



*Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy*

Criteria  
for  
**Supervision Training Courses**  
seeking  
**IACP Course Accreditation**

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of supervision in Ireland during the last two decades together with the increasing demand for competent and well qualified practitioners has seen an increase in the requirements for supervision in the helping professions and consequently in the provision of training courses for supervisors. With developments in the broader field, counselling supervision is now understood as a competency and professional practice distinct from counselling and therapy practice (Falender et al., 2004).

The IACP Criteria for Supervision Training Courses are intended to preserve and enhance independence and diversity of approach while ensuring a common focus on those core elements in training which are to be considered fundamental to best practice. Each course must demonstrate openness to evaluation and ongoing development.

It is hoped that the opportunity to acquire 'Accredited' status will encourage course staff to monitor and develop their own performance in ways which are creative and model the supervisory process thus enhancing the quality of training offered. It is also hoped that the accreditation process will encourage trainers of different traditions and theoretical orientations to network with each other for support, research and development.

An IACP Accredited Supervision Training Course must be experienced by its trainee supervisors and graduates as a thorough training for competent supervisory practice. This training must emphasise that a commitment to continuing professional development in supervision practice is an ethical requirement for all accredited supervisors. For a course to be successful in its application for accreditation, it must satisfy and continue to adhere to the criteria which are detailed in this document.

Satisfactory completion of an Accredited Supervision Training Course automatically meets the training requirements for IACP Supervisor Accreditation as Counselling / Psychotherapy Supervisors. Trainees who have successfully completed an IACP Accredited Supervision Training Course will be eligible to apply for IACP Supervisor Accreditation.

Supervision Training Courses which meet the Accreditation standards will be awarded IACP Course Accreditation for a 6 year period. During this 6 year period accredited courses are required to submit an Annual Monitoring form and may be subject to Annual Monitoring visits.

Accredited status is provided to individual courses rather than institutions. If an institution runs two or more courses in supervision training, separate applications are required for each course. Courses which have successfully completed the accreditation process and have received formal confirmation of their IACP Accredited status may include the words 'IACP Accredited Course' on their publicity material. Agencies or institutions engaged in training must not include in their publicity material any statement of the fact that they intend to apply or that they have applied for accreditation.

## 1. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERVISION COURSE ACCREDITATION

- 1.1 Applications for approval are welcome from training courses which are a minimum of one year part-time duration (of not less than 100 hours of staff/trainee contact plus 50 hours of supervised supervision practice within the duration of the course. The 50 supervision practice hours may be a blend of one to one, peer, or group supervision. These hours must be formally contracted in the ratio of 25 internal practice hours and 25 external practice hours.
- 1.2 An accredited course will require that the students complete all elements of the course.
- 1.3 An accredited course will have a balance of theoretical knowledge, professional development, skills and supervised professional practice consistent with the course theoretical supervision model or approach.
- 1.4 The core theoretical supervision model must be reflected not just in theory, skills and professional practice but also in the way the course is structured, assessed, taught and administered.
- 1.5 Any information, leaflets, brochures, web pages, advertisements and so forth, supplied to the public must be made available to the IACP Accreditation Department.
- 1.6 Course organisers and course supervisors must hold professional indemnity insurance cover for themselves and require their trainee supervisors to also hold professional indemnity insurance. This needs to specify counselling /psychotherapy supervision for their professional practice.
- 1.7 Each course must have an independent External Examiner. The External Examiner is normally appointed by the institution or organisation in which the course is run. Although the course staff may nominate an External Examiner, the role must be an independent and unbiased one wherein the External remains directly accountable to the institution/and not to the course itself. The External Examiner needs to be appropriately qualified and hold prior experience of the role as an external examiner. The most important condition for the appointment of an external examiner is that she/he has no current association with the Institution/organisation or the course or any current personal relationships with any of the course staff or trainees.
- 1.8 A clear written Complaints/Appeals Procedure must be available to trainees, course staff and IACP.
- 1.9 Courses applying for Accreditation are subject to the IACP's Code of Ethics and Practice.
- 1.10 Each trainee supervisor must have an IACP, BACP or IAHIP accredited external supervisor who will provide a supervisor's assessment of the 25 external supervision practice hours to the course.

**NOTE:** In order to ensure that the supervisor can be seen to be objective and have no conflict of interest with regard to the trainee supervisor, supervision of the 25 external hours must not be undertaken with a supervisor who is directly involved with the training course in any way other than as the external supervisor. Involvement with a Supervision Training Course is deemed to extend for 2 years following the period of employment on or engagement with the course.

## 2. ADMISSIONS

- 2.1 The target group must, as far as possible, be identified.
- 2.2 Prospective applicants must be provided with detailed and accurate information about the course, including its structure, aims, staff and qualifications, contents, assessment requirements, fees (including any additional costs e.g. supervision of professional practice) and conditions of participation (e.g. time commitments).
- 2.3 The procedure for selections must be clearly explained and be consistent with the course rationale, design and methodology.

- 2.4 Applicants for the course must be required to make a detailed written application and provide names of referees.
- 2.5 Selection procedures must be designed to obtain clearly defined evidence of:
  - a) Commitment to the role of Supervisor.
  - b) Respectful, empathic, flexible and open.
  - c) Commitment to lifelong learning and ongoing professional development.
  - d) Value ethical principles.
  - e) Commitment to knowing and working within one's own strengths, limitations and competence
  - f) A minimum of 4 years accredited as Counsellor/Psychotherapist
  - g) Self-awareness, maturity and stability
  - h) Ability to make use of and reflect upon life experience.
  - i) Capacity to cope with the demands of the course, both academic and professional.
  - j) Potential to form a supervisory relationship.
  - k) Ability to be self-reflective and evaluative and to give and receive constructive feedback.
  - l) Awareness and sensitivity to issues of diversity, the nature of discrimination, marginalisation, oppression and the appropriate use of power.
- 2.6 Applicants must demonstrate suitability to train and fitness to practice.
- 2.7 At least two members of the course staff must be directly involved in the interviewing and selection process.
- 2.8 Unsuccessful candidates must be directly informed of the outcome of their application in a timely and appropriate manner.

### 3. COURSE STAFF

- 3.1 Core staff are course trainers who have a central involvement in admission, course management, theory, skills training and assessment.
- 3.2 The staff team must include at least two core team members for the duration of any course, both of whom must be in contact with trainee supervisors and involved in their assessment.
- 3.3 Core staff are crucial to the professional formation of the trainee supervisor and as such undertake a significant role in training and assessment
- 3.4 Courses are accountable for the work of all staff and tutors
- 3.5 Clear contracts must be formed between the trainee supervisor and the external supervisor. Formal feedback must be provided to the course.
- 3.6 Core staff must be appropriately and adequately qualified to teach and facilitate the main elements of the course:
  - a) Have substantial experience of supervised counselling for at least 5 years after qualifying and be currently in practice as a supervisor and as a counsellor/psychotherapist.
  - b) Have a minimum of 4 years of experience in training and hold relevant qualifications as trainers such as group facilitation skills or adult education (such as Train the Trainer Fetac Level 6).
  - c) Understand the principles of adult education and learning styles.

- d) Have regular external supervision /consultancy for their supervision training work
  - e) Have experience of personal therapy
  - f) Have a clear understanding of theoretical models of Supervision and of Counselling and Psychotherapy
  - g) Demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional development
- 3.7 One core staff must be an Accredited Supervisor Member of IACP.
- 3.8 All course staff including tutors/trainers and External Examiners must be familiar with IACP Code of Ethics for Supervisors.
- 3.9 There must be regular staff meetings/ consultations with staff and other forms of staff support, consultation and development.

#### **4. COURSE RATIONALE, PHILOSOPHY AND DESIGN**

- 4.1 The purpose of supervision is primarily to ensure a high standard of service to the client, to ensure the continuing professional development of the supervisee and to enhance the development of the profession. Supervision and the role of the supervisor, needs to take into account the multiple systems within which the work occurs, namely, the supervisee/supervisor system; the client/supervisee system; the context of the work and the wider system (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).
- 4.2 Supervision Training must provide for the following areas (Bradley & Whiting, 2001, p. 449);
- a) To provide a theory or knowledge base relevant to supervisory functioning.
  - b) To develop and refine supervisory skills.
  - c) To integrate the theory and skills into a working supervisory style.
  - d) To develop and enhance the professional identity of the supervisor.
- 4.3 Supervision Training must serve three functions:
- a) Help the trainee supervisor to integrate theory with practice and to develop competent supervisory skills.
  - b) Support the trainee supervisor's professional development.
  - c) Continuous assessment of competency offering a degree of protection to the trainee supervisor's supervisees.
- 4.4 Courses must provide a clear statement of the course rationale, philosophy and design (including methods), which is consistent with the actual structure of the course and closely related to the supervision work for which the trainee supervisors are training.
- 4.5 Course developers must design a coherent curriculum that provides for systematic supervision training and includes a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods.
- 4.6 Course developers must be aware of the current literature on curriculum development and training models for supervision training and competency development.
- 4.7 All courses must provide a detailed study of at least one major model of supervision with an introduction to other models for comparison, contrast and critical analysis. Models of supervision may be generic models as well as counselling and psychotherapy supervision models.
- 4.8 There must be a careful balance between theory and practice across all elements of the course.
- 4.9 Course evaluation must be an on-going process throughout the duration of the Course

- a) There must be regular staff meetings designed for planning and evaluation of the course.
  - b) Both during and at the conclusion of a course, trainee supervisors must be given every opportunity to evaluate their training experiences and give feedback on the course to the staff. There must be regular staff-trainee supervisor review meetings for this purpose.
- 4.10 The trainee supervisor's evaluation must include the External Supervisor's assessment together with all the forms of assessment and evaluation over the duration of the course.
- 4.11 Courses must facilitate a collaborative and positive learning environment that is respectful of trainees' different learning preferences, promotes psychological safety, and provides constructive feedback.

## 5. Course Content <sup>1</sup>

### 5.1 Knowledge

1. Knowledge and understanding of the purpose, tasks and functions of supervision (different orientations, research, assessment etc.)
2. Knowledge of models, theories, techniques, modalities such as 1 to 1, peer, group, team and other forms of supervision.  
Knowledge of group development, group dynamics and group supervision styles.
3. Knowledge of adult learning theories/styles and their implications in supervision
4. Knowledge of the development stages of both supervisee and supervisor.
5. Knowledge of legal and ethical issues and Codes of Ethics and Practice specific to supervision.
6. Knowledge of and the ability to manage evaluation, review and giving and receiving constructive feedback.
7. Awareness and knowledge of diversity and inclusive practice.
8. Knowledge of research developments in the field of supervision.

### 5.2 Professional Skills

**As the knowledge and skill base for clinical supervision has increased it has become compulsory that supervisors be competent in the practice of supervision above and beyond their competence as a therapist.**

1. Ability to establish an effective supervisory contract and relationship with a balance of support and challenge.
2. Ability to establish, maintain and end a supervisory working alliance.
3. Awareness of and an ability to adapt to diversity in all its forms, (e.g. gender, age, culture, class, sexual orientation, personality and professional training).
4. Sensitivity and competency in relation to issues of power and authority inherent in the role of supervisor.
5. Awareness of the need for confidentiality and also awareness of the limits of confidentiality with reference to IACP Code of Ethics and relevant legislation (e.g. The Children First Act, 2014).
6. Ability to establish and maintain professional boundaries.
7. Skilled in attending to the supervisee's verbal and non-verbal communications (e.g. use of effective empathy, purposeful challenge etc.).
8. Understanding and awareness of the various stages of the supervisory process.
9. Models multicultural awareness and competence.

<sup>1</sup> Criteria informed by Falender et al., (2004)

10. Ability to implement a gatekeeping role and monitor best professional practice with supervisees (e.g. issues of fitness to practice; record keeping).
11. Capacity to manage the interface with agency, training body and organisational issues.
12. Ability to negotiate formative and summative evaluations.
13. Capacity to give and receive constructive feedback.
14. Understanding of the relevance of supervision research to best practice in supervision
15. Attend to outcomes for supervisees and their clients.

### 5.3 Reflective Practice

1. Each course must provide opportunities for reflective practice consistent with the IACP Code of Ethics for supervisors.
2. Course must provide regular and systematic approaches to reflective practice, individually and in a group which is congruent with the course rationale and which ensures that each trainee supervisor examines/ explores/ their personal process in relation to their role as supervisor.
3. Trainee supervisors must be facilitated to monitor their own self development and show evidence of professional growth as a reflective practitioner and supervisor over the duration of the course.

## 6. Professional Practice

- 6.1 Trainee Supervisors must have opportunities to work with individual supervisees in a mode consistent with the course rationale, philosophy and design, and with the primary work for which they are being trained.
- 6.2 Professional practice refers to formally contracted supervisory relationships. Please refer to section 1, subsection 1.1 of course requirements.
- 6.3 Explicit supervision contracts must apply to trainees supervision work, including the identification of appropriate boundaries.
- 6.4 Contracts: According to the IACP and BACP (2008):

*'Supervision is a formal arrangement for counsellors to discuss their work regularly with someone who is experienced in counselling and supervision. The task is to work together to ensure and develop the efficacy of the counsellor/client relationship. The agenda will be the counselling work, with the supervisors' reactions and comments. Supervision is a process to maintain adequate standards of counselling and a method of consultancy to widen the horizons of the practitioner'*<sup>2</sup>

As such, supervision needs to be an explicit contractual agreement made between a Supervisor and a Supervisee. Typically, a contract or agreement for supervision needs to address the following areas:

- 1) Purpose, Goals and Objectives of Supervision namely: to monitor and promote welfare of clients seen by the supervisee, to promote development of supervisee's professional identity and competence and to fulfil requirements for the supervisee's accreditation or re-accreditation requirements.
- 2) Context of Supervision: to include the practicalities, for example, the location, length of time, arrangements for absences and emergencies, record keeping, fees, and so forth. Information about the professional and theoretical background of the supervisee and supervisor, the work and cultural context of the supervisee and the Code of Ethics to which both parties are bound also need to be discussed.

<sup>2</sup> British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) (2008). *What is Supervision?* S2:1 Information Sheet. Lutterworth: BACP.

- 3) The Supervision Working Alliance: Roles and responsibilities of each party need to be made explicit to include how clients will be presented in the supervision session, (e.g. case notes, audio recordings). Other areas in this regard include how and when the working relationship will be reviewed.
- 4) Evaluation: How and when supervision is evaluated is pertinent to the working agreement. Criteria for evaluation need to be made explicit to the supervisee and how feedback will be given.

In each of the above the learning needs of the supervisee are of paramount importance but do not supersede best practice principles. This three way agreement needs to be documented and signed by all parties (e.g. Supervisor/supervisee/ and, if relevant, the organisation).

- 6.5 This work must be monitored by core staff and supervisors.
- 6.6 Supervisors of professional practice must provide summative and formative feedback to the trainee supervisor.
- 6.7 Professional practice must take place in an appropriate supervision setting.
- 6.8 Trainee supervisors have an obligation under the IACP Code of Ethics to indicate their trainee status to supervisees. It is expected that trainee supervisors will provide their supervisors' contact details to supervisees.
- 6.9 Accredited courses will ensure that the trainee supervisor has formally contracted for regular and sufficient supervision of their supervision practice. This must be with an accredited supervisor (IACP, BACP or IAHIP accredited) with a minimum of five years' experience of supervising counsellors/psychotherapists.
- 6.10 Supervisors must also:
  - a) Have substantial experience of supervised practice.
  - b) Engage in regular supervision of their own supervision practice.
  - c) Have a recognised theoretical background both in supervision and in counselling/psychotherapy and are cognizant that supervision is a professional activity distinct from counselling/therapy.
  - d) Have a commitment to ongoing personal/professional development.
- 6.11 Internal Group supervision is vital and required on the course. The amount of group supervision is set at the discretion of the course provider.
- 6.12 Trainee supervisors must engage in external supervision in the ratio of one hour supervision to five hours of supervision practice.
- 6.13 External and internal supervisors' reports must form an integral part of the training course's ongoing assessment.

## 7. Supervision Theory

- 7.1 There must be a broad introduction to the concept of adult learning, including the development of conducive learning environments with supervisees across various developmental levels, providing constructive feedback/evaluation and monitoring outcomes in both supervision and client work.
- 7.2 There must be specific input on models and forms of supervision, the supervisory relationship, tasks and processes.
- 7.3 Courses must have a clear statement of core theoretical approaches to supervision which may be integrative.
- 7.4 There must be sufficient supervision theories, drawing upon a variety of disciplines, to enable trainee supervisors to understand and evaluate critically:
  - a) The underlying assumptions, basic principles and elements, concepts, strategies and techniques of the

core theoretical models of supervision.

- b) The supervision process and principles and mechanism of learning conceived by the core theoretical models.
- c) Comparisons and contrasts with other supervision approaches.
- d) Awareness of the social system and organisational context in which supervision occurs for the supervisor, the supervisee and their clients.
- e) Awareness of the clinical rhombus and its implications for organisations, supervisors, supervisees and their clients.

7.5 Study of core theoretical approaches in supervision and related supervision practice may be informed and enriched by consideration of other psychological concepts and ideas by reference to current research findings.

## 8. Supervision Skills Training

It is essential that a comprehensive skills training must be provided. This needs to be congruent with the course philosophy and training model. A variety of skill practice and reflection opportunities need to be provided, therefore the training must include a blend of both experiential and theoretical

8.1 Courses must provide:

- a) Structured experience and regular opportunities for observation, practice and feedback of supervision, discussion and review.
- b) Opportunities to practice the blend of supervision skills appropriate to core theoretical models of supervision, these skills being identified and developed so that trainees can describe, analyse and utilise them.
- c) Progressive monitoring and assessment of skills development.

## 9. Supervision Training & Learning Methods

9.1 Course staff must take responsibility for and provide or facilitate a range of learning experiences congruent with the philosophy and rationale of the course.

The course must include:

- a) Trainees taking responsibility for their own learning.
- b) Access to external sources of knowledge and information.
- c) Substantial small group work and opportunities for experiential learning.
- d) The provision of regular opportunities for trainees to review the course and give feedback on it.
- e) Regular opportunities for trainees to evaluate their learning in light of course provision.
- f) Access for each trainee to a member of staff for support.

9.2 There must be substantial reading and written work (or creative alternative) required of trainees to clarify philosophical and theoretical concepts and their application to practical supervision work. This must be supported by adequate and up to date reading lists, references, bibliographies and resources. The training organisation has an obligation and responsibility to ensure that recommended reading material is accessible to trainees.

## 10. Professional Issues in Supervision Training

- 10.1 Trainees must be formally introduced to the IACP Code of Ethics and Practice for supervisors and have ample opportunity to discuss all aspects of this Code. This also applies to all relevant legislation, to familiarise themselves with its implication for practice and how it relates to their own values and attitudes. A commitment to abide by the Code of Ethics for supervision must be required of the trainee from the commencement of their supervision work.
- 10.2 Course must provide trainees with systematic approaches to record-keeping and documentation for their role as supervisors and also for the supervision task of monitoring best practice in this regard with their supervisees.
- 10.3 Courses must provide on-going opportunities for trainees and staff to meet and reflect on all aspects of the course and to explore organisational issues.
- 10.4 Trainees must be made aware that successful completion of the course does not mark the end of training and development. They must be reminded of the ethical requirement for supervision of their supervision work throughout their working life and also encouraged to seek further opportunities for their professional development.
- 10.5 Supervision courses must provide opportunities to explore multicultural factors and issues of diversity and inclusive practice in supervision theory and practice, to include class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability.
- 10.6 Trainees must be encouraged to read and understand research findings and how they might inform supervision practice.
- 10.7 Trainees must be made aware of the requirement for professional indemnity insurance cover for themselves on commencement of the course.

## 11. Supervision Training Assessment

### Basic Principles

- 11.1 A course must adopt modes of assessment which are congruent with the philosophy and rationale of the course, with appropriate elements of staff, peer, supervisor and self-assessment.
  - 11.1.2 A developmental perspective must underlie all assessment of competencies, both formative assessment (e.g. while still in training and progressing through a course or for continual professional development) and summative assessment (e.g. for course completion/qualification; accreditation) are needed in supervision. Assessment of competencies practices during training ought to model how professionals must continue assessment of competencies throughout one's career.
- 11.2 Trainees must be fully informed of the assessment procedures and the criteria used. They must also be given formal feedback/progress reports at various stages throughout the course. Assessment criteria must be in line with academic standards.
- 11.3 There must be substantial emphasis on the assessment of competence in supervision skills and practice undertaken during the course. Competency based evaluation must include measurable indicators of behaviours, skills and attitudes/values. Skills assessment needs to be integrative and holistic in approach, not just a set of competencies singly assessed. This may be achieved through verbatim reports, audio/DVD recordings, viva examinations and live supervision of supervision. It is essential that due regard to confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent is formally provided for if any supervisee material is included in such written/recorded assignments and used for educational purposes.

- 11.4 The storage, management and destruction of such material must be compliant with best practice principles and relevant legislation, as applicable (e.g. Data Protection Act, 1988/2003; Freedom of Information Act, 1997/2014 etc.)
- 11.5 External supervisors' reports must form an integral part of ongoing assessment.
- 11.6 The course must include written assignments (e.g. essays, thesis, case studies, verbatim reports) and provide clear guidelines to trainees regarding the requirements and assessment criteria for these assignments.
- 11.7 Both during and at the conclusion of the course trainees must be given every opportunity to evaluate their training experience and give feedback to the course.
- 11.8 Courses must provide details of procedures for deferrals, late submissions extensions, grading of assignments etc.
- 11.9 An Appeals Procedure must be in place. Trainees and staff must be aware of the Appeals Procedure
- 11.10 All assessments need to be externally monitored by an independent external examiner. The external examiner must monitor the course, assessment procedures and the standards achieved by the trainees and may be involved in the Appeals Procedure, as appropriate (Ref. Section 1.6)

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