

BACB Newsletter



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Special Edition on Revised BCBA and BCaBA Degree Requirements

The organization that accredits the BACB’s certification programs, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, requires that important requirements be periodically reviewed by subject matter experts (SMEs) for possible revision. As such, the BCBA and BCaBA academic-degree requirements were studied by a 7-member SME committee (hereafter referred to as “the committee”) in April 2018. The committee was carefully composed to ensure that recommended changes were properly informed by SMEs familiar with the profession, the BACB’s current degree requirements, and university systems. The committee composition was diverse in terms of professional role (practitioners and faculty members), certification level, gender, and geographic location.

Before the committee reviewed and discussed the current degree requirements, they were provided with data on the growth of the profession, information from the BACB’s internal systems, and comparable requirements from other professions. Ultimately, each requirement under consideration was carefully discussed and was either left intact or revised. Committee decisions were made using a consensus approach.

In August 2018, at its annual meeting, the BACB Board of Directors reviewed and unanimously approved the committee’s recommendations. The remainder of this newsletter describes the upcoming changes to the BCBA and BCaBA degree requirements.

New BCBA Degree Requirements

The committee first considered the level of the BCBA degree requirement (currently a master’s degree or higher from an accredited institution). Consensus was quickly reached that the current degree level requirement should remain unchanged.

The committee then discussed the current field-of-study requirements (i.e., behavior analysis, education, psychology) in the context of other eligibility requirement changes that were announced in 2017. For example, the committee noted that the new coursework requirements (i.e., 315 hours of graduate-level instruction) are close to the academic requirements of many master’s programs and the new supervised

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fieldwork requirements (i.e., 2,000 supervised fieldwork hours or 1,500 concentrated supervised fieldwork hours) are comparable to similar requirements in other professions. In this context, and after reviewing data indicating that there are only a few dozen degree-granting programs in behavior analysis, the committee recommended that the field of study not be further restricted at this time. However, given these considerations, and that any new degree requirements would be implemented in conjunction with the other new eligibility requirements in 2022, the committee discussed the value of an *unrestricted* field-of-study requirement. For example, the increased behavior-analytic coursework and fieldwork requirements would likely lessen the importance of the differences in educational histories of applicants with graduate degrees in fields outside of education, psychology, and behavior analysis. This consideration, along with the secondary benefits of having more certificants with diverse training backgrounds and connections to other professional communities, led the committee to determine that more flexibility in the field-of-study requirement would be valuable at this time.

Finally, the committee discussed the value of recognizing graduate degrees from programs accredited by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). Because these programs include both coursework and degree elements, and have been vetted through the accreditation process, a BCBA eligibility pathway that recognizes such programs seemed appropriate.

Based on the committee’s recommendations, the BCBA degree requirements will be revised as shown below.

Summary of BCBA Eligibility Pathways	
Current Requirements	New Requirements
<p>Option 1 – Coursework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 270 hours of graduate coursework in behavior analysis • A master’s degree or higher in behavior analysis, psychology, or education • Practical experience <p>Option 2 – Faculty Teaching and Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty appointment, teaching, and research • A master’s degree or higher in behavior analysis, psychology, or education • Practical experience <p>Option 3 – Postdoctoral Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years of postdoctoral experience • A doctoral degree in behavior analysis, psychology, or education • Practical experience 	<p>Pathway 1 – ABAI Accredited Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A master’s or doctoral degree from an ABAI-accredited program • Practical experience that meets the 2022 supervised fieldwork requirements <p>Pathway 2 – Coursework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 315 hours of graduate coursework in behavior analysis • A master’s degree or higher in any field of study • Practical experience that meets the 2022 supervised fieldwork requirements <p>Pathway 3 – Faculty Teaching and Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This pathway will be reviewed in 2019; there are no changes to report at this time <p>Pathway 4 – Postdoctoral Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This pathway will be reviewed in 2019; there are no changes to report at this time

Note: This table is only a **summary** of eligibility requirements. The degrees referenced above must be obtained from a qualifying institution. For **detailed information** related to the eligibility requirements, please visit www.BACB.com.

The new requirement of a graduate degree from an ABAI-accredited program, and its position as the first pathway, highlight the importance of comprehensive graduate training in behavior analysis, while the unrestricted degree in the second pathway (together with the additional coursework and fieldwork requirements) will afford flexibility to applicants who already have an existing graduate degree from another discipline.

New BCaBA Degree Requirements

The current degree level and field-of-study requirements (i.e., a bachelor's degree in any field of study from a qualifying institution) for BCaBA certification were reviewed by the committee. The committee recommended that the field of study remain unrestricted. The rationale for their recommendation included the limited number of behaviorally oriented degree-granting programs at the undergraduate level and the critical role of the enhanced 2022 coursework (i.e., 225 instructional hours) and fieldwork requirements (i.e., 1,300 supervised fieldwork hours or 1,000 concentrated supervised fieldwork hours).

The committee spent the majority of their BCaBA-related discussion considering the *bachelor's degree* specification, as it impacts international applicants whose undergraduate titles and degree structures sometimes vary across countries. The committee recommended a minor revision for non-US applicants that recognizes undergraduate degrees from an institution that would qualify someone for a graduate program in their home country¹.

In addition to approving the recommendations above, the BACB Board of Directors also approved a BCaBA degree pathway for individuals who hold an undergraduate degree from an ABAI-accredited bachelor's program; this mirrors the new primary BCBA pathway described earlier.

Based on the aforementioned recommendations, the BCaBA degree requirements will be revised as shown below.

Summary of BCaBA Eligibility Pathways	
Current Requirements	New Requirements
<p>Coursework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180 hours of coursework in behavior analysis • A bachelor's degree from a qualifying institution in any field of study • Practical experience 	<p>Pathway 1 – ABAI Accredited Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A degree from an ABAI-accredited bachelor's program • Practical experience that meets the 2022 supervised fieldwork requirements <p>Pathway 2 – Coursework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 225 hours of coursework in behavior analysis • A bachelor's degree in any field of study from an accredited institution in the US or an undergraduate degree from a qualifying institution outside the US that would qualify someone for a graduate program in that country¹ • Practical experience that meets the 2022 supervised fieldwork requirements

Note: This table is only a **summary** of eligibility requirements. The degrees referenced above must be obtained from a qualifying institution. For **detailed information** related to the eligibility requirements, please visit www.BACB.com.

Implementation Timeline

The revised degree requirements for BCBA and BCaBA certification will be effective for applications received on or after January 1, 2022. At the same time, the following requirements will take effect:

- BCBA and BCaBA examinations will be based on the [BCBA/BCaBA Task List \(5th ed.\)](#)
- Coursework must meet the [2022 coursework requirements](#)
- Practical experience must meet the [2022 supervised fieldwork requirements](#)

Because the 5th edition examinations will not be available until 2022, the BACB will not be able to accept applications that meet the 2022 requirements before that time.

¹ The BACB will make a list available of acceptable qualifying degrees for different countries.

2019 Hemingway Award

In memory of the life and contributions of Michael Hemingway, the BACB annually honors an individual distinguished for his or her contributions (a) to the development of public policy related to behavior analysis and/or (b) to increasing the availability of behavior-analytic services. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board is pleased to call for nominations for the 2019 award.

Nominations will be accepted through 5:00 PM MST on **Friday, October 26, 2018**.

Visit our website to [learn more about the award](#) or to [submit a nomination](#).

A Summary of Recent and 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
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
March 16, 2018	BCBA/BCaBA Experience & Supervision Requirements	Experience and Supervision Standards Training Module no longer required.	March 2018
January 1, 2019	BCBA/BCaBA Experience & Supervision Requirements	Changes to the Experience Standards and implementation of the monthly experience system.	March 2018
January 1, 2022	BCBA/BCaBA Eligibility Requirements	Changes to the coursework requirements for the BCBA (Pathway 2) and BCaBA credentials.	January 2017
	BCBA/BCaBA Examination Content	All BCBA/BCaBA examinations will be based on the BCBA/BCaBA Task List (5th ed.)	January 2017
	BCBA/BCaBA Experience & Supervision Requirements	Changes to the “Structure and Amount of Supervised Fieldwork”, “Terminology Revisions”, “BCBA & BCaBA Experience & Supervision Requirements”, “Appropriate Clients”, and “Activities”.	October 2017
	BCBA/BCaBA Degree Requirements	Changes to the degree requirements for the BCBA and BCaBA credentials.	October 2018