the following three criteria can be demonstrated in the Supervision arrangement:

1. the Supervisor chosen by the financial counsellor is their line manager who is an Approved FCAN Supervisor, and
2. there is a demonstrated long term arrangement (over 5 years), and
3. performance management is not conducted during the Supervision sessions.

Record of Supervision Sessions

A record of each supervision session, with the time and length of supervision, needs to be maintained and kept by the supervisee. The supervisor and supervisee should separately record any issues that may need to be followed-up in future supervision sessions.

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The supervisee is required to submit a copy of the FCAN Record of Supervision to the FCAN office each membership year when renewing their membership. A copy of the FCAN Record of Supervision is shown as Appendix A.

Each year the supervisor needs to confirm on the supervisee's membership renewal form the frequency and length of supervision sessions.

Supervision Relationship - Limits to Confidentiality

Where the supervisor becomes aware of a matter that may cause harm to the supervisee and/or his/her client, this matter needs first to be discussed fully and openly with the supervisee. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved in this way then further action needs to be taken.

Where the issue is with the supervisee's management, then the supervisor needs to encourage and support (but not represent or advocate on the supervisees behalf) the supervisee in negotiations with his /her line manager.

Where the issue is with the supervisee, then this may need to be brought to the attention of the FCAN Board for further advice.

Structure of Supervision Sessions

- Supervision sessions need to be free of interruptions.
- Specific dedicated time needs to be planned in advance and set aside.
- A dedicated private room needs to be available.
- There needs to be a negotiated and shared control of the agenda and rules for the supervision.
- Rules and items on the agenda should be recorded in writing.
- Confidentiality and privacy of the supervisee and client details are to be maintained, subject to limitations described in *Supervision Relationship – Limits to Confidentiality*
- It is recommended that arrangements be made so that the supervisee may contact the supervisor, as needed, between supervision sessions. Notwithstanding, the supervisee should be encouraged to develop her/his own referral network within the legal, government, ombudsman and community sectors.

Content of a Supervision Session

Content of a supervision session should include four main functions comprising:

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- Supportive – act as mentor, to encourage how to manage job related stress and develop attitudes and feelings for optimum performance.
- Professional Development – encourage to enhance existing skills and expand knowledge and develop new skills.
- Administrative – provide opportunity to obtain guidance and discuss general administration and/or Agency issues (in an independent and non-judgemental way)
- Casework (by financial counsellor supervisor only) - opportunity to workshop client cases by canvassing alternative options, strategies and actions which could produce a more desirable outcome for the client.

The supervisor may use various methods of interaction with their supervisee to maximise the two way communication necessary to achieve the desired outcomes of peer supervision and mentoring. These methods may include:

- The opportunity to reflect on practice and feelings about work
- Explore the use and adequacy of the financial counsellor's skills, knowledge and values
- Review options available of how to improve knowledge and skills, identify possible training courses thereby supporting the development of a long term program to enable the supervisee to achieve greater job satisfaction in his/ her role and ultimately obtain full accreditation where this has not been already attained.
- Review casework, management of case load and work through and discuss outcomes and observations.
- Agreeing on action plans for further support and development.

To assist the interaction, "open" questions can be used to assist assessment of the supervisee's current level of understanding which can include:

1. Experience:
 - a) How did you find working with that client?
 - b) What was your aim? What planning did you do?
 - c) What did you expect to happen? What happened?
 - d) What went according to plan? What didn't happen?
2. Reflection:
 - a) Did the client raise anything that you found uncomfortable?
 - b) How did you manage that?
 - c) Did you have a clash of values/ how did it affect how you worked?
 - d) What did you think the client was thinking – based on what?

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- e) What was left unfinished?
- 3. Analysis:
 - a) What are the current strengths, needs, risks for the client?
 - b) What FC technical knowledge have you used in this case?
 - c) What aims/ outcomes for this session were or were not achieved?
 - d) What went well, or not well, and why?
 - e) Were there times when boundaries became blurred?
- 4. Action Plans:
 - a) What information needs to be obtained before proceeding?
 - b) What are your aims in the next phase of this case?
 - c) Does anyone else need to become involved (other agency/legal)
 - d) What would be a successful outcome for you, and for the client?
 - e) Did you need additional support and/or resources? How did you seek that support?
Who from? Was it helpful?
 - f) Where do you feel more or less confident?

APPENDIX A

Record of Supervision

Name: _____

Session:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Comments
Date													
Duration hour/s													
Mode of delivery:													
Face to Face													
Telephone													
Other													
Type of Supervision:													
Peer, Technical or Case Work Supervision <i>(minimum 50%)</i>													
Clinical Supervision <i>(max. 25%)</i>													
Group Supervision or Casework Conference <i>(max. 25%)</i>													
Areas Discussed:													
Practice Management & Administration													
Skills & Technical Knowledge													
Ethics													
Case Review													
Industry Trends, Issues & Legislative Changes													
Self-Care													
Workplace, Organisation & Cultural Changes													
Review Professional Development													
Personal Insight and Reflection													
Improvements/Issues/Suggestions													
Signatures:													
Supervisee Signature													
Supervisor Name and Signature													