

BACB Newsletter



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Content:

- ▶ Changes to 2027 BCBA and BCaBA Coursework and CEU Requirements 1
 - ▶ 2027 BCBA and BCaBA Coursework Requirements (Pathway 2) 2
 - ▶ 2027 BCBA and BCaBA Continuing Education Requirements 2
- ▶ RBT Criminal Background Check and Abuse Registry Check FAQs 3
- ▶ Multiple Certifications Policy Update 4
- ▶ Recent and Upcoming Changes to BACB Requirements 5

Changes to 2027 BCBA and BCaBA Coursework and CEU Requirements

In March 2022, the BACB announced several revisions to BCBA and BCaBA certification requirements that are scheduled to be implemented in 2027. These revisions included integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) content into several course-content areas (Behavior Assessment and Intervention, Organizational Behavior Management, and Ethics) and adding a new continuing education unit (CEU) category on DEI. The original intent of the subject matter experts (SMEs) who recommended these revisions to the BACB Board of Directors was to ensure that training adequately prepared BCBAs and BCaBAs to adapt their practices to diverse cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics—crucial elements of behavior-analytic assessment and treatment.

Recently, anti-DEI initiatives have gained traction across the US through state laws, regulatory activity, and federal executive orders. The BACB has invested years of effort to ensure that its certification programs are widely recognized by funders and state licensure programs. Maintaining this recognition is essential to protecting the value of these credentials for certificants and the consumers they serve. However, incorporating DEI content in our upcoming requirements may jeopardize this widespread recognition. Given the critical role these certifications play in employment and licensure, the BACB has a responsibility to safeguard their standing. To address these concerns while maintaining the integrity of training requirements, the BACB Board of Directors authorized an SME study of the upcoming changes.

A committee of 12 SMEs met virtually to review the planned requirements. Their collective expertise included behavior-analytic assessment and intervention across diverse populations and settings, knowledge of how BACB certification programs have been recognized by funders and regulators, and the cultural and contextual adaptation of behavior-analytic procedures. The committee represented various stakeholder groups in behavior analysis, including consumer representatives, faculty, and practitioners, and included perspectives from a diverse range of organizations, geographic locations, certification types, genders, and races/ethnicities.

After reviewing the 2027 requirements and discussing the original SME recommendations in light of current circumstances, the committee unanimously recommended the following revisions, which the BACB Board of Directors also unanimously approved. These changes balance the original SME intent and the evolving regulatory and legal landscape.

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2027 BCBA and BCaBA Coursework Requirements (Pathway 2)

The Behavior Assessment and Intervention and Organizational Behavior Management course-content areas must now address “the identification and integration of client-specific cultural, contextual, and personal variables throughout the assessment process and in the selection of goals and interventions.” Because cultural considerations already appear in the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*, Ethics coursework does not require a similar modification. The requirements no longer include the integration of DEI into any of the course-content areas. These revisions align with best practices in behavior-analytic assessment and treatment, comparable to other major helping professions, and provide clearer guidance for university faculty designing and implementing required coursework.

2027 BCBA and BCaBA Continuing Education Requirements

The originally planned CEU category requirement on DEI has been removed. Instead, the Ethics CEU category has been expanded to explicitly include content on cultural and contextual responsiveness. This expansion was a natural evolution for this content category given the existing ethics requirements to adapt procedures to contextual circumstances. Ethics CEUs may be awarded for content on cultural/contextual responsiveness, even if ethics is not the primary focus.

Revised Ethics Continuing Education Definition:

Ethics continuing education is defined as (a) events related to the BACB’s [ethics requirements](#) and/or (b) events related to cultural/contextual responsiveness. The content must relate to behavior-analytic practice or applied research and be directly linked to the behavior-analytic literature and/or established practice. To qualify as Ethics continuing education, most of the event must focus on ethics or cultural/contextual responsiveness. Continuing education events that only briefly reference the BACB’s ethics codes and primarily cover unrelated content should not be offered as Ethics continuing education.

As a result, the 2027 CEU requirements are as follows:

Certification	CEU Requirement
BCBA	CEUs per 2-year cycle: 32 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethics: 4• Supervision (if applicable): 4
BCaBA	CEUs per 2-year cycle: 20 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethics: 4• Supervision (if applicable): 3

These revised CEU requirements will provide certificants with greater flexibility in how they meet them. Certificants can prioritize content on ethics, cultural/contextual responsiveness, or both, depending on their professional development needs for each recertification cycle.

For full details on upcoming eligibility and maintenance requirements, see our new 2027 [BCBA](#) and [BCaBA](#) Requirements documents.

RBT Criminal Background Check and Abuse Registry Check FAQs

When RBT certification was first introduced in the [December 2013 BACB Newsletter](#), one of the essential eligibility requirements was that RBT applicants are required to have a qualified supervisor confirm that the applicant has successfully cleared a criminal background check and an abuse registry check comparable to those commonly required for individuals working as home health aides, child care professionals, and/or teachers in the community where services will be provided. Because RBTs often work with vulnerable populations, the BACB's subject matter experts who have studied RBT requirements over the past decade have consistently reaffirmed that these checks are critical for consumer protection.

When the RBT Certification Application structure was updated on January 1, 2025 (see the [October 2024 BACB Newsletter](#)), the attestations confirming that the applicant had cleared both the criminal background check and abuse registry check were moved from the online application to the new [RBT Certification Application Attestation form](#). The new form separated the criminal background check and the abuse registry check and included fields for the attestor to indicate when each check was conducted. These form revisions were formatting changes only and did not impact the criminal background and abuse registry check requirements. In response to questions about the existing background check and abuse registry check requirements, we have provided answers to frequently asked questions regarding these important standards.

Q. Are the criminal background check and abuse registry check the same?

- ▶ No. These are different background checks that reference separate databases. To obtain RBT certification, an applicant must complete both a criminal background check and an abuse registry check. If an organization contracts with a background check company to perform these reviews, the background check company may be able to conduct an abuse registry check in addition to the criminal background check. In some cases, information may appear in both the criminal background check and the abuse registry check. The specific details and the scope of information included in a background check can vary depending on the type of background check being conducted and the state in which the check is performed.

Q. Can the BACB provide guidance on which specific criminal background checks and abuse registry checks to complete?

- ▶ No. Criminal background check and abuse registry check requirements vary by governmental region (e.g., state, province, country) and are subject to periodic changes. In the United States, each state maintains a repository of criminal history information. However, the level of detail, accessibility, and public availability of these repositories can differ significantly between states. Most states also have systems to track abuse records, which may include child abuse registries and adult abuse registries. However, not all states maintain statewide abuse registries, and for those that do, the content, focus, and accessibility of these registries may vary.

Given these variations, the organization providing services is often best positioned to identify the relevant local laws and requirements, as it should be familiar with applicable local requirements for ABA service delivery, including licensure, funding, and employment requirements for specific facility types.

Q. What if we cannot access the abuse registry check in our state, or the state does not have an abuse registry check system?

- ▶ If the applicant resides in a location (e.g., state or province) without an abuse registry or if the registry information is not accessible to the organization, then you may indicate "Unavailable" on the RBT Certification Application Attestation form.

Q. My organization operates in multiple states. How do we meet the abuse registry check requirements in the states where we provide services?

- ▶ At a minimum, an abuse registry check must be conducted in the state where the applicant will provide services. However, the organization must comply with the relevant requirements in each jurisdiction where services are provided. In some regions, this includes requiring the applicant to undergo a criminal background check and abuse registry check in every state where they have resided during a specified number of years, as determined by local regulations.

Q. If the human resources team at my organization completes the criminal background check and abuse registry check, can I, a BCBA or BCaBA at the organization where the applicant is also employed, attest on the RBT Certification Application Attestation form that those requirements were met?

- ▶ A qualified BCBA or BCaBA may complete the attestation if human resources staff have confirmed that the applicant cleared both checks, **provided two conditions are met**. First, the attesting certificant must be familiar with the organization's policies, procedures, and processes for vetting applicants for RBT certification. Second, the attesting certificant must be able to provide documentation to support their attestation if audited by the BACB.

Q. What if the requirements for home health aides, childcare professionals, and/or teachers are inconsistent in my state?

- ▶ We encourage you to adopt the most conservative of the requirements.

Q. If the applicant completed a criminal background check or abuse registry check at another organization within 180 days of working at our organization, could we use those checks?

- ▶ No. The attesting certificant must confirm with the organization that the applicant cleared both checks, be familiar with the organization's policies, procedures, and processes when vetting applicants for RBT certification, and be able to provide documentation to support their attestation if audited by the BACB. This is highly unlikely if the attesting certificant is not affiliated with the organization conducting the background checks.

Multiple Certifications Policy Update

The multiple certifications policy announced in the [September 2023 Newsletter](#) took effect on January 1, 2025. Under this new policy, individuals may hold only one BACB certification at a time. When a certificant earns a higher-level certification, their lower-level certification expires 90 days later or on its natural expiration date, whichever comes first.

This policy was established because (a) higher-level BACB certifications encompass the knowledge, skills, and abilities of lower-level BACB certifications; (b) maintaining multiple certifications with different supervision requirements creates logistical challenges; and (c) few individuals actively maintained more than one BACB certification concurrently when this practice was permitted.

When the revised policy took effect in January, the BACB received feedback that certificants needed more time for funders and regulators to recognize their new certification before their lower-level certification expired. In response, the BACB Board of Directors approved an update to the policy.

Effective immediately, when an individual obtains a higher-level certification, their lower-level certification will expire after **180 days**. If the lower-level certification expires during this 180-day period and the certificant wants to renew or recertify while waiting for their higher-level certification to be recognized by relevant stakeholders, they may submit a renewal or recertification application to maintain their lower-level certification through the 180-day period.

Recent and Upcoming Changes to BACB Requirements

The following table summarizes important changes to certification requirements that have been announced in BACB newsletters or other resources.

Effective Date	Area	Change	Source
January 1, 2024	BCBA and BCaBA Reinstatement Period	The BCBA and BCaBA reinstatement period for recertification will be reduced to 30 days.	September 2023 Newsletter
	BCBA and BCaBA Coursework Expiration Policy	A rolling 10-year expiration date will be placed on coursework submitted as part of a BCBA or BCaBA certification application.	March 2022 Newsletter
	RBT Initial Competency Assessment	The responsible assessor, assistant assessor(s), and RBT applicant must be employed at (or all have a contractual relationship with) the same organization where the client is receiving services. This requirement applies to the entire assessment.	September 2023 Newsletter
July 1, 2024	RBT and BCaBA Certification in Ontario	Ontario residents will no longer be able to apply for RBT or BCaBA certification. Those holding RBT and BCaBA certification in Ontario will have their certification placed on voluntary inactive status.	Upcoming Changes to BACB Certification in Ontario
October 1, 2024	RBT Supervision	New noncertified RBT Supervisor requests will no longer be accepted for review.	September 2024 Announcement
January 1, 2025	Multiple Certifications Policy	BACB certificants may only hold one BACB certification at a time.	September 2023 Newsletter March 2025 Newsletter
	BCBA Examinations	The BCBA examination will be based on the BCBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.).	February 2022 Newsletter
	BCaBA Examinations	The BCaBA examination will be based on the BCaBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.).	February 2022 Newsletter
January 2, 2025	RBT Certification Application	RBT certification application will be updated.	October 2024 Newsletter

Effective Date	Area	Change	Source
January 1, 2026	BCBA and BCaBA Verified Coursework	All pathway 2 certification applications will require that a Coursework Attestation is completed by a designated program contact.	January 2023 announcement to VCS Coordinators
	Noncertified RBT Supervisors	Noncertified RBT Supervisor role eliminated. RBT Supervisors must hold BCaBA or BCBA certification.	September 2023 Newsletter
	RBT Eligibility and Maintenance Requirements	Revisions to core RBT eligibility and maintenance requirements, including training, competency assessments, and professional development. Recertification cycles will change from 1 to 2 years.	December 2023 Newsletter
	RBT Examination	The RBT examination will be based on the RBT Test Content Outline (3rd ed.).	December 2023 Newsletter
	BACB Certification in the UK	Residents of the United Kingdom (UK) will no longer be able to apply for BACB certification. Those holding BACB certifications in the UK will be able to maintain their certification.	International Development and Support
July 1, 2026	BCBA Certification in Ontario	Ontario residents will no longer be able to apply for BCBA/BCBA-D certification. Those holding BCBA/BCBA-D certification in Ontario will be able to maintain their certification.	Upcoming Changes to BACB Certification in Ontario
January 1, 2027	BCBA Eligibility and Maintenance Requirements	Revisions to core certification requirements, including degree, coursework, supervised fieldwork, continuing education, and ongoing supervision. Pathways 3 and 4 discontinued.	2027 BCBA Requirements March 2025 Newsletter March 2022 Newsletter
	BCaBA Eligibility and Maintenance Requirements	Revisions to core certification requirements, including degree, coursework, supervised fieldwork, continuing education, and ongoing supervision.	2027 BCaBA Requirements March 2025 Newsletter March 2022 Newsletter
	BACB Certification in Australia	Residents of Australia will no longer be able to apply for BACB certification. Those holding BACB certifications in Australia will be able to maintain their certification.	July 2024 Newsletter
January 1, 2032	BCBA Eligibility Pathways	Pathway 1, which requires a degree from an accredited university training program, will be the only eligibility pathway for BCBA certification.	March 2022 Newsletter September 2023 Newsletter