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PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION – PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION POLICY

Financial Counselling Victoria (FCVic), as the peak body for financial counsellors in Victoria, has a responsibility to ensure that the professional practice of financial counsellors in Victoria is maintained at the highest possible standard.

FCVic agrees to apply and uphold a series of national standards for the professional supervision of financial counsellors in Australia. The *National Professional Supervision Policy* (National Policy) sets out the minimum requirements and best practice approach for professional supervision of financial counsellors.

The FCVic Board, following recommendations from its Professional Standards Committee (PSC), has agreed to adopt a policy to provide direction around additional provisions beyond what is detailed in the National Policy, and to guide the implementation of the principles outlined in the National Policy in Victoria.

2. PURPOSE

This policy is adopted to manage the implementation of the *National Professional Supervision Policy* in Victoria, and to ensure financial counsellors in Victoria are supported to provide consistent, safe and high-quality service to clients, while maintaining the practitioner’s own well-being.

This policy sets out the prescribed requirements for Professional Supervision for FCVic members, above and beyond the requirements outlined in the National Policy.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all practising members of FCVic, namely Accredited, Associate and Intern/Trainee members.

4. DEFINITIONS

Accredited Professional Supervisor is an individual who meets the criteria and ongoing requirements prescribed in this policy to provide financial counselling professional supervision, with approval from the FCVic Board or its delegated representative.

FCVic Members’ Portal refers to the password-secured area of the FCVic website, with access restricted to FCVic members and staff only. It provides information and resources specific to financial counsellors and enables members to record professional supervision hours completed throughout the membership year, view a list of accredited financial counselling professional supervisors, and apply to become an accredited professional supervisor.

Professional Standards Committee (“PSC”) is a sub-committee of the FCVic Board established to consider and undertake assessments of professional standards issues, make relevant policy recommendations to the Board on professional issues, and to take any other actions in relation to professional issues delegated to it by the Board.

Professional Supervision is a formal relationship between supervisor and supervisee (financial counsellor) designed to promote wellbeing, facilitate reflective practice, explore ethical issues, develop skills and foster best practice.

5. PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION POLICY

5.1 Face to face professional supervision

For the purposes of implementing the National Policy, FCVic regards supervision provided via video technology (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Facetime) as equivalent to face to face supervision.

5.2 Professional supervision sessions

No individual professional supervision session should be more than 2 hours.

It is considered best practice that professional supervision sessions are planned to be spread throughout the year, as opposed to an ad hoc manner or loaded towards the end of the year.

5.2.1 Reciprocal professional supervision

Where two professional supervisors provide professional supervision to each other in a reciprocal arrangement, each supervisor can claim no more than 50% of the total time towards their supervision requirements (e.g. 2 hours of reciprocal supervision, each supervisor can only claim 1 hour of supervision each). Best practice is to schedule separate sessions for each participant to act as professional supervisor so that there is a clear delineation between the role of supervisor and supervisee.

5.3 Qualifications of a financial counselling professional supervisor

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

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

*Details of the Professional Supervision Training Program are published on the FCVic Members’ Portal.

5.3.1 Applying for accreditation as a professional supervisor

FCVic members who qualify under the criteria in clause 5.3 can apply for accreditation via the relevant form on the FCVic Members’ Portal. Applicants will be required to provide:

- a) evidence of their completion of the Professional Supervision Training Program approved by FCVic;
- b) a personal statement (of up to 500 words) outlining their skills and experience and why they believe they would make a good professional supervisor; and
- c) endorsement from two nominators:
 - i) a current accredited professional supervisor, and

- ii) a member who has worked with the applicant in the same workplace (current or previous) for a minimum period of 12 months.

Nominators are required to complete a nomination form, including pro forma questions, as prescribed by the FCVic Board.

Applications will be considered at the subsequent meeting of the Professional Standards Committee (PSC), as delegated by the FCVic Board. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application within one week of the PSC meeting.

5.3.2 Maintaining accreditation as a professional supervisor

To retain accreditation, all professional supervisors must participate in an ongoing supervision training program approved by FCVic. This will require completion of at least one supervision professional development (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.

FCVic will issue accreditation certificates annually to professional supervisors who, after review, have been deemed to satisfy the requirements for accreditation.

5.3.3 List of accredited supervisors

FCVic will maintain a list of accredited financial counselling professional supervisors. FCVic will regularly update the accredited list, and review it annually.

A list of accredited financial counselling professional supervisors will be made available to FCVic members via the FCVic Members’ Portal. Accredited professional supervisors have the option to add or remove their name and contact details from the list available to members.

5.3.4 Interstate professional supervisors

Under the National Policy, a supervisor does not have to be located in the same State/Territory as a financial counsellor they supervise, provided the supervisor has been approved by their State/Territory association to provide supervision. Evidence of the professional supervisor’s accreditation with their State/Territory association must be provided to FCVic upon request.

5.4 Professional supervision requirements for professional supervisors not currently practising as a financial counsellor

All non-practising financial counsellors providing professional supervision shall engage in professional supervision in accordance with this policy.

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.

5.5 Record keeping and audit compliance

The professional supervisor and supervisee will keep a record of all supervision hours. The supervisee is responsible for submitting their supervision records to FCVic.

Supervision records are to be submitted via the FCVic Members’ Portal, and can be added at any time throughout the year, along with evidence. All supervision records for the membership year must be submitted prior to applying for renewal of membership with FCVic.

In accordance with the FCVic CPD and Professional Supervision Audit Policy, FCVic members are expected to keep evidence of their professional supervision records for a period of up to 12 months from the conclusion of each membership year. FCVic provides a pro forma to enable professional supervisors to validate the supervision records submitted by the supervisee, in the event that the supervisee is selected for audit.

A range of tools and resources are available from the FCVic Members’ Portal to assist with record keeping and compliance.

5.6 Supervision notes and reporting

Professional supervision is a confidential process, and as such, it is not appropriate for any professional supervisor (internal or external to the agency) to report on the details of any professional supervision sessions to the supervisee’s agency.

The supervision session notes belong to the supervisee and supervisor only. The only exception to this is where there is a duty of care if there is a risk to clients. Refer to the National Professional Supervision Policy regarding extraordinary circumstances.

5.7 Professional Indemnity Insurance

As per the National Professional Supervision Policy, “A supervisor may wish to consider professional indemnity insurance.” (p.8)

Professional supervisors who facilitate group supervision under the auspices of FCVic are covered by FCVic’s professional indemnity insurance policy.

5.8 Cost of professional supervision

There may be a cost for professional supervision; however, FCVic does not determine that cost. It is the responsibility of the supervisee to confirm with a potential supervisor about the cost and method of payment before engaging the professional supervisor.

Details about professional supervisors’ fees, including those that do not charge fees, are available from the list of accredited professional supervisors published in the FCVic Members’ Portal.

6. COMPLIANCE

In accordance with the FCVic CPD and Professional Supervision Audit Policy, FCVic will conduct an annual audit to ensure compliance with this policy. Each year, 10% of professional supervisors will be

randomly selected for a review of their supervisor training and professional supervision records for the preceding membership year.

7. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in July 2023.

8. RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Australian Financial Counselling Code of Ethical Practice

FCVic CPD and Professional Supervision Audit Policy

FCVic Appeals Policy

FCVic Membership Policy

FCVic Constitution

National Professional Supervision Policy

National Standards for Membership & Accreditation

9. IMPLEMENTATION

The Executive Officer for FCVic is responsible for the implementation and management of this policy.

10. APPROVED

Approved by FCVic Board: 21 July 2021

Enquiry Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact the FCVic Executive Officer.

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| 1 | 20/11/18 | New | Dr. Sandy Ross | FCVic Board |
| 2 | 30/04/19 | Revision | Dr. Sandy Ross | FCVic Board |
| 3 | 18/08/20 | Revision | Dr. Sandy Ross | FCVic Board |
| 4 | 21/7/21 | Revision to align with National Professional Supervision Policy. | Dr. Sandy Ross | FCVic Board |

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|-----|-----------|---|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 4.1 | 4/11/2021 | Update following constitutional changes | Dr. Sandy Ross | FCVic Board |
| 5 | 5/12/2023 | Revision | Professional Standards Committee | FCVic Board |