



# BCBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.)

The BCBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.; TCO) describes the content that will appear on the BCBA® certification examination beginning in 2025. The TCO represents the knowledge and skills identified as being important for entry-level BCBA practitioners by the most recent job task analysis (see the [February 2022 BACB Newsletter](#)). The BCBA examination includes 175 scored questions and 10 unscored pilot questions. The TCO includes 104 tasks organized in 9 domains as follows:

Domain	# of Questions (% of Exam)
A. Behaviorism and Philosophical Foundations	8 (5%)
B. Concepts and Principles	24 (14%)
C. Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation	21 (12%)
D. Experimental Design	13 (7%)
E. Ethical and Professional Issues	22 (13%)
F. Behavior Assessment	23 (13%)
G. Behavior-Change Procedures	25 (14%)
H. Selecting and Implementing Interventions	20 (11%)
I. Personnel Supervision and Management	19 (11%)
<b>Total Questions</b>	<b>175</b>

Domain	# of Questions
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## A. Behaviorism and Philosophical Foundations 8

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.1. Identify the goals of behavior analysis as a science (i.e., description, prediction, control).</li> <li>A.2. Explain the philosophical assumptions underlying the science of behavior analysis (e.g., selectionism, determinism, empiricism, parsimony, pragmatism).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.3. Explain behavior from the perspective of radical behaviorism.</li> <li>A.4. Distinguish among behaviorism, the experimental analysis of behavior, applied behavior analysis, and professional practice guided by the science of behavior analysis.</li> <li>A.5. Identify and describe dimensions of applied behavior analysis.</li> </ul> |
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## B. Concepts and Principles 24

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B.1. Identify and distinguish among behavior, response, and response class.</li> <li>B.2. Identify and distinguish between stimulus and stimulus class.</li> <li>B.3. Identify and distinguish between respondent and operant conditioning.</li> <li>B.4. Identify and distinguish between positive and negative reinforcement contingencies.</li> <li>B.5. Identify and distinguish between positive and negative punishment contingencies.</li> <li>B.6. Identify and distinguish between automatic and socially mediated contingencies.</li> <li>B.7. Identify and distinguish among unconditioned, conditioned, and generalized reinforcers.</li> <li>B.8. Identify and distinguish among unconditioned, conditioned, and generalized punishers.</li> <li>B.9. Identify and distinguish among simple schedules of reinforcement.</li> <li>B.10. Identify and distinguish among concurrent, multiple, mixed, and chained schedules of reinforcement.</li> <li>B.11. Identify and distinguish between operant and respondent extinction as operations and processes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B.12. Identify examples of stimulus control.</li> <li>B.13. Identify examples of stimulus discrimination.</li> <li>B.14. Identify and distinguish between stimulus and response generalization.</li> <li>B.15. Identify examples of response maintenance.</li> <li>B.16. Identify examples of motivating operations.</li> <li>B.17. Distinguish between motivating operations and stimulus control.</li> <li>B.18. Identify and distinguish between rule-governed and contingency-shaped behavior.</li> <li>B.19. Identify and distinguish among verbal operants.</li> <li>B.20. Identify the role of multiple control in verbal behavior.</li> <li>B.21. Identify examples of processes that promote emergent relations and generative performance.</li> <li>B.22. Identify ways behavioral momentum can be used to understand response persistence.</li> <li>B.23. Identify ways the matching law can be used to interpret response allocation.</li> <li>B.24. Identify and distinguish between imitation and observational learning.</li> </ul> |
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## C. Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation

21

- C.1. Create operational definitions of behavior.
- C.2. Distinguish among direct, indirect, and product measures of behavior.
- C.3. Measure occurrence.
- C.4. Measure temporal dimensions of behavior (e.g., duration, latency, interresponse time).
- C.5. Distinguish between continuous and discontinuous measurement procedures.
- C.6. Design and apply discontinuous measurement procedures (e.g., interval recording, time sampling).
- C.7. Measure efficiency (e.g., trials to criterion, cost-benefit analysis, training duration).
- C.8. Evaluate the validity and reliability of measurement procedures.
- C.9. Select a measurement procedure to obtain representative data that accounts for the critical dimension of the behavior and environmental constraints.
- C.10. Graph data to communicate relevant quantitative relations (e.g., equal-interval graphs, bar graphs, cumulative records).
- C.11. Interpret graphed data.
- C.12. Select a measurement procedure to obtain representative procedural integrity data that accounts for relevant dimensions (e.g., accuracy, dosage) and environmental constraints.

## D. Experimental Design

13

- D.1. Distinguish between dependent and independent variables.
- D.2. Distinguish between internal and external validity.
- D.3. Identify threats to internal validity (e.g., history, maturation).
- D.4. Identify the defining features of single-case experimental designs (e.g., individuals serve as their own controls, repeated measures, prediction, verification, replication).
- D.5. Identify the relative strengths of single-case experimental designs and group designs.
- D.6. Critique and interpret data from single-case experimental designs.
- D.7. Distinguish among reversal, multiple-baseline, multiple-element, and changing-criterion designs.
- D.8. Identify rationales for conducting comparative, component, and parametric analyses.
- D.9. Apply single-case experimental designs.

## E. Ethical and Professional Issues

22

- E.1. Identify and apply core principles underlying the ethics codes for BACB certificants (e.g., benefit others; treat others with compassion, dignity, and respect; behave with integrity).
- E.2. Identify the risks to oneself, others, and the profession as a result of engaging in unethical behavior.
- E.3. Develop and maintain competence by engaging in professional development activities (e.g., read literature, seek consultation, establish mentors).
- E.4. Identify and comply with requirements for collecting, using, protecting, and disclosing confidential information.
- E.5. Identify and comply with requirements for making public statements about professional activities (e.g., social media activity; misrepresentation of professional credentials, behavior analysis, and service outcomes).
- E.6. Identify the conditions under which services or supervision should be discontinued and apply steps that should be taken when transitioning clients and supervisees to another professional.
- E.7. Identify types of and risks associated with multiple relationships, and how to mitigate those risks when they are unavoidable.
- E.8. Identify and apply interpersonal and other skills (e.g., accepting feedback, listening actively, seeking input, collaborating) to establish and maintain professional relationships.
- E.9. Engage in cultural humility in service delivery and professional relationships.
- E.10. Apply culturally responsive and inclusive service and supervision activities.
- E.11. Identify personal biases and how they might interfere with professional activity.
- E.12. Identify and apply the legal, regulatory, and practice requirements (e.g., licensure, jurisprudence, funding, certification) relevant to the delivery of behavior-analytic services.

## F. Behavior Assessment

23

- F.1. Identify relevant sources of information in records (e.g., educational, medical, historical) at the outset of the case.
- F.2. Identify and integrate relevant cultural variables in the assessment process.
- F.3. Design and evaluate assessments of relevant skill strengths and areas of need.
- F.4. Design and evaluate preference assessments.
- F.5. Design and evaluate descriptive assessments.
- F.6. Design and evaluate functional analyses.
- F.7. Interpret assessment data to determine the need for behavior-analytic services and/or referral to others.
- F.8. Interpret assessment data to identify and prioritize socially significant, client-informed, and culturally responsive behavior-change procedures and goals.

## G. Behavior-Change Procedures

25

- G.1. Design and evaluate positive and negative reinforcement procedures.
- G.2. Design and evaluate differential reinforcement (e.g., DRA, DRO, DRL, DRH) procedures with and without extinction.
- G.3. Design and evaluate time-based reinforcement (e.g., fixed-time) schedules.
- G.4. Identify procedures to establish and use conditioned reinforcers (e.g., token economies).
- G.5. Incorporate motivating operations and discriminative stimuli into behavior-change procedures.
- G.6. Design and evaluate procedures to produce simple and conditional discriminations.
- G.7. Select and evaluate stimulus and response prompting procedures (e.g., errorless, most-to-least, least-to-most).
- G.8. Design and implement procedures to fade stimulus and response prompts (e.g., prompt delay, stimulus fading).
- G.9. Design and evaluate modeling procedures.
- G.10. Design and evaluate instructions and rules.
- G.11. Shape dimensions of behavior.
- G.12. Select and implement chaining procedures.
- G.13. Design and evaluate trial-based and free-operant procedures.
- G.14. Design and evaluate group contingencies.
- G.15. Design and evaluate procedures to promote stimulus and response generalization.
- G.16. Design and evaluate procedures to maintain desired behavior change following intervention (e.g., schedule thinning, transferring to naturally occurring reinforcers).
- G.17. Design and evaluate positive and negative punishment (e.g., time-out, response cost, overcorrection).
- G.18. Evaluate emotional and elicited effects of behavior-change procedures.
- G.19. Design and evaluate procedures to promote emergent relations and generative performance.

## H. Selecting and Implementing Interventions

20

- H.1. Develop intervention goals in observable and measurable terms.
- H.2. Identify and recommend interventions based on assessment results, scientific evidence, client preferences, and contextual fit (e.g., expertise required for implementation, cultural variables, environmental resources).
- H.3. Select socially valid alternative behavior to be established or increased when a target behavior is to be decreased.
- H.4. Plan for and attempt to mitigate possible unwanted effects when using reinforcement, extinction, and punishment procedures.
- H.5. Plan for and attempt to mitigate possible relapse of the target behavior.
- H.6. Make data-based decisions about procedural integrity.
- H.7. Make data-based decisions about the effectiveness of the intervention and the need for modification.
- H.8. Collaborate with others to support and enhance client services.

## I. Personnel Supervision and Management

19

- I.1. Identify the benefits of using behavior-analytic supervision (e.g., improved client outcomes, improved staff performance and retention).
- I.2. Identify and apply strategies for establishing effective supervisory relationships (e.g., executing supervisor-supervisee contracts, establishing clear expectations, giving and accepting feedback).
- I.3. Identify and implement methods that promote equity in supervision practices.
- I.4. Select supervision goals based on an assessment of the supervisee's skills, cultural variables, and the environment.
- I.5. Identify and apply empirically validated and culturally responsive performance management procedures (e.g., modeling, practice, feedback, reinforcement, task clarification, manipulation of response effort).
- I.6. Apply a function-based approach (e.g., performance diagnostics) to assess and improve supervisee behavior.
- I.7. Make data-based decisions about the efficacy of supervisory practices.