



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING,
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY,
AND FOUNDATIONS

Applied Behavior Analysis Supporting Interest Area
(for Educational Psychology Majors Only)
Undergraduate Student Handbook

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PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This handbook is intended to help students understand the framework and functioning of the Applied Behavior Analysis program at Mississippi State University. This handbook provides students with a variety of resources that will be valuable during their time as a student in the program. Students will find documents related to course sequences, accreditation information, student expectations, and how student progress will be evaluated throughout the program.

If any student has any questions about the information presented in this handbook or has additional questions that are not addressed in this handbook, they should contact the ABA Program Coordinator, Dr. Hallie Smith.

Contact Information

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FULL TIME DEPARTMENTAL AND RELATED FACULTY AND STAFF

Director of Applied Behavior Analysis Programs

Smith, Hallie M., Ph.D. (Mississippi State University). Assistant Professor. Licensed Psychologist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral Designation (BCBA-D). Interests include the assessment and treatment of pediatric feeding disorders and severe problem behavior, understanding relationship between social validity and treatment integrity of behavioral interventions, and application of behavior analytic interventions to children with developmental disabilities and CHARGE syndrome.

Applied Behavior Analysis Core Faculty

Borgen, John, Psy.D. (NovaSoutheastern University). Assistant Professor. Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral Designation (BCBA-D). Interests include pediatric feeding disorders, severe behavior disorders, behavioral skills training, organizational behavior management, mindfulness in higher education, behavioral economics, and applications of virtual reality technology.

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS PROGRAMS

The applied behavior analysis (ABA) programs at Mississippi State University (MSU) are designed to provide education, training, and experience to students with the goal of preparing them for practice in real-world settings. Our faculty members are equipped with extensive clinical experiences in the field of behavior analysis and have exceptional teaching, supervision, and research skills. Faculty in the ABA programs share the goal of preparing students to become behavior analysts who provide high quality, evidence-based services to a wide range of ages, populations, and functioning levels in order to make socially significant changes in the lives of others. Students will be encouraged to work with each core faculty member to facilitate skill development in a number of areas. The faculty members also serve as important role models in the students' development into professionals in the field of ABA.

Faculty members expect students to work diligently to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful behavior analyst. Thus, students are viewed as “works-in-progress” within a developmental approach to skill and knowledge acquisition. Degree and coursework options within the ABA programs include: Master of Science (MS) in Educational Psychology with a concentration in ABA, a graduate certificate in ABA, and an undergraduate minor in ABA.

The undergraduate concentration in ABA is a Verified Course Sequence (VCS) program; completion of the program meets one of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board's (BACB) requirements for credentialing as a Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA). The VCS follows the BACB's 5th edition task list for BCaBA coursework requirements. Per the 5th edition task list, the BACB requires that students receive 225 classroom hours of graduate level instruction in the following content areas:

Content Area	Classroom Hours
BACB Compliance Code and Disciplinary Systems; Professionalism	30 hours
Philosophical Underpinnings; Concepts & Principles	45 hours
Behavior Assessment	45 hours
Measurement, Data Display and Interpretations; Experimental Design	30 hours
Behavior-Change Procedures; Selecting and Implementing Interventions	60 hours
Personnel Supervision and Management	15 hours
TOTAL	225 hours

ACCREDITATION AND VERIFIED COURSE SEQUENCE

Within the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA), credentialed practitioners at all levels are required to meet a set of standards developed by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). Although the standards differ across credentialing options (e.g., BCBA, BCaBA, RBT), completing specific coursework is a requirement for all credentials. Currently, the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) serves as the accreditation and approval body for all education programs and coursework in ABA. Their mission is to contribute to the well-being of society by developing, enhancing, and supporting the growth and vitality of the science of behavior analysis through research, education, and practice. ABAI's primary objective in education is to recruit, train, and professionally develop behavior analysts. As is common in other disciplines, professional associations often oversee training programs within their discipline, and ABAI manages that verification of course sequences as part of its objective to foster high-quality education in behavior analysis.

Verified Course Sequence (VCS) status is granted once ABAI has verified the sequence of courses as meeting particular instructor and coursework standards in a college or university program offering behavior analytic instruction. Completion of a VCS meets the coursework requirement for applications for the BACB's Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) credential. **ABAI has designated Mississippi State University's ABA program as a VCS, meaning that our courses cover all of the required content to meet requirements for credentialing as a BCaBA.**

Please note that this does not mean you will receive your BCaBA upon completion of this undergraduate minor program, as the BACB requires not only completion of coursework in behavior analysis, but also completion of supervised field work and passing of the credentialing exam (<https://www.bacb.com/bcaba/>). This minor **does not include** any practicum courses or opportunities for students to accumulate their field work hours. However, you may contact any of the ABA faculty members to discuss options for obtaining these hours independently.

Contact information of accrediting and approval bodies:

Association for Applied Behavior Analysis International (ABAI)
 550 W. Centre Avenue
 Portage, MI 49024
 269-492-9310; abainternational.org



MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE ABA MINOR PROGRAM

The mission of the ABA programs at MSU is to prepare students to provide high quality behavior analytic services to a diverse population of individuals by offering excellent training, supervision, and research experiences.

More specifically, the mission of the ABA undergraduate minor/concentration program at MSU is for students to begin to acquire the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to demonstrate competency in applied behavior analysis, as demonstrated by their mastery of criteria outlined by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) in the 5th edition task list (<https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/170113-BCBA-BCaBA-task-list-5th-ed-.pdf>). Further, the mission of this program is to provide mentorship and guidance to undergraduate students regarding the incorporation of behavior analysis into their long-term career goals.

The ABA programs at MSU adhere to the **scientist-practitioner model**, where both faculty and students are expected to be (a) consumers of empirically-based practice, (b) evaluators of their own empirically-based practice, and (c) informed consumers and producers of research that contributes to the field of behavior analysis. While there are no specific research requirements for students in the program at this time, engagement in research at any capacity is encouraged and fostered by faculty in the ABA program.

CURRICULUM

The undergraduate educational psychology supporting interest area in ABA is an 18-hour program that consists of 6 courses. Courses will typically be offered in the spring and fall semesters only. Students who are educational psychology majors can choose ABA as their supporting interest area within the major. ***The courses offered in this concentration are intended to be taken in a sequential order, as the later courses build on content covered in the earlier courses.*** For example, students should take EPY 4113 before taking EPY 4223, EPY 4443, and EPY 4493. The course offerings each semester follow these recommendations.

Undergraduate Concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis (18 HOURS) Beginning Fall 2020

Applied Behavior Analysis Concentration (18 hours)

EPY 4103	Behavior Analysis for Behavior Technicians
EPY 4113	Principles of Behavior Analysis
EPY 4223	Applications of Behavior Analysis
EPY 4443	Basics of Single Subject Design Research
EPY 4493	Behavior Assessment
EPY 4603	Ethics and Supervision in Behavior Analysis

BACB Coursework Requirements for BCaBA-5 th Edition Task List	
Content Area	Courses
BACB Compliance Code and Disciplinary Systems; Professionalism	EPY 4603: Ethics and Supervision in Behavior Analysis
Philosophical Underpinnings; Concepts & Principles	EPY 4113: Principles of ABA
Measurement, Data Display and Interpretation; Experimental Design	EPY 4443: Basics of Single Subject Design Research
Behavior Assessment	EPY 4493: Behavior Assessment
Behavior-Change Procedures; Selecting and Implementing Interventions	EPY 4113: Principles of ABA EPY 4223: Applications of ABA
Personnel Supervision and Management	EPY 4603: Ethics and Supervision in Behavior Analysis

Undergraduate Minor in ABA- Typical Course Offering Schedule

FALL	SPRING
EPY 4113: Principles of ABA	EPY 4223: Applications of ABA
EPY 4603: Ethics and Supervision in Behavior Analysis	EPY 4443: Basics of Single Subject Design Research
EPY 4103: Behavior Analysis for Behavior Technicians	EPY 4493: Behavior Assessment

DECLARING A SUPPORTING INTEREST AREA IN ABA

If you are interested in the supporting interest area in ABA, please notify your advisor and complete the “ABA Supporting Interest Area Declaration” form (located at the end of this document). As a VCS program, the VCS coordinator is required to maintain a record of students enrolled in the minor program. Completion of this form serves as that documentation. The form should be emailed to Dr. Hallie Smith (hms238@msstate.edu), the VCS Coordinator.

By declaring your supporting interest area in ABA and completing all required coursework, you have inherently also received your minor in ABA, and this will be reflected on your transcript.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is applied behavior analysis?

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the science of applying the principles of learning to change socially significant behavior. This basically means that we use principles of learning to change behavior that matters. We can use ABA to increase academic skills, communication skills, and functional life skills; we can also use ABA to decrease inappropriate or problematic behaviors that may be negatively impacting a person.

Do I need to have experience in behavior analysis to take courses in this minor?

No previous experience is necessary.

How many courses will I be expected to take each semester?

You can take courses as you are able each semester, we have standard course offerings in the fall and the spring, meaning that not every course is offered every semester, so make sure to look and plan ahead if you are interested in completing all courses required for the minor.

Can I take some of these courses even if I don't have time in my schedule to take all of them and complete the concentration?

Absolutely!

Can I sit for the BCaBA exam after completing this program?

After completing the coursework and the minor, you will have completed all the required coursework to make you eligible to take the exam (<https://www.abainternational.org/vcs.aspx>). However, in order to sit for the BCaBA exam, you will also need to have accrued all the required experience and supervision hours.