

FCRC Professional Supervision Policy

Approved by the Board of the Financial and Consumer Rights Council Inc (FCRC)

Date of adoption: 20 November 2018

Last revision: 30 April 2019

1. Background

The Constitution of the Financial and Consumer Rights Council Inc (FCRC) provides that the Board will prescribe requirements for Professional Supervision for members and associate members of FCRC. By this policy, the Board sets out the prescribed requirements for Professional Supervision for members.

2. Supervision

2.1 Definition of supervision

Professional supervision for financial counsellors is a formal relationship between supervisor and supervisee designed to promote wellbeing, facilitate reflective practice, explore ethical issues, develop skills and foster best practice.

The supervisory relationship is characterised by:

- Confidentiality
- Independence from the employment relationship

Professional supervision is a framework that facilitates:

- A supported and professional workforce
- Confidence for consumers that they will receive high quality service
- Extension and currency of the financial counsellor's knowledge, skill set and personal awareness
- Opportunities to reflect and develop in professional role
- Mitigation of risk of burnout and vicarious traumatisation.

2.2 Essential feature of supervision

The supervisee has a key role in seeking professional supervision from a recognised professional supervisor and drives the professional supervision relationship.

A financial counsellor may use various recognised professional supervisors / methods to achieve a cycle of reflective learning and development.

2.3 Relationship between professional supervision and management

Professional supervision depends on an equal two-way relationship that is not related to performance management, and focuses on growth, support and building capacity.

Whilst casework issues may be raised in professional supervision, casework solutions are not the core function of professional supervision. The professional supervisor will support the supervisee to discuss difficulties and seek appropriate casework supervision from their agency.

The professional supervision relationship is not a line management relationship. Line management provides casework a risk management and quality assurance function driven by agency management structures.

Individual financial counsellors should seek professional supervision outside the line management structures of their team/ agencies.

BEST PRACTICE IS THAT AGENCIES SHOULD BUDGET FOR COSTS OF THE FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR'S CHOICE OF SUPERVISOR.

Best Practice	Acceptable Practice	Unacceptable Practice
Choice of supervisor:		
Supervisee driven, so that the financial counsellor chooses their supervisor	Chosen by the agency, after agreement with the financial counsellor	Agency imposed with no agreement
Whether the supervisor is external/internal to the agency:		
External supervision	Internal Supervision by Supervisor who is not the FC's line manager	FC's Line Manager (To be phased out by 30 th June 2019)

2.4 Qualifications of a financial counselling professional supervisor

To become an FCRC accredited professional supervisor, a person must:

- have held full membership with FCRC for a minimum of two years;
- have undertaken a minimum of 3840 hours of practice as a financial counsellor;
- complete a Professional Supervision Training Program approved by FCRC; and
- apply to the Board for accreditation, and submit to any further assessment processes the Board applies to applicants for accreditation.

Those who do not qualify under these criteria but believe they have the necessary skills to become a supervisor can apply for special dispensation to be accredited by the Board. This could include those with specialist expertise, such as a solicitors or social workers with close familiarity with the work of financial counsellors.

2.4.1 Maintaining accreditation as a professional supervisor

To retain accreditation, all professional supervisors must participate in an ongoing supervision training program approved by FCRC. This will require completion of at least one supervision PD session each year. Minimum requirement is one face-to-face PD session within a 2 year period but can be alternated with an e-learning revision to maintain accreditation.

2.4.2 List of accredited supervisors

FCRC will maintain a list of accredited financial counselling professional supervisors. FCRC will review and update the accredited list annually.

2.4.3 Transitional provisions

Notwithstanding anything in this policy, all currently accredited supervisors at the time of the adoption of the policy will retain their accreditation, subject to having met the previous requirements for accreditation.

2.5 Professional supervision requirements for financial counsellors

All practicing financial counsellors in Victoria, and non-practising financial counsellor supervisors shall engage in professional supervision in accordance with this policy

Depending on the need of the financial counsellor the type of supervision to meet the above requirements can be made up of the following:

1. One on one supervision with a financial counsellor supervisor
2. One on one supervision with a registered psychologist or counsellor qualified to provide professional supervision to their own profession
3. Group supervision with either of the above

Minimum standard is: no less than 50% from Point 1, and up to 50% from Points 2 & 3.

The choice of breakdown should be determined by the supervisee.

At a minimum, practicing financial counsellors are required to engage in professional supervision for:

- **10 hours per year** for those members employed as financial counsellors for twenty or more hours per week
- **6 hours per year** for those members employed as financial counsellors for less than twenty hours per week.

The minimum requirement of professional supervision for supervisors not currently practicing as a financial counsellor is **4 hours per year**. To maintain their professional registration they must also complete the sector professional development requirements.

Whilst not a minimum requirement, it is considered best practice that graduates should have access to a senior financial counsellor for support in the first 12 months after graduation.

Ideally, professional supervision sessions will be planned to be spread throughout the year as opposed to an ad hoc manner or loaded towards the end of the year. No individual session should be more than 2 hours.

Best Practice	Acceptable Practice	Unacceptable Practice
Method of Supervision		
100% Face to Face Supervision	Minimum of 2 face to face supervision sessions with remainder by phone or skype	No face to face supervision or sessions by email.

2.6 Group supervision

Group supervision can be led by an accredited professional supervisor or a registered psychologist/counsellor. It can occur face to face or by phone. However for a session to be considered to meet FCRC requirements, and be counted towards eligible hours, the session must be limited to a maximum of 8 participants.

2.7 The supervision agreement and record keeping

Agencies will be responsible for:

- 2.7.1 Supporting a financial counsellor to meet their supervision needs to be compliant for FCRC membership; and
- 2.7.2 Facilitating arrangements for supervision of all financial counsellors;

2.8 Record keeping

- 2.8.1 The professional supervisor and supervisee can enter into a written Supervision Agreement
- 2.8.2 The professional supervisor and supervisee will keep a log of all supervision. The supervisee shall submit this log to FCRC when applying for renewal of membership of FCRC.
- 2.8.3 Unless there is a duty of care issue, there will be no reporting to agencies apart from confirmation of dates and times by the supervisor.

2.9 Insurance

Best practice is that professional supervisors are covered by appropriate professional indemnity insurance.

3 Compliance

FCRC will conduct auditing to ensure compliance with this policy.

3.1 Agency Circumstances and Variations to policy

An Agency member or Full or Associate member may apply to the Board for variation to the operation of this policy where, due to remote location or other distinct circumstance, a variation will enable reasonable capacity to maintain professional standards with regard to supervision.

Where a variation is granted, it is subject to review by the Board or its delegated representative no later than 2 years after being granted, and will lapse in the absence of an active decision to renew it, or replace it with a different variation.

4 Review

This policy will be reviewed in June 2021.