BACB Newsletter

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Introducing the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.)

The BACB periodically updates and reviews the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List*, which serves as the foundation for the BCBA and BCaBA examinations, to remain current with the discipline and to retain accreditation by the National Commission of Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The process the BACB uses to revise its task lists is known as a job analysis, which involves meetings of subject matter experts to develop a draft task list and then conducting a large-scale survey of BCBAs and BCaBAs to validate its content. The job analysis for the 4th edition of the *BCBA/ BCaBA Task List* occurred in late 2009 and the task list was published in 2010. The BCBA and BCaBA examinations that were based on the 4th edition of the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* were launched in February 2015. Thus, it may appear too soon for a new task list. However, because it is accompanied by revisions to coursework requirements, which take time for universities to develop and teach, it was necessary to begin the lengthy job-analysis process, announce the new task list along with new coursework requirements, and begin to implement those requirements. In addition, a periodic review of the task list for potential revision is prudent due to the rapidly changing landscape of the profession. The remainder of this article describes the various activities that were conducted as part of the development of the BCBA Task List (5th ed) and the BCaBA Task List (5th ed).

Task List Development

The first major step in the task-list development process was assembling a stratified group of subject matter experts (SMEs) who were appropriately representative of practitioners and faculty members, the predominant stakeholders of the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List*. The 16-member workgroup had the following characteristics: (a) BCBA-Ds [9], BCBAs [4], BCaBAs [3]; (b) practitioners [10], faculty [6]; (c) balanced gender diversity (8 women, 8 men); and (d) geographically diverse representatives (Australia, Canada, France, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

The workgroup was convened in Littleton, Colorado in November 2015. After first being oriented to the task-list development process, the workgroup was presented with four sets of materials for their

consideration and discussion: (a) the 3rd and 4th editions of the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* to highlight a range of content and organizational structures, (b) results from a survey of prior BACB SMEs who provided recommendations about content and structure, (c) results from a survey of experts in the experimental analysis of behavior (EAB) who provided recommendations about basic concepts and principles and terminology, and (d) the *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts (Compliance Code)*. After three days of consensus-based discussion, the workgroup revised the task list as follows:

» The task list was reorganized to feature two main sections: Foundations and Applications
» The basic and theoretical content was moved from the Foundational Knowledge appendix of the prior version into the task list
» The entire *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts* was incorporated as a section
» Two new sections (Selecting and Implementing Interventions; Personnel Supervision and Management) were added by relocating existing relevant tasks and adding new ones
» Tasks were removed, added, or reworded to improve clarity

Task List Validation

It is critical that certification programs establish a direct link between the practice of the profession and its entrance requirements. Thus, the revised task list developed by the workgroup was distributed in February 2016 to all BCBAs and BCaBAs in a survey designed to validate the task-list content. Respondents were presented with each of the 86 tasks and were asked to rate each one. Tasks in the Foundations section (e.g., theory, EAB, methodology) were rated on their *importance* -- not, moderately, or critically important -- and tasks in the Applications section (e.g., behavior-change procedures, personnel supervision and management) were rated on their *frequency/prevalence of use* -- never, with a few clients, with half of clients, with most clients, or with all clients -- and their *criticality* -- no, slight, moderate, or high risk of adverse consequences. The frequency and criticality scales were combined to create an index of overall importance for tasks in the Applications section.

Survey distribution and response rate. Invitations were sent to all active certificants as of February 28, 2016, totaling 21,446 email addresses. Of these, 33 (0.2%) were undeliverable, yielding an effective sample size of 21,413. A total of 6,333 (29.6%) certified individuals submitted complete responses to the survey. Of the respondents, 7% were BCaBAs, 83% were BCBAs, and 9% were BCBA-Ds, which is consistent with the overall proportion of certificants. Ninety-two percent of respondents indicated that they provide, supervise, or consult on behavior-analytic services.

Results. Psychometric approaches to defining the relative importance (I) of a task are generally based on the frequency and criticality ratings obtained from the job analysis survey. Because behavior analysts often provide services to individuals for whom a lack of treatment or improper treatment are of great concern, the importance formula more heavily weights the *criticality* (C) rating than the *frequency/prevalence* (F) rating: $I = 2C + F$. The number of response options differed between the Foundations and Applications section questions; thus, task ratings were transformed to a 10-point scale for analytical consistency. The following anchor-point values were applied to task ratings from each section: 10 = Critically Important; 7.5 = Very Important; 5.0 = Moderately Important; 2.5 = Somewhat Important; and 0.0 = Not Important.

The mean scaled importance values for all tasks were calculated by credential level. For BCaBAs, the mean importance ratings ranged from 3.77 to 9.48; for BCBAs, the means ranged from 3.85 to 9.61, and for BCBA-Ds, the means ranged from 4.09, to 9.65. The task with the lowest importance rating for all three certification levels was "Use group contingencies." The ratings for this task were 3.77, 3.85, and 4.09 respectively. Given that all tasks had mean importance ratings above the scaled value for the "Somewhat Important" rating (2.5), none of the tasks appeared to be unimportant enough to consider elimination from the task list; that is, the SME-developed draft task list became the final task list.

Additional analyses revealed no statistically significant differences in ratings between various subgroups of respondents (i.e., gender, age, primary role, geographic location).

The *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.)

The BACB's Board of Directors voted to accept the results of the job analysis and the resulting task list on June 6, 2016. The *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.), which is now available on the BACB website, is organized as follows:

Foundations (37 tasks)

A. Philosophical Underpinnings

B. Concepts and Principles

C. Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation

D. Experimental Design

Applications (58 tasks)

E. Ethics (*Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts*)

F. Behavior Assessment

G. Behavior-Change Procedures

H. Selecting and Implementing Interventions

I. Personnel Supervision and Management

Changes to BCBA and BCaBA Coursework Requirements

After the BACB's Board of Directors approved the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.) in June 2016, they directed that a workgroup be convened to review the current coursework eligibility requirements and make recommendations for any revisions that should accompany the new task list. A majority of the workgroup members were faculty to ensure any recommended changes to coursework were properly informed by experts familiar with university-system requirements. The workgroup was diverse in geographical location, area of practice, gender, and representation of course sequence type. The 10-member SME workgroup reviewed the current *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (4th ed.) coursework requirements and the new *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.) and made recommendations to be implemented concurrently with examinations based on the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.). The BACB's Board of Directors approved the coursework recommendations in December 2016. The new coursework requirements are consistent with the primary changes to the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (i.e., reincorporation of foundational knowledge and ethics content; a greater focus on personnel supervision and management). In addition, they reflect the needs of BCBAs and BCaBAs given their current practice situations (e.g., increased supervisory responsibilities).

BCBA Coursework Changes

The primary changes to BCBA coursework requirements are described below.

- » 45 additional hours of instruction are required.
- » The "Ethical and Professional Conduct" requirement has been revised to reflect that both the BACB's *Compliance Code* and disciplinary systems must be taught, in addition to professionalism.
- » The "Concepts and Principles" requirement has been revised to include the discipline's philosophical underpinnings and 45 hours have been added to that requirement, resulting in 90 hours that must cover these areas. At least 45 of these must be taught in a freestanding course in concepts and principles.
- » The research methods requirement

(Measurement; Experimental Design) must now be taught in a 45-hour freestanding course.
- » The applied behavior analysis content has been reorganized as follows:
  - » Behavior Assessment: 45 hours
  - » Behavior-Change Procedures; Selecting and Implementing Interventions: 60 hours
- » 30 hours of Personnel Supervision and Management have been added.
- » Discretionary behavior-analytic content has been removed from the requirements (although programs are encouraged to teach additional content at their discretion).

BCaBA Coursework Changes

The primary changes to BCaBA coursework requirements are described below.

- » 45 additional hours of instruction are required.
- » The "Ethical and Professional Conduct" requirement has been revised from 15 hours to 30 hours and now reflects that both the BACB's *Compliance Code* and disciplinary systems must be taught, in addition to professionalism. At least 15 of these hours must be taught in a freestanding course on the BACB's Compliance Code and disciplinary systems.
- » The "Concepts and Principles" requirement has been revised to include the discipline's philosophical underpinnings.
- » The research methods requirement (Measurement; Experimental Design) has been increased from 15 to 30 hours.
- » The applied behavior analysis content has been reorganized as follows:
  - » Behavior Assessment: 40 hours
  - » Behavior-Change Procedures & Selecting and Implementing Interventions: 60 hours
- » 15 hours of Personnel Supervision and Management must now be taught.
- » Discretionary behavior-analytic content has been removed from the requirements (although programs are encouraged to teach additional content at their discretion).

The following tables illustrate how the new requirements compare to the current requirements.

BCBA: The applicant must complete graduate-level instruction in the following content areas and for the number of hours specified.

| Fifth Edition (implementation: 2022)		Fourth Edition (implementation: 2015)	
BACB *Compliance Code* and Disciplinary Systems; Professionalism *Note: The content must be taught in one or more freestanding courses.*	45 hrs	Ethical and Professional Conduct *Note: The content must be taught in one or more freestanding courses.*	45 hrs
Philosophical Underpinnings; Concepts & Principles *Note: 45 hours must be taught as one freestanding course on concepts and principles.*	90 hrs	Concepts and Principles of Behavior Analysis	45 hrs
Measurement, Data Display and Interpretation; Experimental Design *Note: The content must be taught in one freestanding course.*	45 hrs	Measurement (including data analysis)	25 hrs
		Experimental Design	20 hrs
Behavior Assessment	45 hrs	Identification of the Problem and Assessment	30 hrs
Behavior-Change Procedures; Selecting and Implementing Interventions	60 hrs	Fundamental Elements of Behavior Change and Specific Behavior Change Procedures	45 hrs
		Intervention and Behavior Change Considerations	10 hrs
		Behavior Change Systems	10 hrs
		Implementation, Management, and Supervision	10 hrs
Personnel Supervision and Management	30 hrs		
		Discretionary	30 hrs
Total	**315 hrs**	**Total**	**270 hrs**

BCaBA: The applicant must complete instruction in the following content areas and for the number of hours specified.

Fifth Edition (implementation: 2022)		Fourth Edition (implementation: 2015)	
BACB Compliance Code and Disciplinary Systems; Professionalism *Note: 15 hours must be taught in one or more freestanding courses.*	30 hrs	Ethical and Professional Conduct	15 hrs
Philosophical Underpinnings; Concepts & Principles	45 hrs	Concepts and Principles of Behavior Analysis	45 hrs
Measurement, Data Display and Interpretation; Experimental Design	30 hrs	Measurement (including data analysis)	10 hrs
		Experimental Design	5 hrs
Behavior Assessment	45 hrs	Identification of the Problem and Assessment	30 hrs
Behavior-Change Procedures; Selecting and Implementing Interventions	60 hrs	Fundamental Elements of Behavior Change and Specific Behavior Change Procedures	45 hrs
		Intervention and Behavior Change Considerations	5 hrs
		Behavior Change Systems	5 hrs
		Implementation, Management, and Supervision	5 hrs
Personnel Supervision and Management	15 hrs		
		Discretionary	15 hrs
Total	**225 hrs**	**Total**	**180 hrs**

Implementation Timeline

The graphic below illustrates the implementation timeline for the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.) and new coursework requirements. The BCBA and BCaBA examinations will be revised to reflect the new task list and implemented in January 2022. Applicants who qualify for those examinations must have qualified with coursework based on the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.), described previously. (*Note:* Applicants approved prior to January 2022 will be permitted to test until their original authorization expires; however, they will take the 5th Edition exams if testing in January 2022 or later.)

January 2017 ———————— 5 years ———————— **January 2022**

Newsletter Announcement
BCBA/BCaBA Task List (5th ed.) & Revised Coursework Requirements

New Examinations Administered
Examinations will be based on the *BCBA/BCaBA Task List* (5th ed.); applicants must qualify based on the 5th ed. coursework requirements
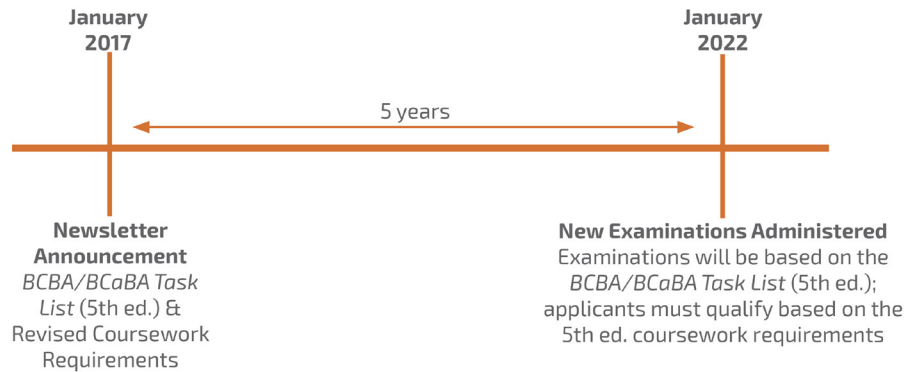
A Summary of Recent and Upcoming Changes to BACB Standards

In an effort to assist certificants in remaining up-to-date with BACB standards, the table below summarizes recent and upcoming changes announced in past issues of the *BACB Newsletter*.

Effective Date	Area	Change	Newsletter
Recertification cycles that begin on or after January 1, 2015	Continuing Education	Changes to recertification cycle duration, # of required CEUs, ethics CE, and new CE categories	February 2013
January 1, 2016	BCBA Degree Requirement	Possession of a minimum of a master's degree from an accredited university that was (a) conferred in behavior analysis, education, or psychology, or (b) conferred in a degree program in which the candidate completed a BACB approved course sequence	February 2013
January 1, 2016	Ethics and Discipline	The *Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts* is enforced. Revisions to the disciplinary system take effect.	September 2014
January 1, 2016	BCBA Eligibility Requirements	Change to eligibility requirements for Options 2 (College Teaching) and 3 (Postdoctoral Experience). *See also page 2 of the October 2015 issue of the *BACB Newsletter*.	November 2014
February 1, 2016	BCBA-D Eligibility Requirements	Changes to eligibility requirements for the doctoral designation for BCBAs	January 2016
January 1, 2017	Approved Course Sequence Coordinator Requirements	• Be employed full-time as faculty by the university; • Hold BCBA/BCBA-D certification; AND • Hold a relevant degree - BCBA course sequences: doctoral degree - Stand-alone BCaBA course sequences: master's degree or higher *Click here for additional information about how this change will be implemented.	May 2013
January 1, 2017	BCaBA Supervision	Changes to the following policy requirements: Supervisor Responsibilities and Qualifications, Supervision Amount and Structure, Group Supervision, and Documentation of Supervision	December 2014
January 1, 2022	BCBA/BCaBA Coursework Requirements	Changes to coursework eligibility requirements for BCBA and BCaBA credentials include additional hours and redistribution of the existing hours across content areas.	January 2017