

CPD and Professional Supervision Audit Policy

Introduction

Financial Counselling Victoria Inc (“FCVic”) is responsible for ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the professional standards of its members, the Victorian financial counselling sector. These professional standards are outlined in the *Financial Counselling National Standards for Membership & Accreditation* (“*National Standards*”), which all Victorian financial counsellors are required to comply with to remain eligible as members of FCVic.

By maintaining the professional standards of the sector, FCVic aims to ensure a consistent and high-quality level of financial counselling service delivery. Strong professional standards fosters confidence and trust from the people seeking financial counselling assistance.

The FCVic Board, following recommendations from its Professional Standards Committee (“PSC”), agreed to adopt a policy for conducting an annual compliance audit of members to ensure the requirements for Continuous Professional Development (“CPD”) and Professional Supervision are being met.

Scope

The policy covers selection of members for audit and an overview of the process.

Policy

- Each year a random audit of members will be conducted to ensure they are actually meeting the professional standards requirements for CPD and professional supervision, as outlined in the *National Standards*.
- The audit is to be of 10% of practising members (Associate or Full), conducted on completion of membership renewals (in around April). Members who have had special provisions imposed on their CPD and professional supervision requirements (i.e. additional requirements) for the preceding membership year will be automatically included in the audit of the following year.
- The audit will seek independent evidence confirming the completion/attendance at self-nominated CPD activities. The audit will also ask members to provide evidence confirming supervision sessions attended.
- There is to be an audit of 10% of professional supervisors in parallel to the member audit, confirming that they have themselves been receiving supervision (in particular where they are an Affiliate member), and obtaining certification that they have completed required refresher training as a supervisor.

Process (General member audit)

- 1) Each year, at the conclusion of the annual membership renewal, the FCVic Office will randomly select 10% of practising members using an electronic system, and conduct a preliminary review of the members' CPD and Professional Supervision records for the preceding membership year.

- 2) The members will be notified by email that they have been selected for audit and asked to provide evidence to confirm their participation in any self-nominated CPD activities and all professional supervision sessions. Examples of evidence include certification of attendance/completion of CPD or professional supervision, receipts of payment for CPD or professional supervision, completed training materials from CPD, signed record of supervision by professional supervisor.
 - a) Members will be given two (2) weeks to submit the requested documentation. Failure to provide all documentation within this timeframe, without prior consent from FCVic Office, will result in an automatic recommendation for *Review* by the PSC.
 - b) Where a supervisor is employed by the same agency, clarification may be sought to ensure that the relationship is not a direct line management relationship.
- 3) Once the members' responses have been received, the FCVic Office will provide a report on the evidence to the PSC along with a recommendation, for each submission, to either *Pass* or *Review* the member's submission.
- 4) The PSC will conduct a meeting to review and discuss the recommendations and evidence. The PSC can assign one of the following outcomes *Pass*, *Further information required*, *Remedial action required*, or *Fail* to each individual submission.
 - a) *Pass*: A letter of compliance will be issued to the member. No further action required.
 - b) *Further information required*: The FCVic Office, on behalf of the PSC, will contact the member to request further details in relation to their CPD and professional supervision records. A new timeframe for submission will be determined. The process will resume from Step 4 (above).
 - c) *Remedial action required*: The PSC will determine, based on the evidence submitted, additional actions required by the member in order to comply with the professional standards. This could entail additional CPD points or hours of professional supervision to be recorded for the new membership year. The outcome will be communicated with the member by the FCVic Office.
 - d) *Fail*: Based on the submission from the member, the PSC may identify a potential serious breach of professional standards. In such case, the matter will be referred to the FCVic Board for review.
- 5) At the conclusion of the audit, the PSC will report to the FCVic Board on the outcomes.

Process (Professional Supervisors)

- 1) Each year, at the conclusion of the annual membership renewal, the FCVic Office will randomly select 10% of professional supervisors using an electronic system, and conduct a review of the supervisors' CPD refresher and Professional Supervision records for the preceding membership year.
- 2) The members will be notified by email that they have been selected for audit and asked to provide evidence to confirm their completion of professional supervision sessions. Examples of evidence

include certification of attendance at professional supervision, receipts for payment of professional supervision, signed record of supervision by professional supervisor.

- a) Supervisors will be given two (2) weeks to submit the requested documentation. Failure to provide all documentation within this timeframe, without prior consent from FCVic Office, will result in an automatic recommendation for *Review* by the PSC.
- 3) Once the supervisors' responses have been received, the FCVic Office will provide a report on the evidence to the PSC along with a recommendation, for each submission, to either *Pass* or *Review* the supervisor's submission.
- 4) The PSC will conduct a meeting to review and discuss the recommendations and evidence. The PSC can assign one of the following outcomes *Pass*, *Further information required*, *Remedial action required*, or *Fail* to each individual submission.
 - a) *Pass*: A letter of compliance will be issued to the supervisor. No further action required.
 - b) *Further information required*: The FCVic Office, on behalf of the PSC, will contact the supervisor to request further details in relation to their professional supervision records. A new timeframe for submission will be determined. The process will resume from Step 4 (above).
 - c) *Remedial action required*: The PSC will determine, based on the evidence submitted, additional actions required by the supervisor in order to comply with the professional standards. This could entail additional CPD points or hours of professional supervision to be recorded for the new membership year. The outcome will be communicated with the supervisor by the FCVic Office.
 - d) *Fail*: Based on the submission from the supervisor, the PSC may identify a potential serious breach of professional standards. In such case, the matter will be referred to the FCVic Board for review and further action may take place in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.
- 5) At the conclusion of the audit, the PSC will report to the FCVic Board on the outcomes.

Appeals

A member can appeal the decision of the PSC at 4c) *Remedial action required* to the FCVic Board, which will establish an appeals committee to review the evidence and any supporting documentation, and determine the matter. No member of the PSC may serve on the appeals committee.

Roles & responsibilities

Role of FCVic members

FCVic members are expected to keep records of their CPD and professional supervision attendance for a period of up to 12 months from the conclusion of each membership year.

Role of FCVic Office

The FCVic Office operates and maintains a database of member records, including attendance at FCVic-delivered CPD sessions, and members' self-entered CPD and professional supervision activities. FCVic staff are responsible for collating the evidence and conducting the initial compliance assessment.

Role of Professional Standards Committee

The PSC is responsible for reviewing the submissions and recommendations (by FCVic Office) of each individual.

The PSC members will declare any conflict of interest, and where this exists, will be excused from reviewing the individual's submission.

Role of FCVic Board

The FCVic Board is responsible for resourcing the PSC.

Reporting

The PSC will report to the FCVic Board on the outcomes.

Implementation

The audit process will commence from the year 2020. The Communications & Membership Manager for FCVic is responsible for the implementation and management of this policy.

Approval

Approved by FCVic Board: 18th June 2019