

BACB Newsletter



NOTICE: The information contained in BACB Newsletters may be outdated and should be independently verified via our website.

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Upcoming Changes to the RBT Certification Application

The RBT certification application will be updated on **January 2, 2025**. The update will result in a more streamlined application with fewer steps to facilitate processing. The update is also designed to reflect the more common scenario in organizations where the BACB certificant involved in the applicant’s onboarding differs from the person who will provide ongoing supervision once the applicant is certified as an RBT.

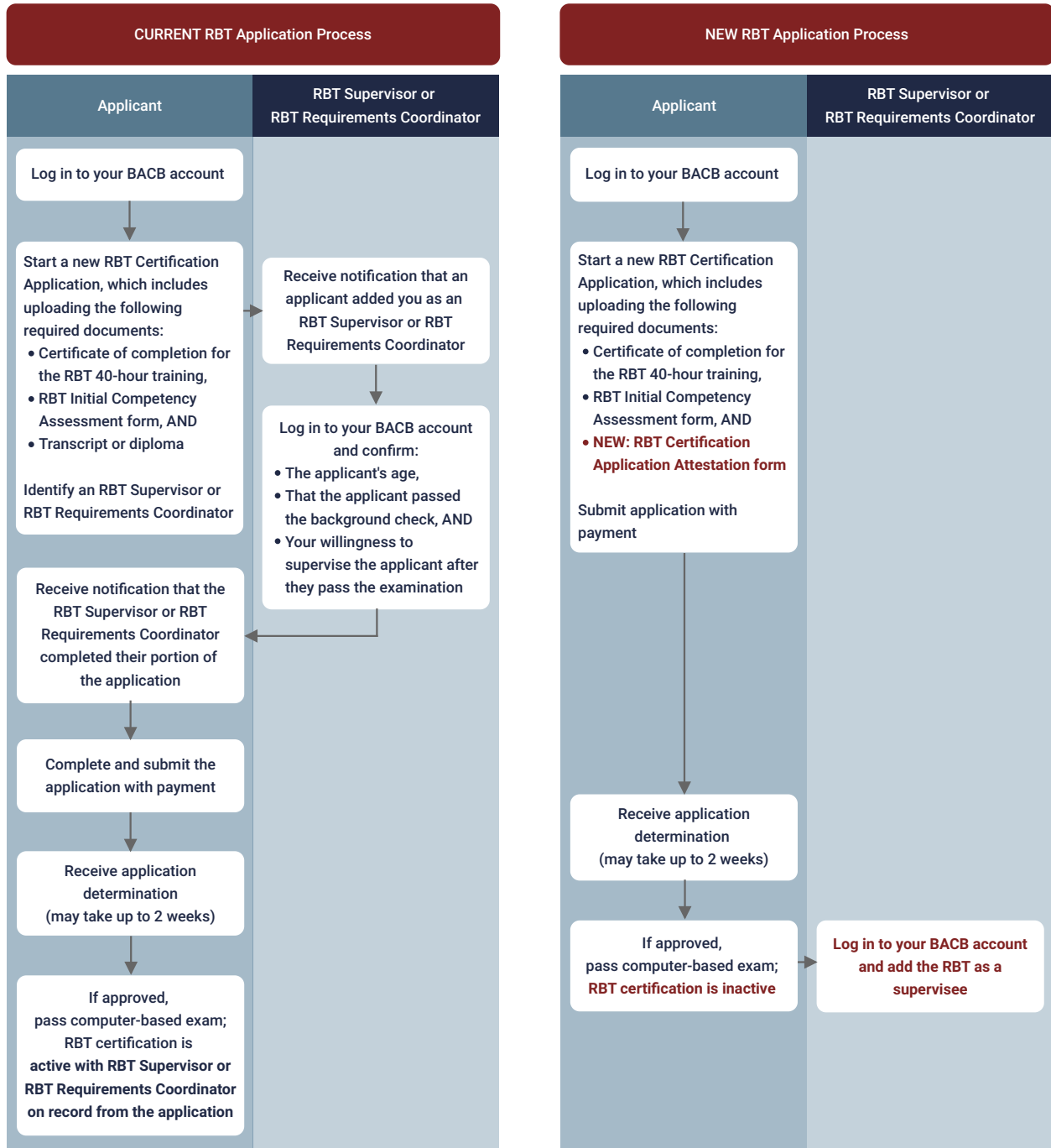
What is Changing?

- The application will change from a three-part application involving two parties to an application that can be completed in one sitting by the applicant.
- The RBT Supervisor or RBT Requirements Coordinator will no longer need to log into their account as part of the application process. Instead, a BCBA- or BCaBA-certified attestor will complete the [RBT Certification Application Attestation form](#), attesting that the applicant meets the age, background check, and education requirements. The applicant will then upload this form in their application when they apply.
- Applicants will no longer need to upload evidence that they meet the education requirement (i.e., high school diploma or higher) as part of their RBT certification application. A BCBA- or BCaBA-certified attestor will confirm that they meet this requirement and attest to it on the RBT Certification Application Attestation form.
- Applicants will no longer identify their ongoing RBT Supervisor or RBT Requirements Coordinator in the application. After passing the RBT examination, the RBT’s certification status will be **inactive** until an RBT Supervisor or RBT Requirements Coordinator adds them as a supervisee in their [BACB account](#).

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Side-by-Side Comparison



For answers to anticipated questions and a checklist for organizations to use when preparing for the upcoming change, review the [2025 RBT Application Update](#) resource.

Ethics Update: Considerations for Soliciting Testimonials for Nonservice Activities

The [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#) (“Code”) addresses the use of testimonials in three of its standards (5.07, 5.08, 5.09). Standard 5.07 states:

Because of the possibility of undue influence and implicit coercion, behavior analysts do not solicit testimonials from current clients or stakeholders for use in advertisements designed to obtain new clients. This does not include unsolicited reviews on websites where behavior analysts cannot control content, but such content should not be used or shared by the behavior analyst. If a behavior analyst is employed by an organization that violates this Code standard, the behavior analyst makes reasonable efforts to remediate the situation, documenting all actions taken and the eventual outcomes.

Standard 5.08 states that testimonials may be solicited from former clients or stakeholders; however, BACB certificants must consider the possibility that former clients may re-enter services. Standard 5.09 pertains to the use of testimonials for nonadvertising purposes such as fundraising, grant applications, or the dissemination of information about Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

The purpose of standards 5.07, 5.08, and 5.09 is to protect clients and stakeholders, who are often either vulnerable persons or are in vulnerable situations, from undue influence or coercion. These Code standards help to prevent situations in which a client or stakeholder may feel pressured to provide a testimonial because they believe that not doing so could result in the termination of services or a decrease in the quality of services, or that doing so will result in preferential treatment or access to services.

As the ABA profession continues to grow, BACB certificants are increasingly finding themselves in positions outside of typical service delivery, but that still support the profession (e.g., test preparation, agency accreditation, software development). The BACB often receives questions regarding whether a BACB certificant may solicit testimonials for these other types of professional activities that they or their organization provide. In short, the answer is yes, assuming that these roles do not involve the delivery of ABA services (therapeutic or otherwise) to clients under a defined contract or agreement for the delivery of ABA services. However, if an individual certificant has more than one role or service that they provide, it is their responsibility to ensure that the testimonial is clearly only connected to the nonservice activity.

We recommend that BACB certificants take a conservative interpretation of their activities to ensure that they do not constitute ABA service delivery. In addition, when determining whether to solicit testimonials, the following questions should be considered to minimize potential negative impacts.

- How is the testimonial being solicited?
- Can the solicitation be considered coercive?
- Are there any incentives provided or expected for the testimonial?
- Is the individual or organization providing the testimonial able to rescind it in the future?
- Is anyone being put at risk by the testimonial? What is the level of risk? Was the risk fully disclosed to the individual or organization providing the testimonial?

It may seem counterintuitive that such considerations would be presented given the testimonials allowance for nonservice activity mentioned above. We remind the reader that the Code standards apply to certificants in all of their professional activities. Thus, if the BACB were to receive a Notice of Alleged Violation alleging misconduct related to the use of testimonials for nonservice activity, Codes 5.08 and 5.09 may not be relevant in this instance, but other Code standards may still apply.

Making Adjustments to BCBA and BCaBA Fieldwork Hours

The BACB has allowed supervisors to prorate BCBA and BCaBA fieldwork hours when a trainee does not work a full calendar month (e.g., they are completing fieldwork through a school placement, and the school year ends mid-month; see the “Partial Months” subsection in the “Supervised Fieldwork Requirements” section of the certificant handbook). The BACB has not previously provided guidance on how to adjust fieldwork hours if the trainee did not work a full calendar month or is in a situation in which some fieldwork requirements were not met, as those decisions have been left to the supervisor. However, we have increasingly seen this flexibility being overused (e.g., supervisors using the “partial month” flexibility for multiple months or important supervision requirements being waived under this policy). We have also received feedback from supervisors that more specific guidance would be helpful in these situations. To better support trainees and their supervisors and ensure consistency in fieldwork-hour calculations, the current partial month policy will be updated to articulate how and when hours can be adjusted when certain monthly fieldwork requirements are not met. The following describes the updated policy that will go into effect for hours accrued on or after **January 1, 2025**.

Adjusting Fieldwork Hours When All Monthly Requirements Are Not Met

After all of the fieldwork hours in a month have been documented, the trainee will determine whether they met the minimum requirements before they complete the Monthly Fieldwork Verification Form (M-FVF). If a trainee does not meet all of the monthly fieldwork requirements (e.g., not enough supervisor contacts, supervision percentage is too low), the trainee will work with their supervisor to determine whether they may adjust their hours to meet the requirements through a systematic reduction of hours. The following table describes each monthly fieldwork requirement and the associated adjustment if the requirement is not met within a month.

Requirement Not Met	Adjustment to the Month’s Fieldwork Hours
No observation of the trainee working with a client	No hours are eligible for the month.
Fewer than 20 total hours	No hours are eligible for the month.
More than 130 total hours	Remove independent hours for the month until the total equals 130 hours.
Not enough supervisor-trainee contacts	Take the total hours accrued in the month (up to 130) and prorate the hours based on the percentage of contacts that met the requirement. For example, if 2 out of 4 required contacts occurred (i.e., 50% of the contacts were met) and there were 110 total hours accrued in the month, multiply 110 hours by .50 (i.e., 50%) to determine the total hours that can count (i.e., 55 eligible hours).
Group supervision is more than individual supervision	Reduce the group supervision hours until they equal (or are less than) the individual supervision hours.
% of supervision did not meet the minimum requirement	Decrease the independent hours for the month until the % of supervision meets (or exceeds) the minimum monthly requirement.
Monthly Fieldwork Verification Form (M-FVF) is not signed by the last day of the calendar month following the month of supervision	No hours are eligible for the month.

Once the hours have been adjusted, the trainee will record the adjusted hours on the M-FVF. *Note:* The fieldwork documentation system will still need to include all of the hours accrued for the month (i.e., the unadjusted hours).

The BACB is currently developing more resources around fieldwork hours, including an app for tracking fieldwork hours, which will calculate adjusted hours automatically. Stay tuned!

About the BACB Board of Directors

The BACB plays a limited but important role in the Applied Behavior Analysis profession by operating three widely recognized certification programs and setting related standards for practitioners—all through the lens of consumer protection. Central to this mission is the BACB Board of Directors (Board), which serves as the governing body of the BACB (a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization). Like other nonprofit governing bodies, the Board is charged with a number of important responsibilities, including setting the mission and strategy for the BACB, overseeing executive leadership, and monitoring financial operations. In addition, the Board is legally required to exercise several fiduciary duties. The *duty of care* requires directors to act in good faith and in the best interests of the BACB. The *duty of obedience* obliges directors to adhere to the BACB's mission and bylaws, ensuring that all actions align with the organization's core objectives. Lastly, the *duty of loyalty* mandates that directors prioritize the BACB's interests above their own or those of any other group. We should note that these duties are not unique to the BACB. All US nonprofit governing boards (e.g., governing boards of state and national professional associations) are legally required to fulfill these same duties.

The [current Board](#) is comprised of 11 members who have 178 years of collective experience in the profession ($M = 16$ years). Notably, seven directors (64%) had prior board service before joining the BACB, bringing a wealth of governance experience to their current roles. Since its Board of Directors was first established in 1999, the BACB has benefited from the contributions of 56 highly experienced and dedicated directors, 7 of whom have also served as president of the Board:

Jim Johnston, Ph.D. (1999–2007)
Judy Favell, Ph.D. (2007–2012)
Jane Howard, Ph.D. (2012–2015)
Iser DeLeon, Ph.D. (2015–2018)
Bridget Taylor, Psy.D. (2018–2021)
SungWoo Kahng, Ph.D. (2021–2024)
Breanne Hartley, Ph.D. (2024–)

The BACB is grateful to its many current and past directors who have volunteered their time and expertise to help the organization fulfill its important mission.

Recent and Upcoming Changes to BACB Requirements

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

Effective Date	Area	Change	Source
September 29, 2023	BCBA Pathway 1 Update	Applicants who receive a master's degree from an APBA-accredited university program can apply under BCBA Pathway 1.	September 2023 Newsletter
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
	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.	March 2022 Newsletter
	BCaBA Eligibility and Maintenance Requirements	Revisions to core certification requirements, including degree, coursework, supervised fieldwork, continuing education, and ongoing supervision.	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