

Navigating Choppy Waters: The QSEP Voyage from Multiple Perspectives

Summary Abstract

The Society's Stage 2 Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP) has been developed to provide an appropriate training route for those seeking to forge a career within our relatively fledgling domain. QSEP represents a positive advancement for the personal and professional development of aspiring practitioners, whilst also ensuring greater transparency for service users regarding the competence of Chartered Sport and Exercise Psychologists. Although QSEP has evolved into a rigorous and fairly standardised process of professional training, there remains a great deal of variation in the approaches to supervision and subsequent experiences of candidates. The aim of this symposium is to provide a descriptive and reflective account of a particular model of supervision being adopted at one host institution within the UK. In paper 1, Andrew Manley will provide an overview of this institutional model of supervision, setting the scene for the remainder of the symposium. Paper 2 will be delivered by Ross Shand, who will offer a reflective account of his QSEP experiences under this institutional model. In paper 3, Charlotte Hinchliffe will outline her role in the development and functioning of the Applied Sport Psychology Special Interest Group, as it looks to become an integral part of the institutional supervision model. Paper 4, delivered by Andrew Manley and Susan Backhouse, will provide a reflective summary of the QSEP process from perspectives of two Supervisors and Assessors. Finally, Jo Hudson will act as discussant, offering some conclusions and implications based on the presentations. The primary aim of this symposium is not to advocate a specific approach to QSEP supervision as an example of "best" practice, but rather an opportunity to share some insights regarding the benefits and challenges of operationalising a particular model of supervision from the perspectives of Trainees, Supervisors, and Assessors.

Paper 1 – The "Good Ship"?: An Overview of an Institutional Model of QSEP Supervision

Purpose: This paper will provide a description of a specific model of supervision currently being adopted within a placement host institution in the UK, which should help to contextualise the presentations which follow.

Background: Just as it is important for applied practitioners to carefully consider and understand their theoretical and philosophical approaches to consultancy, so too it is vital that Supervisors of candidates enrolled on the Stage 2 Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP) exert effort in developing an appropriate model of supervision. Taking into consideration their own values, beliefs and approach to applied practice, two QSEP Supervisors decided to work collaboratively in moulding their academic environment into a suitable placement host for eligible QSEP candidates. Following negotiation with the institution's senior management and administrative teams, this

institutional model of QSEP supervision was formally established in 2013, in line with QSEP requirements.

Methods: The presentation will provide a largely descriptive overview of the institutional model of supervision, whilst also drawing upon relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence to justify the adopted approach.

Conclusions: If practitioner psychologists truly are the tool of their trade, then QSEP Supervisors and the environments they create are the workshop through which these tools are crafted. Through the adoption of a collaborative approach to supervision under the banner of a UK Higher Education institution, the Supervisors believe they are well placed to generate optimal conditions for the effective cultivation of the next generation of practitioner Sport and Exercise Psychologists.

Paper 2 – The Calm Despite the Storm: Reflections from a QSEP Candidate

Purpose: The present case study provides an overview of a Trainee Sport and Exercise Psychologist's experiences of undertaking the Stage 2 Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP) as part of an institutional model of supervision.

Background: The Qualification has been embedded within Leeds Beckett University, with the Trainee working as an associate member of staff. It is the trainee's belief that operating within this environment has been highly beneficial to his development due to support structure provided by an established higher education institution. In addition, the Co-ordinating and Key Role Supervisors have limited supervision to two Trainees whilst also adopting a collaborative team approach to the supervision process. Utilising such an approach to supervision has allowed the Trainee to feel fully supported and have access to a wide range of expertise. As a supervision team, both Supervisors attend monthly and quarterly meetings with Trainees, providing feedback and support.

Methods: The Trainee's experiences are presented within a reflective model, and academic literature will be drawn upon to support the adopted approaches.

Conclusions: It is believed that the approach adopted has been highly beneficial to the Trainee's development as an applied practitioner. Not only has it allowed access to expertise beyond a single primary Supervisor, it has provided a sense of belonging within a process where Trainees face many challenges and uncertainties. It is hoped these reflections may prove useful to other Supervisors and Trainees.

Paper 3 – The Applied Sport Psychology Special Interest Group (ASP-SIG): From Plotting the Course to Setting Sail

Purpose: This case study provides an overview of a QSEP candidate's experiences of establishing the Applied Sport Psychology Special Interest Group (ASP-SIG) at her host institution. The case study focuses on: the inspiration behind the inception of ASP-SIG; processes regarding initial development; how the group has functioned to-date; benefits and challenges experienced; and visions for future development.

Background: ASP-SIG was formed with the intention of bringing together those with a common interest in applied sport psychology. It was hoped that this would provide a valuable peer support network for colleagues, and an opportunity to share ideas and resources. Examples of ASP-SIG activities to-date include group meetings to facilitate peer networking/support; sharing of relevant research articles and "tools, tips, and techniques"; hosting a series of applied practice seminars; and attending identified professional development opportunities.

Methods: A reflective model will be adopted in presenting this case study. Theories of peer mentoring will also be considered.

Conclusions: Certain challenges needed to be overcome in developing ASP-SIG, yet the benefits of the group are believed to be of great value to those involved. The personal and career development opportunities fostered through this group have been evident, but more importantly, it provides a valuable support network for those involved in what can often be perceived as an isolating profession. It is hoped that the group will continue to develop in the years to come, and that in presenting this case study, others will be inspired to create their own peer groups and share their experiences.

Paper 4 – Skipper, Skivvy, or Scavenger?: Supervisor-Assessors' Reflections on Their Roles Within an Institutional Model of QSEP Supervision

Purpose: This paper will provide a synoptic reflection of the experiences of two QSEP Supervisors who operate under an institutional model of supervision, and also fulfil the role of QSEP Assessors.

Background: Conceiving the idea for an institutional model of QSEP supervision was a relatively swift process, given the wide-ranging benefits (e.g., extensive facilities/infrastructure, enhanced profile, enhanced perception of service/support) that can and have been realised by a range of stakeholders internal and external to the supervisory and candidate team. Consequently, it remains a model to which the two Coordinating Supervisors are fiercely committed. However, in light of their initial experiences over the course of the last two years, the Supervisors continue to question the sustainability of such a model in the face of numerous financial and logistical constraints. This

presentation will share some of the perceived successes and difficulties associated with this approach to supervision, and outline some of the intended future directions of travel.

Methods: A specific model of reflective practice will be adhered to in attempts to conceptualise and convey the experiences of supervision, as well as the learning that has occurred through engagement in the reflective process.

Conclusions: Based on personal reflections and feedback from Supervisees, the Coordinating Supervisors will continue working in accordance with their institutional model of QSEP supervision, with plans to bolster the ranks of both the supervisory team and the Trainee network. However, it is crucial that Supervisor-Assessors who operate under institutional models work hard to ensure their varied duties and roles remain complementary rather than becoming conflicting.