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## BACB Newsletter

November 2014

### Annual Certification Renewals are Being Eliminated

At its recent annual meeting, the BACB's Board of Directors voted to eliminate annual renewal requirements for the BCBA (including BCBA-D) and BCaBA credentials. This change is primarily being made to streamline credential maintenance and will go into effect at each certificant's first certification cycle that begins on or after January 1, 2015. This effective date will also be the point at which (a) the certification cycle will change from 3 to 2 years in duration and (b) new continuing education requirements go into effect (see the [February 2013 BACB Newsletter](#)). After the effective date, certificants will only need to keep track of their recertification date, at which time they will need to have completed all recertification requirements and pay the recertification fee. Because annual renewals are being eliminated, renewal and recertification fees will now be bundled into one new recertification fee, resulting in the same fee amounts being paid every 2 years rather than divided into annual amounts. Recertification fees will be as follows: BCBA-D (\$260 US), BCBA (\$200 US), and BCaBA (\$130 US). However, the first recertification fee certificants encounter on or after January 1, 2015 will remain the current lower fee, with the higher combined fee being assessed at the subsequent recertification point. Please note that it is imperative that certificants continue annual renewal requirements until they enter their first 2-year certification cycle.

### Changes to BCBA Alternative Eligibility Standards

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), which accredits the BACB's certification programs, requires key standards to be reviewed periodically for possible revision. At its annual meeting in 2013, the BACB's Board of Directors authorized further review and potential modification of a number of standards. In July 2014, a 10-person standards workgroup was convened for a 2-day meeting and charged with reviewing certain standards and making revision recommendations to the Board of Directors. Workgroup membership included a consumer representative, and professionals representing all three certification levels (BCBA-D, BCBA, BCaBA), diverse professional roles (e.g., professor, senior clinician), and multiple practice areas (e.g., aging, autism, traumatic brain injury, child welfare). The group was also geographically diverse, representing Alabama, California, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, New York, and Canada (Ontario). Each standard under consideration was carefully discussed and, through a consensus process, either revised or left intact. The Board of Directors voted to accept the workgroup's recommendations on August 8, 2014. Changes to certain BCBA eligibility standards are described below. Additional standard revisions will be described in the next issue of *BACB Newsletter*.

The majority of applicants for the BCBA credential qualify under the Option 1 eligibility requirements (coursework & experience), about which most are familiar. However, there are two other Options for qualifying for the BCBA credential that are less well known: Option 2 (College



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Teaching) and Option 3 (Doctorate/BCBA Review). The eligibility requirements for these options have been clarified and enhanced to have better parity with the requirements under Option 1.

### Option 2: College Teaching

Option 2 was originally intended for faculty members who have been teaching for such an extended period of time that obtaining proof of past coursework constituted an unreasonable eligibility requirement. Thus, this option replaces the required coursework with teaching and research activities in behavior analysis. The option does not, however, waive the experience requirement. The current Option 2 requirements are as follows:

1. **College Teaching:** The applicant must complete a one academic-year, full-time faculty appointment at a college or university during which the applicant:

- Teaches classes on basic principles of behavior, single-subject research methods, applications of basic principles of behavior in applied settings, and ethical issues; and
- conducts and publishes research in behavior analysis.

2. **Experience:** Same as under the Coursework option (Option 1)

The primary changes to this eligibility option are more extensive teaching experience and more detail about the research requirement. The following revised standards for Option 2 BCBA eligibility requirements will be effective **January 1, 2016**.

### NEW BCBA Eligibility Requirements: Option 2 (College Teaching)

1. Faculty Appointment
  - a. At least 3 years (cumulative) of full-time work as a faculty member at a fully accredited higher education institution within a 5-year period
2. Teaching
  - a. The applicant must have taught at least 5 sections/iterations of behavior-analytic coursework
  - b. The applicant must have taught at least 2 of the following behavior-analytic content areas in separate courses: concepts and principles of behavior, single-subject research methods, applied behavior analysis, and ethics in behavior analysis
  - c. Each course must have been exclusively or primarily devoted to behavior-analytic content
  - d. Coursework must have been taught at the graduate level
  - e. *Required documentation:* A letter from the applicant's department head and course syllabi
3. Research
  - a. The applicant must have published one article with the following characteristics
    - i. Behavior analytic in nature (per Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968)
    - ii. Included at least one experimental evaluation
    - iii. Published in a high-quality, peer-reviewed journal
    - iv. The applicant was the first, second, or corresponding author
    - v. The article could have been published at any time in the applicant's career
    - vi. *Required documentation:* A copy of the article
4. Experience
  - a. Same as under the Coursework option (Option 1) - *No change*



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### Option 3: Doctorate/BCBA Review

Option 3 was originally intended for senior practitioners for whom documentation of past coursework and practical experience could not be expected to be easily obtained. Thus, this option replaces the required coursework and experience with the following requirements: a doctoral degree, 10 years of postdoctoral experience in behavior analysis, and 3 positive evaluations from BCBA's (there is no requirement that the BCBA's know the applicant or be familiar with his/her practice). The current Option 3 requirements are as follows:

1. **Doctoral Degree:** The applicant must have a doctoral degree, conferred at least 10 years prior to applying. The field of study must be behavior analysis, psychology, education or another related field (doctoral degrees in related fields are subject to BACB approval).
2. **BCBA Review:** The applicant must have 10 years of postdoctoral experience in behavior analysis. Experience must be verified independently by three Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA's) and supported by information provided on the applicant's curriculum vitae.

The primary changes to this eligibility option are better-operationalized requirements for the doctoral degree and postdoctoral experience, and an additional supervised experience requirement. The following revised standards for Option 3 BCBA eligibility requirements will be effective **January 1, 2016**.

#### NEW BCBA Eligibility Requirements: Option 3 (Postdoctoral Experience)

1. Degree
  - a. A doctoral degree in behavior analysis, psychology, or education from an accredited higher education institution
2. Postdoctoral Experience
  - a. 10 years of postdoctoral experience practicing behavior analysis
    - i. The duration must be at least 10 years of full-time practice (cumulatively)
    - ii. All practice must have occurred under a relevant state or national professional credential (e.g., a license)
      1. Different credentials at different times are acceptable
    - iii. *Required documentation:* curriculum vitae, signed attestations from current or former employers, proof of professional credential
3. Supplemental Supervised Experience
  - a. At least 500 hours of supervised experience that meets current BACB Experience Standards
    - i. This experience must commence following the 10 years of postdoctoral experience
    - ii. *Required documentation:* a signed Experience Verification Form



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## Introducing the Fourth Edition Task List Examinations

The BACB will administer updated BCBA and BCaBA examinations based on the *Fourth Edition Task List* beginning in February 2015. Although the look and feel of these examinations will be similar to the current examinations (based on the *Third Edition Task List*), please know that there are some differences. BACB staff and numerous volunteer Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) have put a great deal of time and effort into updating the examination content to meet the requirements of the *Fourth Edition Task List*. Here is a quick overview of the activities involved in the update.

- **February 2009:** SME panel reviewed the *Third Edition Task List* and proposed new content and a new organizational structure that was adopted for the *Fourth Edition Task List*.
- **November-December 2009:** Online job analysis survey content validated the *Fourth Edition Task List*. All BACB certificants were invited to participate in the survey (n=7067), with 31% responding (n=2236).
- **March 2010:** Job analysis survey report and proposed examination blueprint were approved by the BACB's Board of Directors.
- **August 2012:** SME panel developed knowledge, skill, and ability statements for the *Fourth Edition Task List*. These internal-use-only documents serve as prompts for item writers regarding the kinds of test questions that could be asked about each task.
- **October 2012:** SME panel reviewed approximately 1700 test items associated with the *Third Edition Task List* to determine whether they could be matched to the *Fourth Edition Task List*. Once applicable items were reclassified, an inventory of item writing needs was created.
- **February 2013-September 2014:** Multiple panels of SMEs wrote and reviewed approximately 500 new items based on the *Fourth Edition Task List*.
- **May 2013-November 2014:** New items were pilot tested and reviewed - an activity that will continue throughout the life of the *Fourth Edition Task List* examinations.
- **April 2014:** SMEs reviewed and approved the first draft of the *Fourth Edition Task List* examinations.
- **May-June 2014:** A professional service translated the new examinations into Chinese (BCaBA only), Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew.
- **July 2014:** Panels of bilingual SMEs reviewed the Chinese and Spanish translations.
- **October 2014:** A panel of bilingual SMEs reviewed the Italian translation.
- **November 2014:** A panel of bilingual SMEs reviewed the Hebrew translation.
- **February 2015:** *Fourth Edition Task List* examinations are administered.
- **March 2015:** SME panels will establish new passing scores for the *Fourth Edition Task List* examinations.

**New Passing Scores.** When there is a significant change to an examination, best practices and NCCA Standards require that the passing score be recalibrated to appropriately reflect the needs of the profession. The introduction of new BACB examinations based on the *Fourth Edition Task List* is a perfect example of the kind of significant change that requires developing a new passing score.

The BACB will convene two panels of SMEs to establish the passing scores for the BCBA and BCaBA examinations in March 2015. The panel members will be carefully selected to reflect a representative sample of the overall certificant population based on a variety of factors, such as experience, type of practice, and geographic region. Under the guidance of the BACB's



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Psychometrician, SMEs will use a criterion-referenced method known as the “Modified Angoff” to establish a recommended passing score for the new examinations. This process is described below.

The SMEs will participate in a training exercise that will orient them to the passing-score process prior to rating the scored items. The SMEs will first discuss the minimal level of competence required to obtain certification as a BCaBA or a BCBA to ensure that they all have a common understanding. The group will then complete at least 10 practice-item ratings. For each practice item, each SME will be asked to read the item and select the correct answer as if he/she was a candidate taking the examination. After the SMEs have all answered the practice items, the Psychometrician will announce the correct answer and ask the SMEs to score their responses as correct or incorrect. The SMEs will then be asked to consider the difficulty level of the item and to estimate the percentage of minimally competent candidates who will actually know the answer to the item. After all SMEs have written down their estimates, the Psychometrician will lead a group discussion about the ratings. SMEs with extreme ratings will be asked to explain why they found the item to be difficult or easy. The SMEs will repeat this process for the practice items until the exercise is complete. Although the SMEs ratings do tend to converge after several practice items, the key consideration is to remain focused on how minimally competent candidates will perform instead of using themselves as a point of reference.

After the training session, the SMEs will work independently using the same process (i.e., read the item, select an answer, self-score, rate the item) as they take an entire examination form. At the end of this process, the ratings for the entire SME panel will be averaged together to generate a recommended passing score. The SMEs will discuss the score and its potential impact until consensus is reached. The recommended passing score will then be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors prior to being applied to the February 2015 examination results.

The February 2015 examinations will become the “base” examinations to which subsequent examinations will be equated. Equating ensures that differences between the difficulty level of future examinations and the base examination are taken into account prior to scoring. To promote consistency of different exam forms, the Psychometrician will use historical and pilot-test data on test-item performance to help ensure that each new examination is equal in difficulty to the base examination. Consequently, difficulty differences between examinations are generally quite small. Equating the examinations results in candidates having an equal opportunity to pass regardless of which examination form they take.

The process described above will be repeated again during the development of the *Fifth Edition Task List*, which will begin in late 2015.



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## Notes from the Legal Department

### Setting the Record Straight about Questionable Business Practices

**Retainers and Waitlists.** Client acceptance and termination policies have been increasingly identified in complaints submitted to the BACB Legal Department. For the most part, and absent clear violation of the BACB's ethical and disciplinary standards, the BACB does not delve into the business preferences of certificants. However, a few common exceptions are: (1) whether the certificant is not honest and transparent with the client about the services offered; (2) whether the certificant does not comply with the terms of an agreement with the client; or (3) whether the certificant engages in activity likely to cause harm to the client.

Consider the following two scenarios.

A certificant charges an exorbitant retainer fee and has a waiting list of between 6 months and 1 year. The certificant is transparent in making sure potential clients are aware of the terms of both the fee and the likely waiting period. As long as the certificant also encourages the client to pursue more timely ABA services when appropriate (i.e., when a lengthy wait would harm or otherwise disadvantage the client), this scenario is not likely to violate the BACB's ethical and disciplinary standards. To be clear, the BACB does not prohibit certificants from charging retainers or placing clients on waitlists, as long as clients in need of immediate or time-sensitive services are advised to seek them.

A more concerning scenario is when a certificant operates a business where he or she essentially serves as a placement specialist (headhunter), finding fellow behavior analysts to provide ABA services to a particular client and receiving a share of the fee charged the client for those services. In this scenario, the client may be waiting indefinitely for the certificant to find a service provider to meet the client's needs. This scenario will likely violate the BACB's ethical and disciplinary standards if the client is not aware of the fact that the certificant is essentially a headhunter, without currently available staff to provide the needed ABA services. In this situation, there are no reasonable assurances that the certificant will ever find professionals to provide the ABA services, during which time the client might be missing critical opportunities for essential ABA services.

As you can see from the above examples, a few changes in facts could make the difference between a case that is actionable and one that is not.

**Recommendations Regarding Clinical Hours.** This is another area of increasing concern. Here, the BACB is likely to consider a case if the certificant recommends treatment intensity based on factors unrelated to clinical needs. For example, a client receiving more treatment hours than clinically advisable (based on funding availability) would be an actionable matter. On the other hand, a reduction or discontinuation of services informed by client data is not likely to rise to the level of an actionable matter. Furthermore, complaints against certificants who only serve clients up to a specific number of hours per week would not likely be actionable if the hours were clearly stated in an agreement for services.

**Other Questionable or Actionable Examples.** Here are a few more business practices that typically fluctuate between questionable and actionable. Please note that each case is handled on an individual basis and some factual variances may warrant different procedures for handling a complaint.



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QUESTIONABLE/ACCEPTABLE	ACTIONABLE
Most business disputes with fellow professionals (e.g., partnership dissolution disputes)	Certain court judgments finding contract violations
Non-compete clauses (The BACB is not the party to enforce these types of agreements.)	Court judgments finding non-compete or other violations
High Fees (clearly identified in the contract)	Hidden Fees
Recommending modified services (if based clearly on client needs and progress)	Recommending modified services to match funding availability
Reduction or termination of services (not actionable with proper transition planning)	Abrupt termination and/or failure to timely transition (e.g., inadequate notice, failure to provide client with ABA-related documentation and data)
Opinionated characterizations of fellow professionals	Court judgments of libel or slander

To minimize time spent submitting a disciplinary complaint regarding a “questionable” action, we encourage you to contact the BACB Legal Department at [bacblegal@bacb.com](mailto:bacblegal@bacb.com) for guidance on whether a matter is actionable.

### On the Distinction between Direct Implementation and Other Experience Activities

One of the changes to the BACB’s experience requirements announced in our *September 2012 newsletter* was the limitation that no more than 50% of the experience hours accumulated may be spent in “direct implementation of behavioral programs.” Some frequently asked questions about this requirement were answered in our *October 2013 newsletter*, including the following about the types of activities that are acceptable as indirect experience:

*Q: If no more than half of the experience hours can be in direct implementation of behavioral programs, what should supervisees be doing for the remainder of their experience?*

*A: Other appropriate activities as identified in the standards, including:*

- *Designing and systematically monitoring skill-acquisition and behavior-reduction programs;*
- *Overseeing the implementation of behavior-analytic programs by others;*
- *Training, designing behavioral systems, and performance management;*
- *Other activities normally performed by a behavior analyst that are directly related to behavior analysis such as attending planning meetings regarding the behavior analytic program, researching the literature related to the program, and talking to individuals about the program.*

This aspect of the experience requirements still generates questions from supervisors and supervisees alike. The primary misconception concerns the 50% maximum direct implementation time being equated to all client contact time. This is not correct. The limitation is on the direct implementation of behavioral programs only (i.e., time spent delivering **therapeutic** and **instructional** procedures), and not to all time spent working with clients. Time that a supervisee is directly carrying out the instructions of a behavior program is considered direct implementation. Although this time is an important aspect of the experience requirement, it is also valuable to provide supervisees with opportunities to perform other activities consistent with the standards. Some examples of acceptable activities that are not limited by the 50% implementation maximum are listed below:



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### Direct Activities (Non-Implementation of Behavior-Analytic Programs)

- Observation and data collection
- Observation of others (e.g., implementers, staff, parents)
- Training staff and caregivers on behavior-analytic programs or content
- Conducting assessments related to the need for behavioral intervention
- Meeting with clients about behavior-analytic programming and services
- Performing behavior-analytic assessments (e.g., functional analysis, stimulus preference assessment)

There are also acceptable indirect activities that are not limited by the 50% implementation maximum. Some examples are below.

### Indirect Activities (Behavior-Analytic)

- Data graphing and analysis
- Researching the literature related to a specific behavior-analytic program
- Writing and revising behavior-analytic programs

As always, only behavior-analytic activities may be counted toward the experience requirements for certification. Non-behavior-analytic job duties may not be counted. These include administrative duties (e.g., paperwork, staff orientation to business policies), service delivery activities that are not behavior-analytic in nature (e.g., physical management techniques, CPR, intellectual assessments), and behavior-analytic activities that are not directly related to the experience (e.g., reading literature or attending conference presentations where the content is not related to specific client programs). Although such activities might be part of any employment scenario, and are undoubtedly valuable, supervisors and supervisees should be sure to count only acceptable behavior-analytic activities toward the experience hours for BACB certification.

## NEWS & NOTES

### Board of Directors Update

We wish to sincerely thank Debora (Deb) Thivierge, BCaBA for her 5 years of service to the BACB's Board of Directors. Deb recently resigned from the Board to accept a position on the New York State Board for Applied Behavior Analysis. During her time on the Board, Deb made numerous valuable contributions and was a steadfast representative for the BCaBA community. We'll miss you, Deb!

Dr. Neil Martin has joined the BACB on a part-time basis as Senior International Advisor. Neil will assist the BACB with a number of tasks related to behavior analyst certification around the world. Neil has served the BACB in a number of capacities over the years, with his most recent service being 4 years on the BACB's Board of Directors.

Deb and Neil leave vacant partial terms on the BACB's Board of Directors, to be filled at its discretion.

### Four Additional U.S. States Pass Behavior Analyst Licensure Laws

Alaska, Kansas, Tennessee, and Maryland recently passed legislation to regulate the practice of behavior analysis at the state level. The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Division of Corporations, Business & Professional Licensing will now oversee *Licensed Behavior Analysts* and *Licensed Assistant Behavior Analysts*. The Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board will now oversee *Licensed Behavior Analysts* and *Licensed Assistant Behavior Analysts*. The Tennessee Applied Behavior Analyst Licensing Committee under the Board of Examiners of Psychology will now oversee *Licensed Behavior Analysts* and *Licensed*





## BACB Newsletter

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*Assistant Behavior Analysts.* BCBA and BCaBA certification, respectively, should satisfy the primary application requirements for these new credentials. The Maryland Behavior Analyst Advisory Committee within the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists will now oversee *Licensed Behavior Analysts*. BCBA certification should satisfy the primary application requirements for this new credential.

Although these new laws will not be fully implemented until after a rulemaking period ends, we recommend that certificants in Alaska, Kansas, Maryland, and Tennessee contact their professional associations for information about pursuing these new state credentials.

[Alaska Association for Behavior Analysis](#)

[Kansas Association for Behavior Analysis](#)

[Maryland Association for Behavior Analysis](#)

[Tennessee Association for Behavior Analysis](#)

### BACB Examinations Translated Into New Languages

The BCBA examination is currently offered in both English and Modern Spanish, and the BCaBA examination is currently offered in English, Modern Spanish, and Traditional Chinese. In February 2015, Italian and Hebrew versions of both examinations will be offered for the first time. In addition, the BACB's Board of Directors recently authorized additional translations in Korean and Brazilian Portuguese, which will be available in February 2016.

### Behavior Technician Registry Now Available

Our searchable Behavior Technician Registry is now available [online](#). Every Registered Behavior Technician and his/her supervisor(s) is now listed in the registry.

### Behavior Technician Registry

Enter search criteria below and press 'Search' to find Registered Behavior Technicians.

#### Zip Code

 Search

Within a  mile radius

#### Last Name

 Search

#### State (U.S. only)

 Search

#### City

 Search

#### International

 Search



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## A Summary of Upcoming Changes to BACB Standards

Recent issues of the *BACB Newsletter* have described a number of impending changes to BACB standards. In an effort to assist certificants in keeping track of these many changes, we have provided the following table that includes the changes, their effective dates, and their original published source. We will publish this table and other reminders in future newsletters until the majority of the changes have been enacted.

Effective Date	Area	Change	Newsletter
January 1, 2015	Supervisor Requirements	Pass an 8-hr, post-certification, competency-based training on supervising pre-certification individuals	<a href="#"><i>September 2012</i></a>
January 1, 2015	Supervisor Requirements	Pass an online, competency-based <a href="#"><i>training module</i></a> on BACB experience standards at <a href="http://www.BACB.com">www.BACB.com</a>	<a href="#"><i>September 2012</i></a>
January 1, 2015	Supervisee Requirements	Pass an online, competency-based <a href="#"><i>training module</i></a> on BACB experience standards at <a href="http://www.BACB.com">www.BACB.com</a>	<a href="#"><i>September 2012</i></a>
January 1, 2015	Distribution of Experience	The start-date and end-date of experience may not be more than five years apart	<a href="#"><i>September 2012</i></a>
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	<a href="#"><i>February 2013</i></a>
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.	<a href="#"><i>February 2013</i></a>
January 1, 2016	Ethics and Discipline	The <a href="#"><i>Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts</i></a> will be enforced. Revisions to the disciplinary system will take effect.	<a href="#"><i>September 2014</i></a>
January 1, 2017	Approved Course Sequence Coordinator Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be employed as full-time faculty by the university</li> <li>• Hold a doctoral degree</li> <li>• Hold BCBA/BCBA-D certification</li> </ul>	<a href="#"><i>May 2013</i></a>

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