

Financial Counselling Victoria “Inc” (FCVic)

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Policy Title CPD & PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION AUDIT POLICY

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Financial Counselling Victoria “Inc” (FCVic)

1. 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 foster confidence and trust from the people seeking financial counselling assistance.

2. PURPOSE

This policy is adopted to manage the operation of an annual compliance audit of members to ensure the requirements for Continuous Professional Development (“CPD”) and Professional Supervision are being met.

This policy sets out the processes that FCVic will follow in conducting the audit, and the responsibilities of practising members as part of the audit process.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all practising members of FCVic, namely Full and Associate members, and all accredited professional supervisors.

4. DEFINITIONS

Accredited Professional Supervisor is an individual who meets the criteria and ongoing requirements for professional supervisors prescribed by FCVic, and has been approved to provide financial counselling professional supervision.

Continuous Professional Development (“CPD”) is the reinforcement or acquisition of skills or knowledge relevant to the workplace.

Financial Counselling National Standards for Membership and Accreditation (“National Standards”) sets out national standards for membership and accreditation of financial counsellors in Australia. The standards have been agreed by the State and Territory financial counselling associations.

Independent evidence (“evidence”) is documentation issued by a third-party to confirm whether or not the member’s CPD and professional supervision records are accurate and true. 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.

Membership renewal period means the period from 1 December until 1 March in which membership renewals are open.

Membership year runs from 1st of January to 31st of December.

Practising member refers to any member of FCVic employed as a financial counsellor and engaging in case work. For the purposes of this policy, we define Full and Associate members as practising members.

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.

Professional supervisor refresher training is the ongoing supervision training program approved by FCVic as outlined in the FCVic Professional Supervision Policy.

5. AUDIT POLICY

5.1 General member audit

- 5.1.1. Each year a random audit of members will be conducted to ensure they are meeting the professional standards requirements for CPD and professional supervision, as outlined in the *National Standards*.
- 5.1.2. The audit is to be of 10% of practising members (Associate or Full), conducted at the conclusion of the membership renewal period (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.
- 5.1.3. 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.

5.2 Professional supervisor audit

- 5.2.1. 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 professional supervisor refresher training.

6. AUDIT PROCESS

6.1 General member audit

- 6.1.1. 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.

- 6.1.2. 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.
 - i. 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.
- 6.1.3. 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.
- 6.1.4. 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.
 - ii. *Pass*: A letter of compliance will be issued to the member. No further action required.
 - iii. *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 6.1.4 (above).
 - iv. *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.
 - v. *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.
- 6.1.5. At the conclusion of the audit, the PSC will report to the FcVic Board on the outcomes.

6.2 Professional supervisor audit

- 6.2.1. 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.
- 6.2.2. 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.

- i. 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.

6.2.3. 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.

6.2.4. 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.

- i. *Pass*: A letter of compliance will be issued to the supervisor. No further action required.
- ii. *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 6.2.4 (above).
- iii. *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.
- iv. *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.

6.2.5. At the conclusion of the audit, the PSC will report to the FCVic Board on the outcomes.

7. APPEALS

A member can appeal the decision of the PSC at 6.1.4.iv (or 6.2.4.iv) *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.

An appeal of outcome 6.1.4.v (or 6.2.4.v) *Fail*, where the matter has been escalated to the FCVic Board, will follow the appeals process as outlined in the *FCVic Constitution*.

8. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 Role of FcVic Board

The FcVic Board is responsible for resourcing the PSC.

9. REPORTING

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

10. RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Australian Financial Counselling Code of Ethical Practice

FcVic Appeals Policy

FcVic Constitution

FcVic CPD Activities Policy

FcVic Professional Supervision Policy

FcVic Membership Policy

National Professional Supervision Policy

National Standards for Membership & Accreditation

11. IMPLEMENTATION

The Communications & Membership Manager for FcVic is responsible for the implementation and management of this policy.

12. APPROVED

Approved by FcVic Board: 18 June 2019

Enquiry Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact the FcVic Communications & Membership Manager.

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Financial Counselling Victoria “Inc” (FCVic)

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2	20/08/21	Revision	James Degenhardt	FCVic Board