

BACB Newsletter



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Revised BCBA & BCaBA Experience and Supervision Requirements

The BACB's accrediting body, the [National Commission for Certifying Agencies](#), requires key certification standards to be periodically reviewed by subject matter experts (SMEs) for possible revision. As such, the BCBA and BCaBA Experience Standards were studied by a 12-member SME committee in February 2017 at the BACB's headquarters in Littleton, Colorado. The SME committee was carefully composed to ensure that recommended changes were properly informed by SMEs familiar with the current requirements. SME committee composition was diverse in terms of professional role (6 practitioners, 5 faculty members, 1 consumer representative), certification level, gender, and geographical location. In addition, because university-based Practicum and Intensive Practicum systems were among the areas being reviewed, 4 of the 5 faculty members were associated with Verified Course Sequences that operated such systems.

The SME committee reviewed and discussed the current Experience Standards policy – the collection of all BCBA/BCaBA experience and supervision requirements – in its entirety. Relevant data and comparable requirements from other professions were provided to the SME committee for reference purposes when available. The collective reasoning underlying the SME committee's recommendations, which generally favored modest increases in rigor, were the rapid growth of the behavior analyst workforce, recent increases in rigor of other BACB standards, SME experiences with recent graduates of behavior analysis training programs, and consumer appeals for more rigorous supervised experience requirements. In brief, the SME committee's discussion indicated that trainees need more supervised experience with additional guidance on relevant activities for both the trainee and supervisor. The SME committee also considered the difficulty of managing university-based Practicum and Intensive Practicum systems and the need to develop standards that were modestly more rigorous but less effortful to document and enforce. Ultimately, each standard under consideration was carefully discussed and was either revised or left intact. A consensus approach was used to identify revisions to the standards.

In May 2017, at its annual meeting, the BACB Board of Directors reviewed and unanimously approved the SME committee recommendations. The remainder of this newsletter describes the changes to the BCBA and BCaBA experience and supervision standards.

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Introducing the New Supervised Fieldwork Standards

Terminology Revisions

The current terms used to describe the BCBA and BCaBA experiential requirement — experience and supervised independent fieldwork — have numerous existing meanings that sometimes pose interpretive problems. In the case of “supervised independent fieldwork,” the terms “supervised” and “independent” can convey opposing meanings. In addition, the term “experience” is problematic because of its generic meaning. For these reasons, the SME committee recommended that new terminology be considered. Thus, the new overarching term — “**Supervised Fieldwork Standards**” — will replace “Experience Standards” in upcoming documents and webpages that describe the revised standards.

Structure and Amount of Supervised Fieldwork

The SME committee first discussed the structure of the current fieldwork categories (i.e., Supervised Independent Fieldwork, Practicum, Intensive Practicum) before considering any changes in the amount of experience and supervision needed in each category. The following elements represent the areas of revision to the structure and amount of Supervised Fieldwork, and detailed information is found in the tables below:

- » Elimination of Practicum and Intensive Practicum options
- » Introduction of 2 categories of supervised fieldwork available in all settings
- » Increased fieldwork hour requirements
- » Revised supervisory period duration
- » Increased supervisory contact requirements
- » Revised distributions of restricted and unrestricted activities

BCBA

	Supervised Fieldwork	Concentrated Supervised Fieldwork
Fieldwork Hours Required to Qualify	2000	1500
Fieldwork Hours Per Week	10-30 hrs.	15-30 hrs.
Supervisory Period	1 calendar month	1 calendar month
Percentage of Fieldwork Hours Spent in Supervision (calculated per monthly supervisory period)	5%	10%
Number of Supervisory Contacts per Period (contacts must be at least 15 minutes)	4	6
Unrestricted Activities	At least 60% of supervised fieldwork hours must be spent engaged in unrestricted activities.	
Individual/Small-Group Supervision	Supervision may be conducted in small groups for no more than 50% of the total supervised hours in each supervisory period.	

BCaBA

	Supervised Fieldwork	Concentrated Supervised Fieldwork
Fieldwork Hours Required to Qualify	1300	1000
Fieldwork Hours Per Week	10-30 hrs.	15-30 hrs.
Supervisory Period	1 calendar month	1 calendar month
Percentage of Fieldwork Hours Spent in Supervision (calculated per monthly supervisory period)	5%	10%
Number of Supervisory Contacts per Period (contacts must be at least 15 minutes)	4	6
Unrestricted Activities	At least 40% of supervised fieldwork hours must be spent engaged in unrestricted activities.	
Individual/Small-Group Supervision	Supervision may be conducted in small groups for no more than 50% of the total supervised hours in each supervisory period.	

Supervision Requirements

In addition to a number of revisions to the current supervision policy to improve clarity and direction, there are two primary changes to the supervision requirements: a new policy section that outlines a supervisor's responsibilities and a restriction on BCBA's supervising within their first year after obtaining BCBA certification. These changes are summarized below:

Nature of Supervision: Additions to the Nature of Supervision section reflect the need for greater monitoring of the supervisee's performance, focusing on the training of skills, and monitoring those skills throughout supervised fieldwork.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor: The addition of a section that outlines the responsibilities of a supervisor to reflect their accountability for supervised fieldwork.

Supervisor Qualifications: BCBA's will not be allowed to supervise trainees within their first year after becoming certified. The SME committee considered the 2012 APBA/BACB Supervision Survey report when recommending this change. However, some training systems (e.g., universities,

large organizations) rely on new BCBA's to supervise within carefully designed support systems. Therefore, newly certified BCBA's may supervise trainees within their first year after becoming certified only if they receive monthly consultation throughout that year from a BCBA with at least 5 years of post-certification experience in supervising trainees.

Appropriate Clients

The existing Experience Standards require trainees to work with multiple clients. The revised standards specify that trainees may not receive all of their supervision for work with a single client.

Implementation Timeline

The revised Supervised Fieldwork Standards will be effective on January 1, 2022 in conjunction with the implementation date for examinations based on the [BCBA/BCaBA Task List \(5th ed.\)](#) and for applicants qualifying based on the 5th ed. coursework requirements. **Any application for BCBA or BCaBA certification received on or after January 1, 2022 must meet the revised Supervised Fieldwork Standards regardless of when the fieldwork was completed.**

Modifications of Current Standards (Effective Immediately)

The SME committee made several editorial improvements to the Experience Standards that were not substantive, but were nonetheless important. These changes are summarized below and are reflected in the current [Experience Standards](#).

Activities

Several changes were made to the Activities section. First, the primary goal of the supervisee has been expanded to acquiring not only the skills on the relevant BCBA/BCaBA Task List, but also the skills necessary to interact effectively with consumers, supervisors, families, and others. Second, the allowable activities list now includes the following: evaluation of behavioral interventions, various applied writing activities, communication skill development, and an "other" category that captures normally performed skills that were not otherwise included. Third, the list of activities that do not qualify has been revised to clarify that attendance at specific professional activities and didactic coursework assignments do not qualify for experience hours.

Restricted and Unrestricted Activities

There is currently a restriction imposed on certain allowable activities (i.e., delivery of therapeutic and instructional procedures). Several clarifications to this restriction have been made by the SME committee, particularly to the general definitions of unrestricted and restricted activities.

Onset of Experience

This section was revised to clarify that three requirements (i.e., starting qualifying coursework, passing the Experience Standards Training Module, and securing a qualified supervisor) must be completed before hours may begin being accrued.

BCBA Experience Requirements for Current BCaBA's

Applicants for BCBA certification who are certified at the BCaBA level may currently meet the BCBA experience requirement by submitting 500 hours of experience that were accrued after they earned the BCaBA credential. The SME committee recommended and the Board of Directors approved the following revision to this requirement. BCaBA's seeking BCBA certification are no longer required to obtain post-BCaBA qualifying experience. Instead, they must fully satisfy the BCBA experience requirements, regardless of when the hours were accrued. This change is effective immediately. However, until October 31, 2018, the BACB will allow BCaBA certificants to continue to apply for BCBA certification with only 500 experience hours accrued after obtaining the BCaBA credential, as long as those hours satisfy all BCBA experience requirements.

A comprehensive Supervised Fieldwork Standards document that includes all of the aforementioned revisions will be published in 2018.

A Summary of Recent & 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 will be enforced. Revisions to the disciplinary system will 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 BCBA-Ds	January 2016
January 1, 2017	Verified Course Sequence Coordinator Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be employed full-time as faculty by the university; • Hold BCBA/BCBA-D certification; AND • Hold a relevant degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
October 1, 2017	BCBA Eligibility Requirements	BCaBAs may apply for BCBA certification without being required to obtain post-BCaBA experience hours, as long as they otherwise satisfy all of the BCBA experience requirements.	October 2017
October 31, 2018	BCBA Eligibility Requirements	BCaBAs may no longer apply for the BCBA credential using only 500 post-BCaBA masters-level experience hours.	October 2017
January 1, 2022	BCBA/BCaBA Eligibility Requirements	Changes to the coursework requirements for the BCBA (Option 1) and BCaBA credentials	January 2017
January 1, 2022	BCBA/BCaBA Examination Content	All BCBA/BCaBA examinations will be based on the BCBA/BCaBA Task List (5th ed.)	January 2017
January 1, 2022	BCBA & BCaBA Experience & Supervision Requirements	Changes to the Structure and Amount of Supervised Fieldwork, Supervision Requirements, Clients, and Activities	October 2017