



The
British
Psychological
Society

Qualifications Office

Qualification in Forensic Psychology (Stage 2)

Co-ordinating Supervisor Handbook

January 2011

Qualifications Office

The British Psychological Society, St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR.

Tel: (0116) 252 9505 Fax: (0116) 227 1314

E-mail: exams@bps.org.uk

www.bps.org.uk/qualifications

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1. Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the British Psychological Society's Qualification in Forensic Psychology and thank you for agreeing to be the Co-ordinating Supervisor for one or more candidates as they work to achieve qualification as a forensic psychologist.

The role of Co-ordinating Supervisor is vital to the professional development of the candidates and contributes greatly to their successful completion of this qualification. We have prepared this *Handbook* to help guide you through the process of supervising a candidate for the Qualification and our requirements.

We hope you will find this *Handbook* helpful. It is regularly revised and any feedback you are able to provide will help us to improve it in future. Your feedback is welcomed by e-mail to: exams@bps.org.uk. We will also actively seek your feedback through surveys from time to time.

British Psychological Society Qualifications

The Society's Qualifications are often referred to as independent routes. This is because candidates are not attached to a particular university. More properly, the qualifications should be referred to as professional body qualifications. They have been designed around work-based learning in order to allow candidates to demonstrate that they have developed the competences required for the autonomous practice of their chosen branch of psychology.

The advantages of these professional body qualifications are that they are flexible enough to allow candidates and their Co-ordinating Supervisors to identify appropriate training and development experiences which fit in with the candidate's work and take advantage of opportunities as they arise. This makes them an attractive option to candidates who are unable to relocate or travel to a Higher Education Institution (HEI) programme. In addition, much of the developmental experience can be gained whilst the candidate is employed in an appropriate position, meaning that most candidates are able to continue working as they train. However, candidates do not have to be employed in order to complete the qualification, provided that they are able to access appropriate supervised experience to meet the requirements of the qualification.

Professional body qualifications are not the same as HEI-based courses. Candidates are not part of a 'class' of students working towards a qualification in the same place at the same time. This means candidates can sometimes feel isolated and Co-ordinating Supervisors have an important role to play in supporting candidates to reduce this. There are no organised lectures for candidates and, except for assessments, the Society does not set the timetable. Along with the flexibility of the independent route comes a greater responsibility for organising one's own training experiences and resources. Co-ordinating Supervisors share this responsibility and will guide the candidate through the process.

About the Qualification in Forensic Psychology

The Diploma in Forensic Psychology was established in 2001 and is the main qualification by which trainee forensic psychologists are able to qualify. Its title was changed to the Qualification in Forensic Psychology in March 2010. It consists of four Core Roles in which candidates must develop and demonstrate competence.

The *Candidate Handbook* provides more detail about each of the Core Roles and the evidence requirements which candidates must comply with in order to demonstrate competence. Candidates will normally be enrolled for a minimum of two years.

The Forensic Psychology Qualifications Board

The qualification is overseen by the Forensic Psychology Qualifications Board (FPQB). The FPQB writes the *Handbook* and designs the assessments. It appoints the assessors and approves results and feedback. When a candidate successfully completes all requirements it awards the Qualification.

The FPQB is accountable to the Qualifications Standards Committee, which acts on delegated authority from the Membership and Professional Training Board.

The FPQB has a number of Officers who have key responsibilities within the qualification process and is supported by a Qualifications Officer.

The Qualifications Office

The Society's Qualifications Office is responsible for the day-to-day running of qualifications. All contacts are through the Qualifications Office, which keeps full records in relation to all candidates.

Each qualification is looked after by a specific Qualifications Officer, who will be able to answer most questions about the qualification. When they are unable to help they will contact appropriate people from the FPQB or elsewhere in the Society to find the requested information. Sometimes they may put you directly in touch with someone to discuss your question and sometimes they will find out the answer and get back to you themselves.

You can find out the contact details for the relevant Qualifications Officer on the Society's website (www.bps.org.uk/qualifications).

Key Roles and their responsibilities

Chair of the FPQB

The Chair is responsible for running the Qualifications Board. The Chair is not directly involved in the assessment of candidates in order to maintain some independence. They chair meetings of the Board and take responsibility for decisions taken on behalf of the Board in between meetings.

Registrar and Chief Supervisor

This is currently a combined role and for ease of reference we will use the term Registrar to apply to the combined role. The Registrar has responsibility for approving the process of candidates' training. They are responsible for approving Co-ordinating Supervisors, for approving enrolments, changes of setting and exemplar plans and for reviewing quarterly supervision plans, placement audits and competence logbooks annually. They are able to advise Co-ordinating Supervisors throughout the candidates training and they are responsible for organising training for Co-ordinating Supervisors.

Contact with the Registrar should be made via the Qualifications Officer.

Chief Assessor

The Chief Assessor is responsible for the assessment process. This includes the recruitment and training of assessors, advising assessors, helping to prepare and finalise feedback for candidates and ensuring the process runs smoothly. The Chief Assessor is supported by four Lead Assessors (one for each Core Role). In order to maintain the independence of the assessment process the Chief Assessor is not normally permitted to speak to any candidate about their enrolment or assessment. Co-ordinating Supervisors who need some clarification regarding feedback or results would normally discuss this with the Registrar.

Co-ordinating Supervisor

This person has overall responsibility for guiding the candidate through the Qualification. The Co-ordinating Supervisor must be registered as a Forensic Psychologist with the HPC and must also be a Chartered Member of the Society and a Full Member of the Division of Forensic Psychology

Co-ordinating Supervisors should oversee the trainee's practice and professional development and address any aspect which they identify as a potential concern or training need (including by bringing this, where appropriate, to the attention of the Registrar). Their role includes the following objectives:

- Completing a setting audit and risk assessment as part of the enrolment and subsequently for any change of setting, and reviewing on an annual basis;
- Working with the trainee to develop quarterly training plans, overseeing their implementation and reviewing progress on a quarterly basis;
- Overseeing the quality and comprehensiveness of the Portfolio of Evidence;
- Signing-off competences in the competence logbook as and when demonstrated;
- Listening, supporting and advising the trainee and, where necessary, directing them in respect of organisational, academic, professional and ethical matters;
- Appraising the trainee's overall practice and providing positive and critical feedback on their strengths and weaknesses;
- Encouraging the trainee to reflect on their work, be creative, adopt a problem-solving approach and to integrate theory into their practice;
- Ensuring the trainee focuses on the operationalising of Core Roles and specific competences.

And the following functions:

- Monitoring the trainee's record keeping;
- Reporting any disciplinary or other matter that may call into question the trainee's suitability for Registration as a Forensic Psychologist;
- Where appropriate, and in consultation with the trainee, identifying a suitable Designated Supervisor to provide support in specific areas of practice;
- Countersigning all relevant documents, including the practice diary, exemplar reports and items of supporting evidence;
- Providing a supervisor's report in relation to each core role submission;
- Receiving copies of correspondence and reports, from the Society, in relation to your submissions and progress on the Qualification.

Co-ordinating Supervisors must be on the Society's Register for Applied Psychology Practice Supervisors. Whilst you are Co-ordinating Supervisor for one of our candidates the Qualifications Office will pay your fee for this Register. You must also undertake refresher training at least once every two years. This might be a distance learning module or it might be attendance at a workshop. Once a year you will be asked to complete an appraisal form specifically in relation to your supervisor role which will be reviewed on behalf of the FPQB. This process will help inform the refresher training provided by the FPQB.

Designated Supervisors

All trainees are required to have supervision with a Forensic Psychologist for the majority of their training.

However, in cases where it is not practical for all of the candidate's practice to be supervised by a Forensic Psychologist, a Designated Supervisor may be appointed to supervise some of the practice.

Designated Supervisors must meet the requirements of the Regulations with regard to Designated Supervisors. They should have particular knowledge and experience which has been guided by a professional training. Their conduct should be regulated by a code of conduct enforced by a generally recognised professional body of which they are a member in good standing. It is desirable that Designated Supervisors also display a commitment to multidisciplinary working. The responsibilities of Designated Supervisors are to:

- Liaise with the Co-ordinating Supervisor;
- Provide direct supervision of the trainee's practice in a given area of work;
- Countersign relevant entries in the trainee's practice diary and maintain other forms of administration;
- Listen to the trainee's views or concerns about work in progress and advise as appropriate;
- Model and teach practical competence through illustration, prompting and feedback.
- Encourage the trainee to apply a multi-disciplinary practice, good communication and problem-centred approach;
- Appraise the trainee's integration and effectiveness in a multi-disciplinary context and provide positive and critical feedback on the trainees strengths and weaknesses.

Designated Supervisors must be approved by the Co-ordinating Supervisor and the Qualifications Office must be informed of the arrangement. Another trainee enrolled on the Qualification cannot be a Designated Supervisor.

Contracts

You should have a contract with each candidate who you supervise. This contract should set out what is expected of each party. It should include the minimum number of meetings you will have, the means by which meetings or supervision might take place (face-to-face, telephone, e-mail) and the rates at which the candidate will be charged for this (if applicable). It should also set out what is expected of the candidate, for example, their preparation for supervision meetings, information which you expect them to provide you with.

The *Handbook* for the qualification specifies minimum requirements for supervision and your contract should ensure that at least these minimum criteria are met. You should also bear in mind that some candidates will need more support and supervision than the minimum specified and should allow for this in your contractual arrangement.

Sometimes supervision will be external to the candidate's employing organisation and the need for a contract governing matters such as payment is clear. Sometimes the supervisor and candidate will be employed by the same organisation and supervision might be part of the supervisor's normal job role. In such cases the candidate would not expect to pay additional fees to the supervisor. However, a contract which sets out the expectations and responsibilities of each in relation to the supervision process is still required. This will help both parties to be clear about what is expected of them and about what is reasonable to ask of the other.

A template contract is available on the Society's website which you may use, or you may use your own contract. The candidate and supervisor must both have a copy of the contract and a copy must be lodged with the Society.

Arranging placements

In the context of the Qualification in Forensic Psychology a placement may be defined either as a specific placement organised within an organisation for a specified period of time, during which the candidate will receive supervision, or it may be defined more broadly as periods of supervised practice within a candidate's normal employing organisation. Where the candidate is employed within an organisation for the duration of their enrolment it may be helpful to think of particular projects or particular periods of time as placements.

The Co-ordinating Supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that each placement will provide an appropriate learning experience. This includes approving the designated supervisor if one is to be used.

For all settings in which supervised practice will be undertaken an audit must be completed. The audit form can be found in Section B of the enrolment form and must be completed before enrolment and submitted with the enrolment form. Section C of the enrolment form is a risk assessment for the setting and must also be completed and submitted with the enrolment form. The audit will need to be reviewed on an annual basis. If the trainee changes setting during their enrolment (for example, moves to a new job) then the change of setting forms must be completed. These include both an audit and a risk assessment for the new setting.

The intended learning outcomes of the placement should be identified and a clear plan for achieving these should be in place, including realistic timescales. Learning outcomes will normally refer to competences which the candidate is required to develop and demonstrate. This will usually be part of the quarterly review that the Co-ordinating Supervisor and candidate undertake. In the case of periods of supervision with a designated supervisor it will be helpful for the Co-ordinating Supervisor, Designated Supervisor and candidate to meet to agree the intended learning outcomes for the placement.

The Co-ordinating Supervisor, Designated Supervisor (if applicable) and candidate should all be clear about what is expected and about what evidence the candidate will need to collect. If a Designated Supervisor is being used the Co-ordinating Supervisor should discuss the placement with the Designated Supervisor so that they also understand the requirements for the placement and what will be required from them including any role in evaluating the candidate's performance.

During all of their work the candidate is expected to comply with the Society's *Code of Ethics and Conduct* and the Society's *Generic Professional Practice Guidelines* as well as maintaining an awareness of the HPC *Code of Performance, Ethics and Conduct*. Designated Supervisors should also be advised of this and, if necessary, provided with copies (available from the Society's website and the HPC website respectively).

Before approving the placement, the Co-ordinating Supervisor should consider a number of factors:

- It is important that the practice setting will provide a safe and supportive environment and a risk assessment must be undertaken. The Co-ordinating Supervisor should consult the host organisation (normally the employer) about the most appropriate person to undertake the risk assessment. Some organisations will have a health and safety officer who will be able to help with the risk assessment. However, overall responsibility rests with the Co-ordinating Supervisor, who must be satisfied that the placement will provide a safe environment for the trainee.
- The organisation in which the supervised practice is taking place must comply with certain requirements in order to ensure it will provide an appropriate learning environment for the trainee. The audit form (Section B of the enrolment/change of setting forms) has been designed to help the Co-ordinating Supervisor to ensure that these requirements have been met. When completing the audit the Co-ordinating Supervisor may want to discuss some aspects with the trainee or their line manager, but the final judgement will rest with the Co-ordinating Supervisor. The introduction to the audit form provides more information about its completion.
- There must be appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of the candidate. This is particularly important if the co-ordinating supervisor is external to the setting.

The following sections provide more detail on various aspects of supervised practice which should be taken into account when arranging placements.

Placement arrangements

Practical arrangements for the placement should be clear. The candidate should have clear information about time and place and about who they will meet first when arriving at the placement.

If there are any specific requirements for the site, such as advance security clearance or criminal conviction checks, then these must be complied with.

The placement should start with an induction, particularly if the candidate has not worked for that placement provider before or for some time. This should include practical information about the site (fire escapes, toilets, lunch facilities, breaks, etc.) as well as information about any workplace policies to which the candidate must adhere. This should include Health and Safety policies and any precautions around lone working.

Where a candidate is undertaking their supervised practice within their normal employment this induction may not require all of the above elements, provided that the candidate has been provided with this information previously and is aware of where to find the information again if needed. However, if any of the information or policies change, or new policies are introduced, then the candidate must be informed.

If the candidate is undertaking their supervised practice in the context of their normal employment it is important that their line manager is aware of the requirements for their placement and is supportive in helping to achieve this. It may be helpful for the Co-ordinating Supervisor, candidate and line manager to meet to agree any particular requirements, such as study time or supervision time, allocation of particular work tasks to help the candidate gain appropriate experience and development opportunities which are likely to arise during the placement period. It is important that the line manager understands the candidate's status as a trainee and the limitations this may place on their work. The document *Supporting Forensic Trainees: Best Practice* is included in the Appendix of this *Handbook* and may provide a useful briefing for line managers.

Client consent

The issue of informed consent is central to ethical practice. Supervisors should discuss with candidates any particular issues regarding client consent within the context of their professional role and should ensure that organisational requirements for client consent are adhered to. Clients should be informed that the candidate is in training and working under supervision, and should highlight the limits of confidentiality within the context. Given the particular attributes of forensic settings we advise that trainees seek general consent from clients at the beginning of each piece of work. Trainees should explain to clients their trainee status, that some of their work may be submitted for assessment and obtain general agreement from the client, rather than specifying that any specific work will be submitted.

Recording sessions

Recording sessions can also be a useful tool in the developmental process, enabling a supervisor and candidate to review sessions together to identify learning points. Specific consent should be sought for the recording of sessions.

Ethical frameworks

Candidates are required to work within the Society's *Code of Ethics and Conduct* and the Society's *Generic Professional Practice Guidelines*. These can be obtained from the Society's website (www.bps.org.uk). Candidates are also expected to maintain an awareness of the HPC *Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics* and the HPC *Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students* which are available from the HPC website (www.hpc-uk.org). Supervisors should ensure that they are also aware of these ethical codes and should take opportunities to discuss ethical issues in supervision.

Insurance

Candidates are required to ensure that they have appropriate professional indemnity insurance. Often this will be provided by their employer but they will need to check they are covered for all of their supervised practice as a trainee, especially if some takes place outside of their normal employing organisation.

When arranging placements Co-ordinating Supervisors should ensure that appropriate insurance is in place.

Supervisors may also wish to check that their own professional indemnity insurance covers them for their role as supervisor.

Health and Safety

The Co-ordinating Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that placements take place in a safe environment. This includes ensuring that the candidate's induction includes the organisational health and safety policies, lone working policies and any other policies relevant to the safety of the candidate during their placement. The Co-ordinating Supervisor should undertake the risk assessment required in Section C of the enrolment/change of setting form and be satisfied that the policies, and their implementation, are adequate to provide for a safe placement environment. If there is an organisational health and safety officer they will be able to help with the risk assessment and should be consulted about identified risks and organisational policies. Any concerns should be discussed with the Chief Supervisor and resolved before a placement is approved.

Study time

During periods of supervised practice candidates will require dedicated time to study. This includes reading and reflecting on the psychological literature relating to the current period of supervised practice as well as time to write up reports and other evidence which will later be submitted for assessment.

The supervisor, candidate and, where appropriate, line manager, should agree in advance the amount of study time to be allocated during the period of supervised practice and when it is expected that this will be used. It is beneficial to keep some flexibility in this arrangement, but the candidate's overall study time should be protected.

Whilst study time during placement is strongly recommended, the Society understands that in some employment contexts it might not be possible to provide study time during working time. In such circumstances this should be clearly stated at the outset and the Co-ordinating Supervisor should ensure that the candidate has considered what study time they will need and when they will undertake this. It is important that candidates have realistic expectations about how much study time might be required and when this can be undertaken. Co-ordinating Supervisors should help candidates by discussing these matters and helping them to draw up a realistic plan.

Group supervision

Some Supervisors may be supervising several candidates and may choose to undertake group supervision. This can have advantages for candidates who can benefit from the shared learning experience. When supervising a group of candidates together each candidate will be deemed to have received a limited amount of supervision within the session. Therefore, if group supervision is to count towards the total overall supervision hours required it should be apportioned appropriately. For example, a two-hour supervision session involving a group of four trainees might be counted as 30 minutes of supervision for each individual.

Finally, whilst group supervision can provide benefits to candidates it is not a substitute for individual one to one supervision. Supervisors should ensure that there is an appropriate balance.

Private supervision

Sometimes candidates are unable to obtain supervision from a forensic psychologist within their employing organisation. Other candidates may not be employed whilst training. Whatever the reason, it is not uncommon for candidates to engage private supervision from outside of their workplace or placement setting.

Private supervisors must meet the qualification requirements set out in the *Regulations* and the *Handbook* for the Qualification and should follow the guidelines provided for Supervisors here. Matters such as the contract are particularly important. Supervisors who are not employees of the organisation where the candidate will undertake their supervised practice will need to ensure that they are able to have access to the placement setting and that commercial sensitivities or confidentiality clauses will not hamper their supervisory relationship with the candidate. Where such problems exist they should be acknowledged and a plan agreed to address any difficulties which arise.

Placement duration

Qualification *Handbooks* provide details about the minimum amount of supervised practice which is required. The duration of any particular placement should be agreed and noted in the Practice Diary. If the period of supervised practice relates to a planned exemplar then the duration of the placement should be noted on the exemplar plan.

Communication before, during and after the Placement

Where a Designated Supervisor is being used, the Co-ordinating Supervisor should make appropriate arrangements to communicate with the candidate and supervisor before, during and after the placement. How much communication is necessary or beneficial is likely to vary. However, the candidate and the supervisor should each know how to contact the Co-ordinating Supervisor if they feel it is appropriate, and should agree to do so in the event of any concerns about the placement. The Co-ordinating Supervisor and the Designated Supervisor will have some contact before the placement so that the Co-ordinating Supervisor is satisfied as to the arrangements for the placement. Contact during the placement is also important. For example, a mid-placement telephone conversation or meeting to review progress will help the Co-ordinating Supervisor to maintain an awareness of the candidate's progress and will give an opportunity for the Designated Supervisor to discuss any issues or seek clarification on any matters which may have arisen. At the end of the placement the Co-ordinating Supervisor and Designated Supervisor should make contact to discuss the candidate's progress.

Competence logbooks

Candidates are required to keep a competence logbook. Supervisors will be asked to sign-off competences as they are demonstrated under their supervision. Entries will be verified by assessors on the basis of the evidence submitted.

Co-ordinating Supervisors should regularly review the competence logbook with the candidate to ensure that progress is being made. Plans for achieving outstanding competences should be discussed as part of the quarterly reviews.

Evidence requirements (Assessment and Evaluation)

The evidence requirements for the Qualification can be found in the *Candidate Handbook*.

The Co-ordinating Supervisor should ensure that they are familiar with these and should review all evidence which the candidate intends to submit. Candidates should only submit exemplars when the Co-ordinating Supervisor is content that it represents competent practice. Assessors will then consider whether the evidence meets the requirements of the Qualification.

Supervisor's reports

The *Handbook* sets out the requirements for supervisor's reports.

Designated Supervisors must report to the Co-ordinating Supervisor any concerns they may have about the candidate's progression, any issues which have arisen, or any concerns about the candidate's conduct, health or fitness to practice. If such matters arise the Co-ordinating Supervisor should seek advice from the Registrar about how to proceed.

Further information

Supervisors can access further information via the Society's website, where there are pages devoted to the Qualification in Forensic Psychology. These can be found at www.bps.org.uk/qualforensic.

Appendix

Forensic Psychology Qualifications Board

Supporting Forensic Trainees: Best Practice

Work towards the Qualification in Forensic Psychology is expected to interface with the operational demands of trainees' employment. The Qualification process was designed to facilitate this. However, Qualification work is assessed and has to meet stringent criteria. Further it is likely, in most cases, that work submitted for the Qualification will require time and resources for the additional preparation necessary for its submission.

Employment as a Trainee Forensic Psychologist implies support of the training status by the employer. While some of this support may be expressed financially (e.g. in payment of necessary fees, etc.) there is little advantage to trainee or employer if no support is provided to prepare work for submission in terms of time, resources and supervision. The outcome of such lack of support is likely to be trainee burnout and excessively prolonged training duration. This in turn prolongs the shortage of Forensic Psychologists now much in demand in the Prison Service, health care and elsewhere. Prolonged training and its concomitant frustrations is likely to also reduce trainees' operational functioning.

The Forensic Psychology Qualifications Board wishes to recommend to employers a set of good working practices that serve the function of enhancing the training experience for trainees and supervisors, of accelerating the training process and of maintaining the trainee's operational performance during training. These recommendations apply, in the main, to trainees undertaking their supervised practice (Stage 2) for the Qualification, but can also be applied to any trainee being supported through the independent (examined) route through Stage 1. They may also be applicable to trainees undertaking an accredited MSc where the host university is unclear about support requirements.

Trainees should also recognise their own responsibility in questioning the level of Qualification support and structure available to them when taking up a post. This is particularly important where a trainee is employed in a post designated as a training post (e.g. 'Assistant' or 'Treatment Manager' posts).

Recommendations

1. Two fundamental submissions trainees are required to make for the Qualification are evidence of one to one-and-a-half hours supervision per week and daily practice diary entries describing their activities and reflecting upon their learning. Supervision must be developmental in nature rather than purely operational management oversight and some may be required in addition to normal operational supervision. Supervision has to be logged.

Overall supervision, diary keeping and logging may require up to half-a-day per week. How this is managed is, of course, the responsibility of the organisation and the trainee to negotiate.

2. Supervisors should ensure that where possible, trainees are enabled to undertake their four Core Roles and 20 associated competences as part of their operational duties. Where this is not locally possible, or limited by the scope of an individual trainee's operational responsibilities, it may be necessary to facilitate rotation between roles and/or facilitate transfer to different posts within the relevant organisation. Integrating the trainees' operational duties with their training demands provides the best context for accelerating progress through the Qualification. Trainees also have the ability to change roles once they have exhausted the training opportunities available in any particular role.
3. In addition to the half-a-day per week recommended supervision and diary/log keeping, it is recommended that trainees also be allocated one day per fortnight to prepare their exemplar work for submission.

4. In making these recommendations the Board recognised that, to be successful, trainees will be required to use much of their own time to prepare for supervision, develop skills and knowledge through reading and personal research and probably for further work on submissions.
5. The Board would also recommend that this allocation of time be in addition to any necessary structured training courses that may be required to enable trainees to meet current operational demands

John Hodge
Registrar/Chief Supervisor

Jo Bailey
Chief Examiner/Assessor

The British Psychological Society

St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR, UK

Tel: 0116 252 9568 Fax: 0116 247 0787 E-mail: exams@bps.org.uk Website: www.bps.org.uk