



# APBA Accreditation Proposed Standards

Adopted February 29, 2024

Updated on the website March 29, 2024

**1.0 Mission and Public Disclosure** — The program has a publicly stated mission that is consistent with the mission of the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts. The program discloses relevant information pertinent to success in the mission. The program makes public its goals, objectives, and training model and the alignment of the program offerings with the applicable professional certification and licensing standards in a manner that facilitates informed choices by potential students.

**1.1** The mission of the program is consistent with the mission of the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts to “promote and advance the science-based practice of applied behavior analysis.”

**1.2** The program has a clearly written and understandable mission statement that defines and outlines the purpose of the program and is on the program’s website in a location easily accessible to the public.

**1.3** The program publicly states its goals, objectives, requirements for graduation and the alignment of the program with applicable professional certification and licensing standards.

**1.4** The program publicly posts its curriculum, faculty, facilities, and administrative policies and procedures.

**1.5** Programs that are actively pursuing or that have been granted accreditation display only the accreditation status language provided to them in advertising and other relevant material.

**2.0 Curriculum and Instruction** — The program’s curriculum plan is consistent with the mission of the program. It is systematically focused on training practicing behavior analysts and producing conceptual understanding, practical competence, and skills for life-long learning in an environment that is inclusive and respectful.

**2.1** The curriculum focuses on developing foundational and applied knowledge, skills, and abilities, including analytic thinking and structured



problem solving, evidence-based practice and empirical behavior analytic procedures necessary to practice behavior analysis and produce meaningful outcomes for clients and stakeholders

**2.2** Coursework and applied practical and professional development activities are developed and executed in a manner that produces psychological safety, respect, collaboration, and a culture of inclusion and equity.

**2.3** Programs require and can demonstrate regularly scheduled and ongoing formal student progress and outcome reviews that are subsequently used to improve student outcomes and the academic program.

**2.4** Evidence-based instructional design strategies are employed to ensure student learning and engagement regardless of the modality of instruction.

**2.5** The overall curriculum and individual course content are reviewed at regular intervals and revised as needed to reflect advances in the science, knowledge base, and requirements for practice in the profession.

**2.6** The program has an advisory board or evidence of robust community partnerships to solicit and use feedback from parties (e.g., clinicians, service recipients, family members, school personnel) who are knowledgeable about ABA-based services and/or the populations and communities the program serves to inform the curriculum.

**2.7** Programs may opt to offer or manage fieldwork experience in addition to the academic program. In such instances, the program should track the qualifications of fieldwork supervisors, the status of supervisory relationships for students, and the content and competencies targeted during fieldwork. Programs who provide fieldwork experience or enter into contracts with agencies to provide fieldwork experience should provide professional development resources to facilitate the quality of supervision.

**3.0 Program Outcomes Assessment and Reporting** — The program regularly assesses and accurately reports data on multiple metrics related to the expected outcomes of its training efforts.

**3.1** Time to graduate, graduation rates, and attrition are available and accurately represented in public materials (e.g., recruiting and marketing, program website).

**3.2** The success rate of first-time test takers on the BACB certification exam is prominently displayed on all public materials and matches the reported data in BACB annual reports. Programs must have a pass rate for first-time test takers that meets the APBA standards for accreditation. Programs that



do not meet the existing standard for pass rate over a three- year window may be placed on probation or lose accreditation. If a program does not have student data published in BACB annual reports, they will be directed to submit appropriate alternative data.

**3.2.1** *For programs in Canadian Provinces other than Ontario:* Success rate of first-time test takers on the BACB certification exam is prominently displayed on all public materials and matches the reported data on BACB annual reports. Programs must have a pass rate for first-time test takers that meets the APBA standards for accreditation. Programs that do not meet the existing standard for pass rate over a three-year window may be placed on probation or lose accreditation.

**3.2.2** *For programs in Canadian Province of Ontario:* Success rate on provincial licensing, when available, is prominently displayed on all public materials

**3.3** If the program references job placement rates in marketing material, they must provide and certify the data are the most recent available and provide information on the placement in employment and types of work by graduates.

Pass Percentage Requirements for First-Time BACB Exam Takers Per 3.2

Initial Accreditation Application Criterion	Re-accreditation Criterion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained performance at or above 70% of first-time test takers pass the certification exam to qualify for full accreditation.</li> <li>• Programs that meet all standards and have a pass rate for first-time test takers between 50% and 69.9%, with evidence that they are making programmatic changes to improve student performance on the exam, can apply for and obtain pre-accreditation. Pre-accreditation is an acknowledgment of programs who have met all standards outside of the pass rate standard. A pre-accredited program is not accredited, and therefore cannot use Pathway 1 for graduates to apply for BACB certification. However, upon successfully attaining sustained performance at or above 70%, pre-accredited programs can request review for full accreditation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation cycles are 5 years.</li> <li>• Renewals are annual during the 5-year cycle.</li> <li>• If any two data points during a five-year cycle fall below 70%, the program's accreditation will change to probation status. A program with probationary status can apply for reaccreditation only once.</li> <li>• If all data points from the prior five years fall below 70%, accreditation will be lost.</li> </ul>



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programs with consistent pass percentages below 70% should not be accredited.</li></ul> |  |
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**4.0 Administration and Resources** — The program is actively supported by its sponsoring institution, governed by its faculty, informed by feedback from its students and staff, and led by a qualified core member of the faculty. The program has the required resources to fulfill its mission.

**4.1** The program can document the commitment of the institution’s administration to equitable faculty governance, and maintenance of core faculty-student ratios, and other appropriate resources that support effective learning and mentoring.

**4.2** The program includes documented administrative and decision-making processes that are well-defined and are regularly reviewed and revised based on feedback from faculty, staff, and students.

**4.3** The program administrator must be a nationally certified, doctoral-level behavior analyst (or provincially licensed in the province of Ontario) with the necessary training and applied practical experience to manage the program successfully. The administrator is provided the support and resources to carry out their duties

**4.4** The program has an outlined financial model or budget, allowing for the execution of its mission and realization of its goals related to student outcomes.

**4.5** The program’s non-fiscal resources, including technology, partnerships, educational supports, and physical facilities (if there are physical facilities) allow for the execution of its mission and realization of its goals related to student outcomes.

**5.0 Faculty and Student Services** — Program faculty and student resources are sufficient to fulfill the program’s mission and successful student outcomes.

**5.1** The core faculty consists of full-time, doctoral level (in behavior analysis or a related field), behavior analyst(s). The program may also be supported by other part-time faculty who have master’s or doctoral degrees in behavior analysis or a related field. Part-time and adjunct faculty efforts are coordinated by a core faculty member or program administrator to ensure a cohesive curriculum and student experience.



**5.2** The program provides training and supervision (if provided) by qualified behavior analysts with expertise and experience in the science and practice of behavior analysis.

**5.3** Faculty are required to carry out regularly scheduled formal and informal student assessment of their teaching and have a documented strategy and process for using the feedback to improve the course content and learning activities.

**5.4** The program has a publicly available handbook, updated at least annually, that explains policies and processes that impact students. The program can demonstrate, based on regularly collected data, that these processes are consistently applied. The handbook includes information on, but not limited to:

- admission and disciplinary processes
- student complaint processes
- transfer credit process for evaluating courses taken at accredited [e.g., US DOE or CHEA] institutions, and the transfer and awarding of academic credit if the courses satisfy current program requirements
- masters' projects/theses/capstones; changes in program of study
- financial obligations, including where to access information on tuition and fees
- funding opportunities, including stipends and assistantships and the process for how those are objectively awarded
- how the program's accreditation status and offerings meet certification requirements
- the profession's general regulatory structure
- information related to licensing and limitations or opportunities for practice
- when and how exceptions to the policies and processes can occur

**5.5** Students have regular, systematic opportunities to evaluate their experience with and access to academic advising provided by faculty/staff who are knowledgeable about the program and requirements for licensing, certification, and career paths.

**5.6** Students receive scheduled, recurring formal feedback from faculty/staff about their performance and progress in the program. Students are encouraged to take advantage of resources and supports when needed.

**5.7** There is a clear policy for how student complaints are handled, described in the handbook; variations in implementation of the policy must



be fair and equitable. Programs maintain a written record of all formal student complaints and grievances. The documentation should consist of the written complaints or grievances, program action and resolution.

**5.8** Programs have policies to encourage and accept diverse (e.g., race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender identity) applicants. Programs collect and evaluate related data and use them to improve policies.

**6.0 Master’s Degree Program Requirements** — Master’s programs must meet the following requirements for instruction in specific content areas and documentation of specific student competencies. As indicated below, some requirements include a mandated minimum number of contact hours of instruction. The appropriate range of flexibility for documenting that the requirements are met is specified for each item.

**6.1** Students demonstrate mastery of concepts, skills, abilities, problem solving, and effective application in both coursework and practice related to the profession of behavior analysis.

**6.2** The program consists of at least 360 hours of instruction that meets the requirements of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board as indicated below:

Course	Instructional Hours	Instructional Context
Basic Principles of Behavior	45 hours	w/in 1 freestanding course
Research Methods in Behavior Analysis	45 hours	w/in 1 freestanding course
Theory & Philosophy in Behavior Analysis	45 hours	w/in 1 freestanding course
Behavior Assessment & Intervention*	90 hours	w/in 2 freestanding courses
Ethics in Behavior Analysis*	45 hours	w/in 1 freestanding course
Organizational Behavior Management and Supervision*	45 hours	w/in 1 freestanding course
Experiential Learning in Behavior Analysis/Practicum/Lab/Practice of Behavior Analysis*+	45 hours	Can be in a single course or spread across multiple courses



\* These courses must include coverage of issues related to culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

+ This course requirement might be met by a practicum course, fieldwork experience course, experiential learning course, or course on practice skills. The course must document content that prepares students to benefit from fieldwork and understand the fieldwork requirements. It should also document coverage of core skills relevant to the practice of behavior analysis including interpersonal skills (e.g., therapeutic relationships, multi-disciplinary teaming, supervisory relationships), documentation (e.g., reports, notes, writing skills), and skills for caseload management (e.g., planning, billing requirements, IEP process).

**For Accreditation Applicants Prior to 2026** — the program meets the certification coursework requirements of the BACB, as indicated in the table below, plus instruction in practice related skills in addition to supervision:

Course	Instructional Hours
BACB Compliance Code and Disciplinary Systems; Professionalism Note: must be taught in one more freestanding courses.	45 hours
Philosophical Underpinnings; Concepts and Principles Note: 45 hours must be taught as a freestanding course on concepts and principles.	90 hours
Measurement, Data Display and interpretation; Experimental Design Note: Must be taught as one freestanding course.	45 hours
Behavior Assessment	45 hours
Behavior-Change Procedures; Selecting and Implementing Interventions	60 hours
Personnel Supervision and Management	30 hours
Experiential Learning in Behavior Analysis/Practicum/Lab/Practice of Behavior Analysis*+	45 hours

+ This course requirement might be met by a practicum course, fieldwork experience course, experiential learning course, or course on practice skills. The course must document content that prepares students to benefit from fieldwork



and understand the fieldwork requirements. It should also document coverage of core skills relevant to the practice of behavior analysis including interpersonal skills (e.g., therapeutic relationships, multi-disciplinary teaming, supervisory relationships), documentation (e.g., reports, notes, writing skills), and skills for caseload management (e.g., planning, billing requirements, IEP process).

**6.3** Capstone — Students should demonstrate core competencies for practicing behavior analysis. The format of the capstone experience can include the following: a thesis, a clinical demonstration capstone project, a clinical portfolio of products relevant to the workplace, competency demonstration in practice related skills, a program evaluation project, or a review paper. If other formats are used, the program must justify how the format allows evaluation of competence in skills that are relevant to the practice of behavior analysis