

BACB Newsletter



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Introducing the 2025 BCBA and BCaBA Examinations

The BACB® periodically evaluates its examination content to ensure that it reflects changes in professional practice. These periodic reviews also help the BACB adhere to standards set by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, the BACB's certification-program accreditor. This evaluation is called a *job task analysis (JTA)*, and its outcome has historically been referred to as a *task list*. In April 2021, the BACB began its evaluation of the content that will appear on the 2025 BCBA® and BCaBA® examinations. However, before further describing the BACB's recent JTAs, it is important to consider the primary role of the task list.

Reconsidering the Task List

Certification examinations act as gatekeepers to the profession, ensuring that certificants know enough to safely and competently practice. For this reason, it is vital that examination content is clearly communicated to potential applicants as early as possible for their preparation efforts. The BCBA and BCaBA task lists have always served this primary purpose. However, due to the rapid growth of the applied behavior analysis profession and its infrastructure over the past two decades, these task lists have acquired additional functions beyond their essential one.

The BCBA and BCaBA task lists have been treated as all-encompassing lists of critical behavior-analytic content, which they are not. This interpretation was understandably a result of limited curricular and supervision resources in the profession, as well as references to task lists made by the BACB in its certification requirements. To be clear, the BCBA and BCaBA task lists are not university curricula, although their content should be included in most curricula, along with additional content not included in the task lists. Similarly, the task lists are not supervised fieldwork curricula, although some of their content is certainly useful for supervision activities.

It is time in our profession to reaffirm the original and core purpose of the BCBA and BCaBA task lists so that they primarily serve as outlines of examination content. To emphasize this point, the new editions of the BCBA and BCaBA task lists will be named *test content outlines (TCOs)*, which is how some other professions refer to these types of documents.

In the past, new BCBA and BCaBA examinations were implemented concurrently with revised certification requirements. Although this approach

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worked well in an earlier era, this linkage of the examination and certification requirements resulted in lengthy intervals between new examinations so that universities had sufficient time to develop and implement the new requirements. Moving forward, BCBA and BCaBA examinations and their respective TCOs will be updated independent of changes to certification requirements. This will enable examination content to be revised more frequently in response to changes in the profession. This increased responsiveness is possible due to the relative stabilization of TCO content and certification requirements.

The remainder of this newsletter describes the development of the 6th editions of the BCBA and BCaBA TCOs, on which their respective examinations will be based beginning in 2025.

2025 BCBA Examination

Job Task Analysis

Job task analysis is the predominant method for developing high-stakes examinations for professions, and it has been used in the development of all BACB examinations. The JTA process involves the development of the following: a draft TCO, a content-validation survey of the profession, and a new examination blueprint. The most recent BCBA JTA began in April 2021 and was overseen by the BACB's psychometricians at Pearson VUE. It involved 24 subject matter experts (SMEs), facilitated by BACB staff, who were responsible for TCO content revisions. The SMEs were diverse in terms of their geographic location, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience, primary role (e.g., practitioner, faculty, consultant), and professional area of emphasis. All of the SMEs were certified at either the BCBA or BCBA-D® level.

The development of the draft BCBA TCO (6th ed.) began in a two-day virtual meeting in April 2021. During the meeting, a 14-member SME committee received training on the JTA process and its purpose, reviewed numerous data sets related to BCBA certification and university training, and reviewed the evolution of BCBA certification requirements. After extensive discussions about BCBA certification and the profession at large, the SMEs thoroughly reviewed the [BCBA Task List \(5th ed.\)](#) and used it as the basis for the new TCO. After two days of discussion and consensus-based decision-making, the SMEs produced a draft TCO ready for content validation.

It is vital that certification programs establish a direct link between the practice of the profession and its entrance examination. Accordingly, in July 2021, the draft BCBA TCO (6th ed.) was electronically distributed to all current BCBA in a content-validation survey. Respondents were presented with each of the 104 task statements and asked to assess their importance, criticality, and/or prevalence in practice (depending on the content domain). Of the 18,945 BCBA certificants who clicked the survey link, 16,106 (85%) rated task statements in at least 1 content domain, and 13,783 (73%) rated every task statement. BACB and Pearson VUE staff reviewed all of the data and respondent commentary before finalizing the TCO. Ultimately, the draft TCO was fully validated by the content-validation survey; no tasks were removed from or added to the draft.

The final step in the JTA was a two-day virtual meeting of 14 SMEs, including 4 from the TCO-development meeting, in October 2021 to develop new examination specifications based on the finalized TCO. Examination specifications include the distribution of content from each domain that will appear on the examination, including the number of questions related to each task. This information is not only useful to examination candidates, but it is also critical to examination-form assembly and question writers. After carefully reviewing the content-validation survey results, the SMEs developed the final examination blueprint by determining the relative weightings of the content domains and questions.

A detailed report of the aforementioned activity was presented to the BACB Board of Directors for their review. In December 2021, the Board voted to accept the results of the BCBA JTA and the resulting [BCBA Test Content Outline \(6th ed.\)](#).

Test Content Outline

The JTA resulted in modest changes to the content that will appear on the BCBA examination beginning in 2025. The 9 content domains on the BCBA Task List (5th ed.) were retained with 2 minor title revisions. Content was reorganized for better flow and to eliminate duplications across domains. Task statements that were retained were revised for clarity, and all task statements now include more purposeful verbs. The Ethics domain (retitled *Ethical and Professional Issues*) now includes 12 specific tasks rather than references to the entire [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#). Content related to diversity, equity, and inclusion was integrated into 8 tasks across 4 domains. There was an overall net increase of 12 tasks (104 total), as 9 tasks were removed, 10 tasks were combined into 5 tasks, 9 tasks were separated into 19 tasks, and the Ethics section was restructured. Finally, the following 13 tasks were added, though some of their elements were included in past task statements:

The image shows a thumbnail of the BCBA Test Content Outline (8th ed.) document. It features the BACB logo at the top left and the title 'BCBA Test Content Outline (8th ed.)' at the top right. Below the title is a table with columns for 'Domain', 'Task Statement', and 'Task ID'. The table lists various tasks across different domains, including 'Behaviorism and Philosophical Foundations', 'Concepts and Principles', 'Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation', 'Experimental Design', 'Ethical and Professional Issues', 'Behavior Assessment', 'Behavior-Change Procedures', 'Selecting and Implementing Interventions', and 'Personnel Supervision and Management'. The total number of tasks is listed as 104.

- B.20 Identify the role of multiple control in verbal behavior.
- B.22 Identify ways behavioral momentum can be used to understand response persistence.
- B.23 Identify ways the matching law can be used to interpret response allocation.
- B.24 Identify and distinguish between imitation and observational learning.
- 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.3 Identify threats to internal validity (e.g., history, maturation).
- D.6 Critique and interpret data from single-case experimental designs.
- E.2 Identify the risks to oneself, others, and the profession as a result of engaging in unethical behavior.
- E.8 Identify and apply interpersonal and other skills (e.g., accepting feedback, listening actively, seeking input, collaborating) to establish and maintain professional relationships.
- F.2 Identify and integrate relevant cultural variables in the assessment process.
- G.18 Evaluate emotional and elicited effects of behavior-change procedures.
- H.5 Plan for and attempt to mitigate possible relapse of the target behavior.
- I.3 Identify and implement methods that promote equity in supervision practices.

Content Domain Crosswalk

Domain	# of Tasks	
	6th Edition	5th Edition
A. Behaviorism and Philosophical Foundations <i>Previously Titled Philosophical Underpinnings</i>	5	5
B. Concepts and Principles	24	15
C. Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation	12	11
D. Experimental Design	9	6
E. Ethical and Professional Issues <i>Previously Titled Ethics (Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts)</i>	12	7
F. Behavior Assessment	8	9
G. Behavior-Change Procedures	19	22
H. Selecting and Implementing Interventions	8	9
I. Personnel Supervision and Management	7	8
Total Tasks	104	92

Examination Blueprint Crosswalk (ordered most to least by percentage of 6th-edition exam)

Domain	# of Questions (% of Exam)	
	6th Edition	5th Edition
Behavior-Change Procedures	25 (14%)	35 (20%)
Concepts and Principles	24 (14%)	32 (18%)
Behavior Assessment	23 (13%)	18 (10%)
Ethical and Professional Issues <i>Previously Titled Ethics (Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts)</i>	22 (13%)	18 (10%)
Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation	21 (12%)	21 (12%)
Selecting and Implementing Interventions	20 (11%)	16 (9%)
Personnel Supervision and Management	19 (11%)	17 (10%)
Experimental Design	13 (7%)	12 (7%)
Behaviorism and Philosophical Foundations <i>Previously Titled Philosophical Underpinnings</i>	8 (5%)	6 (4%)
Total Questions	175	175

Implementation Timeline

Beginning on January 1, 2025, the BCBA examination will be based on the BCBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.).

2025 BCaBA Examination

Job Task Analysis

The BCaBA JTA occurred during the same timeframe as the BCBA JTA but was conducted independently. The BCaBA JTA began in April 2021 and was overseen by the BACB's psychometricians at Pearson VUE. It involved 20 SMEs, facilitated by BACB staff, who were responsible for TCO content revisions. The SMEs were diverse in terms of their geographic location, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience, primary role (e.g., practitioner, faculty, consultant), and professional area of emphasis. All of the SMEs were certified at either the BCaBA, BCBA, or BCBA-D level.

The development of the draft BCaBA TCO (6th ed.) began in a two-day virtual meeting in April 2021. During the meeting, a 13-member SME committee received training on the JTA process and its purpose, reviewed numerous data sets related to BCaBA certification and university training, and reviewed the evolution of BCaBA certification requirements. After extensive discussions about BCaBA certification and the profession at large, the SMEs thoroughly reviewed the [BCaBA Task List \(5th ed.\)](#) and used it as the basis for the new TCO. After two days of discussion and consensus-based decision-making, the SMEs produced a draft TCO ready for content validation.

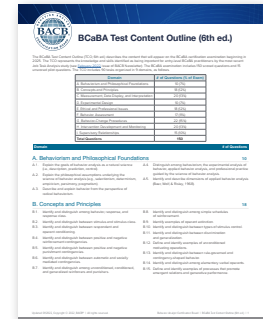
In July 2021, the draft BCaBA TCO (6th ed.) was electronically distributed to all current BCaBAs in a content-validation survey. Respondents were presented with each of the 90 task statements and asked to assess their importance, criticality, and/or prevalence in practice (depending on the content domain). Of the 1,231 BCaBA certificants who clicked the survey link, 1,014 (82%) rated task statements in at least 1 content domain, and 821 (67%) rated every task statement. BACB and Pearson VUE staff reviewed all of the data and respondent commentary before finalizing the TCO. Ultimately, the draft TCO was fully validated by the content-validation survey; no tasks were removed from or added to the draft.

The final step in the JTA was a two-day virtual meeting of 12 SMEs, including 5 from the TCO-development meeting, in October 2021 to develop the new examination specifications based on the finalized TCO. After carefully reviewing the content-validation survey results, the SMEs developed the final examination blueprint by determining the relative weightings of the content domains and questions.

A detailed report of the aforementioned activity was presented to the BACB Board of Directors for their review. In December 2021, the Board voted to accept the results of the BCaBA JTA and the resulting [BCaBA Test Content Outline \(6th ed.\)](#).

Test Content Outline

The JTA resulted in modest changes to the content that will appear on the BCaBA examination beginning in 2025. The 9 content domains on the BCaBA Task List (5th ed.) were retained with 4 minor title revisions. Content was reorganized for better flow and to eliminate duplications across domains. Task statements that were retained were revised for clarity, and all task statements now include more purposeful verbs. The Ethics domain (retitled *Ethical and Professional Issues*) now includes 11 specific tasks rather than references to the entire Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts. Content related to diversity, equity, and inclusion was integrated into 6 tasks across 3 domains. There was an overall net increase of 2 tasks (90 total), as 5 tasks were removed, 4 tasks were combined into 2 tasks, and the Ethics section was restructured. Finally, the following 6 tasks were added, though some of their elements were included in past task statements:



- C.1 Define and identify dimensions of behavior (e.g., count, duration, magnitude).
- C.10 Develop and evaluate mastery criteria.
- E.9 Engage in cultural humility in service delivery and professional relationships.
- G.12 Develop and implement procedures that promote behavioral persistence.
- I.2 Identify and apply strategies for establishing and maintaining effective supervisory relationships (e.g., active listening, providing reinforcement, reciprocal feedback).
- I.3 Identify and implement methods that promote equity in supervision practices.

Content Domain Crosswalk

Domain	# of Tasks	
	6th Edition	5th Edition
A. Behaviorism and Philosophical Foundations <i>Previously Titled</i> Philosophical Underpinnings	5	5
B. Concepts and Principles	15	15
C. Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation	10	11
D. Experimental Design	6	6
E. Ethical and Professional Issues <i>Previously Titled</i> Ethics (Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts)	11	7
F. Behavior Assessment	6	7
G. Behavior-Change Procedures	20	22
H. Intervention Development and Monitoring <i>Previously Titled</i> Selecting and Implementing Interventions	8	8
I. Supervisory Relationships <i>Previously Titled</i> Personnel Supervision and Management	9	7
Total Tasks	90	88

Examination Blueprint Crosswalk (ordered most to least by percentage of 6th-edition exam)

Domain	# of Questions (% of Exam)	
	6th Edition	5th Edition
Behavior-Change Procedures	22 (15%)	35 (23%)
Measurement, Data Display, and Interpretation	20 (13%)	23 (15%)
Intervention Development and Monitoring <i>Previously Titled</i> Selecting and Implementing Interventions	20 (13%)	13 (9%)
Concepts and Principles	18 (12%)	26 (17%)
Ethical and Professional Issues <i>Previously Titled</i> Ethics (Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts)	18 (12%)	14 (9%)
Behavior Assessment	17 (11%)	16 (11%)
Supervisory Relationships <i>Previously Titled</i> Personnel Supervision and Management	15 (10%)	10 (7%)
Experimental Design	10 (7%)	7 (5%)
Behaviorism and Philosophical Foundations <i>Previously Titled</i> Philosophical Underpinnings	10 (7%)	6 (4%)
Total Questions	150	150

Implementation Timeline

Beginning on January 1, 2025, the BCaBA examination will be based on the BCaBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.).

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	Newsletter(s)
January 1, 2022	BCBA and BCaBA Requirements	Revisions to certification requirements, including degree, coursework, fieldwork, ethics, and examinations	January 2017 October 2017 October 2018 December 2020
	RBT® Ethics Requirements	Revisions to RBT ethics requirements	July 2021
January 1, 2025	BCBA Examination	The BCBA examination will be based on the BCBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.)	February 2022
	BCaBA Examination	The BCaBA examination will be based on the BCaBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.)	February 2022