

# MS IN APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

---



## SACRAMENTO STATE

### In Workflow

1. PSYC Committee Chair (laharrison@csus.edu)
2. PSYC Chair (furtak@csus.edu)
3. SSIS College Committee Chair (lo@csus.edu,mummawh@skymail.csus.edu)
4. SSIS Dean (mendriga@csus.edu,wickelgr@csus.edu)
5. Academic Services (catalog@csus.edu)
6. Senate Curriculum Subcommittee Chair (curriculum@csus.edu)
7. Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair (kathy.honeychurch@csus.edu)
8. Faculty Senate Chair (kathy.honeychurch@csus.edu)
9. Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate (s.storms@csus.edu)
10. President (khtudor@csus.edu)
11. Catalog Editor (catalog@csus.edu)
12. Graduate Studies (jdsmall@csus.edu; mxiong@csus.edu)
13. Registrar's Office (k.mcfarland@csus.edu)

### Approval Path

1. Mon, 10 Mar 2025 19:51:10 GMT  
Erin Rose Ellison (ellison): Rollback to Initiator
2. Tue, 18 Mar 2025 20:51:04 GMT  
Erin Rose Ellison (ellison): Rollback to Initiator
3. Mon, 14 Apr 2025 23:22:15 GMT  
Erin Rose Ellison (ellison): Approved for PSYC Committee Chair
4. Fri, 23 May 2025 20:40:37 GMT  
Katie Dickson (katiedickson): Rollback to Initiator
5. 2025-08-27T16:56:13Z  
Erin Rose Ellison (ellison): Approved for PSYC Committee Chair
6. 2025-09-02T15:29:21Z  
Sharon Furtak (furtak): Approved for PSYC Chair
7. 2025-10-06T16:24:19Z  
Bao Lo (lo): Approved for SSIS College Committee Chair
8. 2025-10-06T18:54:13Z  
Emily Wickelgren (wickelgr): Approved for SSIS Dean

### History

1. May 30, 2019 by 212408496
2. Dec 19, 2019 by Megan Heinicke (megan.heinicke)
3. Mar 24, 2021 by Emily Wickelgren (wickelgr)
4. Apr 29, 2021 by Katie Dickson (katiedickson)
5. Aug 8, 2022 by 301127606
6. Aug 10, 2022 by 302822325
7. Mar 7, 2023 by 212408496
8. Feb 20, 2024 by Katie Dickson (katiedickson)
9. May 24, 2024 by Janett Torset (torsetj)

Date Submitted: 2025-08-27T15:08:14Z

**Viewing: MS in Applied Behavior Analysis****Last approved: Fri, 24 May 2024 22:07:44 GMT****Last edit: 2025-10-16T17:49:01Z**

Changes proposed by: Denys Brand (220287575)

**Academic Group: (College)**

Social Sciences &amp; Interdisciplinary Studies

**Academic Organization: (Department)**

Psychology

**Catalog Year Effective:**

2026-2027 Catalog

**Individual(s) primarily responsible for drafting the proposed degree major program:**

| Name (First Last) | Email                | Phone 999-999-9999 |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Denys Brand       | denys.brand@csus.edu | 916-278-5476       |

**Type of Program:**

Major

**Program Change Type:**

Substantive

**Is this a pilot program?**

No

**Pilot program as of:**

NA

**Delivery Format:**

Fully Face to Face

**Title of the Program:**

MS in Applied Behavior Analysis

**Designation: (degree terminology)**

Master of Science

**Briefly describe the program proposal (new or change) and provide a justification:**

We are proposing 2 changes to our MS in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) graduate program. All proposed changes are to support our ABAI (Association for Behavior Analysis, International) accreditation application/status and to benefit student learning. As a program, we need to make these proposed changes to effectively meet all ABAI accreditation requirements, which will benefit our graduate students with graduating in a timely manner. The proposed changes will assist our program graduation rates by reducing the number of units required to graduate from 40-42 to 36-38. The proposed changes include 1) the addition of two already created and approved supervision courses (PSYC 276A & 276B) and removing the 1-unit laboratory components of PSYC 271 (Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis) and PSYC 284 (Assessment and Treatment of Problem Behavior), and 2) replacing PSYC 200 with PSYC 272 as the graduate writing intensive requirement (all required Form A's have been submitted). Next follows a detailed description of each proposed program change:

1. The addition of two already created and approved supervision courses (PSYC 276A & PSYC 276B) and removing the 1-unit laboratory components of PSYC 271 (Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis) and PSYC 284 (Assessment and Treatment of Problem Behavior):

As of January 2022, the supervised fieldwork hours required to sit for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) exam increased from 1500 to 2000 hours. This certification is necessary for students to provide essential health services to vulnerable clients diagnosed with developmental disabilities. Currently, the MS in ABA program outsources fieldwork supervision to local partner agencies (e.g., BEST Consulting, Inc., H.O.P.E. Consulting, LLC, Therapeutic Pathways, Inc.). However, our partner agencies can no longer provide all supervision needed for our students to graduate on time. Thus, we created a sequence of already approved supervision courses (PSYC 276A & PSYC 276B) to assist students with accruing their fieldwork hours prior to graduating and alleviating some of the burden experienced by our community partners who currently provide all of the supervision to our students. Students need to start accruing hours (i.e., be employed by our community partners) as soon as they enter the program in their first semester. The first supervision course (PSYC 276A) in the sequence focuses on developing initial competencies related to conducting

behavioral assessment and interventions and the second course (PSYC 276B) focuses on advancing competencies (primarily in supervision). Thus, the addition of the supervision courses has three important functions: (a) assist student learning by concentrating all of the coursework directly related to clinical supervision across the two new supervision courses, (b) to alleviate some of the burden experienced by our community partners by signing off on some of the fieldwork hours, and (c) providing additional structure in completion of all competencies outlined by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board such that students can complete their fieldwork requirement while in their graduate program.

The content traditionally taught as part of the 1-unit laboratory components for PSYC 271 (e.g., intake assessments, developing/writing acquisition protocols, creating staff training materials) and PSYC 284 (e.g., preference assessments, functional assessments, developing/writing behavioral intervention plans) will be taught as part of the already created and approved supervision courses (PSYC 276A & PSYC 276B). This will greatly benefit our students because all the content directly related to their clinical fieldwork will now be concentrated across the two supervision courses, rather than being distributed among the coursework content for other courses (such as PSYC 271 and 284). PSYC 271 and 284 reduces down to 3 units each. Moreover, these changes will assist with the timely graduation of our graduate students and are consistent with our ongoing accreditation efforts and goals (as well as the goals of the university).

## 2. Replacing PSYC 200 with PSYC 272 as the writing intensive requirement

We want to replace PSYC 200 with PSYC 272 (Research Methods in Behavior Analysis) as the writing intensive requirement for students in the MS in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program. In 2019, the ABA program separated from the General Psychology Program (i.e., MS in Psychological Research). When the programs separated, PSYC 200 remained a part of the MS in ABA program curriculum and satisfied the writing intensive requirement for students in the program. However, given the focus and the content of the course, PSYC 200 no longer directly serve the needs of students in the ABA program. That is, completing the course does not satisfy/meet any of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) 6th Edition Test Content Outline requirements. It also does not contribute to our ongoing accreditation efforts and does not satisfy any of those requirements. PSYC 272 is a course that all ABA graduate students must take to meet the mandatory coursework requirements needed to be eligible to sit the BCBA certification exam (ABAI.com) and satisfies several items in the 6th Edition of the Test Content Outline requirements. The PSYC 272 coursework focuses on teaching students research skills that are directly relevant to the successful and timely completion of their thesis projects. Specifically, the course exclusively focuses on teaching single-case research designs and methodology typically used by clinicians to evaluate treatment/intervention effectiveness. Thus, making PSYC 272 the writing intensive requirement seems to be a reasonable approach for helping students complete the mandatory 6th Edition Test Outline Content while also meeting a core CSUS graduation requirement. This proposed change will also support our ongoing ABAI accreditation goals and help us meet some of their requirements (e.g., timely graduation of graduate students).

In addition, we made changes to the wording in several sections. Specifically, we removed all references to the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) and its requirements from the program description and admission sections. The GRE was removed as a requirement for application to the MS in ABA program previously - the updated wording reflects this change. Also, we changed the wording regarding the lower division research methods requirement and included that this requirement can be satisfied either by completing PSYC 8 (and its equivalent), or by completing any other lower division research methods course. Students in the program are required to take PSYC 272, which teaches them the skills and the knowledge needed to complete all the research requirements of the program.

Finally, we need to following wording to be added to the program catalog (the wording is consistent with the ABAI accreditation requirements): Masters in Applied Behavior Analysis degree program accreditation awarded by the Association for Behavior Analysis International Accreditation Board.

## University Learning Goals

### Graduate (Masters) Learning Goals:

- Disciplinary knowledge
- Communication
- Critical thinking/analysis
- Information literacy
- Professionalism
- Intercultural/Global perspectives

## Program Learning Outcomes

### Program Learning Outcomes

#### Learning Outcome

Synthesize theories and research related to the field of ABA, and apply and evaluate behavior-analytic principles and techniques to affect socially valid issues.

Communicate and defend scientific findings, clinical outcomes, and thesis results to relevant audiences.

Compare perspectives and theories, differentiate assumptions and facts, develop hypotheses, and evaluate data and research findings using appropriate research methodology.

Find and evaluate literature to contextualize behavior-analytic theories and research in the field of psychology as a whole.  
 Employ behavior analysis certification board and APA guidelines for the ethical treatment of human research participants, clients in treatment, staff in training, and other relevant populations, and identify violations of these ethical codes.  
 Respond appropriately to cultural and individual differences, and discuss perspectives on psychology with others regardless of similarity or diversity of professional experience.

**Learning Outcomes Display**

| Course Code | PLO 1 | PLO 2 | PLO 3 | PLO 4 | PLO 5 | PLO 6 |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| PSYC 272    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 291    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 271    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 274    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 281    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 284    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 242    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 275    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 276A   |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 276B   |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 294    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 297A   |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 297B   |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 299    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 500A   |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSYC 500B   |       |       |       |       |       |       |

**Will this program be required as part of a teaching credential program, a single subject, or multiple subject waiver program (e.g., Liberal Studies, Biology) or other school personnel preparation program (e.g., School of Nursing)?**

No

**Please attach a Comprehensive Program Assessment Plan**

MS in ABA Assessment Plan (Fall 2025).pdf

**Please attach a Curriculum Map Matrix**

MS in ABA Curriculum Map Matrix (Fall 2025).pdf  
 MS in ABA ILG Map (Fall 2025).pdf

**Please attach a five-year budget projection**

5 year budget projectio note.docx

**Catalog Description:**

**Total units required for MS: 36-38**

**Program Description**

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the field of Psychology concerned with understanding the environmental variables that reliably influence human behavior, as well as developing procedures to modify socially significant behavior. The Master of Science program in ABA prepares students to work as behavior analysts in a variety of settings including schools, hospitals, neurorehabilitation settings, and agencies providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. The ABA option coursework should fulfill the most recent requirements to sit for the national certification exam in behavior analysis (BCBA). For more information visit [www.bacb.com](http://www.bacb.com). Students should note that this program is also appropriate for those planning to enter doctoral programs in Applied Behavior Analysis, Experimental Analysis of Behavior, or Special Education. Advisors play an active role in the planning process, and students

are strongly encouraged to consult with faculty on a continual and intensive basis as soon as they begin their studies in the program. The Graduate Brochure contains the department application procedures.

Although the program is based on a core set of requirements, the structure of the program allows for flexibility. While much material is covered in regular course offerings, the Psychology Department recognizes that specialized study and the development of certain types of skills must take place on a one-to-one student instructor basis. This includes research activities in the laboratory, field, or library; teaching activities; and practicum experience in community settings. Academic credit under individualized study or fieldwork designations is available for these purposes. Our research facilities include human and animal (rats) operant laboratories and research rooms for data collection with children and adults. We have also established research partnerships with different schools and agencies in the region. Finally, clinical training is also an integral part of our program. There are numerous funded internships and job opportunities for behavior analysis students in Sacramento.

**Admission Requirements: Course prerequisites and other criteria for admission of students to the degree major program, and for their continuation in it.**

## Admission Requirements

Admission to the MS in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is selective. An overall GPA of 3.0 is recommended. When making admissions decisions, the Department takes into consideration the candidate's GPA score, letters of recommendation, previous (research and/or practical) experience, the candidate's interest in a particular faculty member's research agenda, and additional materials.

Applicants are required to have a Bachelor's degree, a lower division undergraduate psychology course in research methods, and an upper division undergraduate course in applied behavior analysis, with at least "C" grades in those courses. The lower division research methods requirement is met by either completing PSYC 8 (or any equivalent course completed at other colleges and universities), or by completing any other lower division research methods course. The upper division applied behavior analysis requirement is met by PSYC 171 taken at Sacramento State, or an equivalent course completed at other colleges and universities. Course equivalents must be reviewed and approved by the Department's Graduate Coordinator.

Please visit the Department of Psychology (<https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/psychology/>) for information on additional requirements.

## Admission Procedures

All applicants, including Sacramento State graduates, must apply to both the University and the Psychology Department. Please submit the following to the Sacramento State Office of Graduate Studies:

- an application for admission—via CalState Apply (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>)
- one set of official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended, other than Sacramento State

For more admissions information and application deadlines please visit the Office of Graduate Studies website (<http://www.csus.edu/gradstudies/>).

At the same time, each applicant must submit the following supplemental application:

- Three letters of recommendation, from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's potential for successful graduate study. At least two letters from faculty are preferred. See application brochure—available from [www.csus.edu/psyc/grad-students/graduate-program-dev.html](http://www.csus.edu/psyc/grad-students/graduate-program-dev.html)— for any additional required materials.

## Minimum Units and Grade Requirements

Units required for the MS: 36-38, each with a grade of "B" or better.

Minimum required GPA: 3.0.

## Advancement to Candidacy

Each student must file an application for Advancement to Candidacy, indicating a proposed program of graduate study. This procedure should begin as soon as the classified graduate student has:

- removed any deficiencies in admission requirements;
- completed at least 12 units of 200-level courses in the graduate program with a minimum 3.0 GPA;
- selected a Thesis or Project committee;
- obtained the committee's approval of a proposal for the thesis or project (as indicated by committee members' signatures on the Department's thesis/project approval form); and
- fulfill a Graduate Writing Intensive (GWI) course in their discipline within the first four semesters of coursework at California State University, Sacramento.

The student will complete the Advancement to Candidacy form after planning a degree program in consultation with a Psychology advisor and members of the student's thesis/project committee. The completed form is then returned to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval.

## Culminating Experience Requirements

Students must enroll once for four units of PSYC 500A, which may be satisfied by completing an empirical thesis. Each student will compile an APA-style manuscript, including introduction, method, results, and discussion sections, at the conclusion of the thesis. Students must also successfully pass an oral defense of the thesis.

If the thesis or project is not completed by the end of the first semester in which a student is registered for culminating requirement units, they must enroll for two units of PSYC 500B during the following semester. If the thesis is still not completed by the end of that semester, students must enroll in the university designated thesis/project continuation course.

As defined by policy <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/acadaff/fsm00010.htm>, a change in units constitutes a substantive change to the program. If your changes constitute a substantive change, please refer back to the "Program Change Type" field above to ensure that "Substantive" is selected.

**Program Requirements: (If new courses are being created as part of a new program, it will be useful to propose courses first.)**

## Program Requirements

| Code  | Title   | Units        |
|---|---|--------------|
| <b>Required Core Course (3 Units)</b>           |   |              |
| PSYC 272  | Research Methods in Behavior Analysis   | 3            |
| <b>Required Area Courses (28 Units)</b>         |   |              |
| PSYC 291  | Professional Issues in Behavior Analysis  | 3            |
| PSYC 271  | Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis  | 3            |
| PSYC 274  | Theoretical Foundations of Behavior Analysis  | 3            |
| PSYC 281  | Advanced Experimental Analysis of Behavior  | 4            |
| PSYC 284  | Assessment and Treatment of Behavior Problems   | 3            |
| PSYC 242  | Seminar in Learning and Behavior  | 3            |
| PSYC 275  | Applied Behavior Analysis in the Workplace  | 3            |
| PSYC 276A                                       | Clinical Supervision in Behavior Analysis I <small>Course must be repeated once for credit</small>  | 2            |
| PSYC 276B                                       | Clinical Supervision in Behavior Analysis II <small>Course must be repeated once for credit</small> | 4            |
| <b>Required Experiential Learning (4 Units)</b> |   |              |
| PSYC 294  | Cooperative Research  | 1            |
| PSYC 297A                                       | Advanced Graduate Research I  | 1            |
| PSYC 297B                                       | Advanced Graduate Research II   | 1            |
| PSYC 299  | Special Problems  | 1            |
| <b>Culminating Experience (4-6 Units)</b>       |   |              |
| PSYC 500A                                       | Culminating Experience  | 4            |
| PSYC 500B                                       | Culminating Experience <sup>1</sup>   | 2            |
| <b>Total Units</b>                              |   | <b>39-41</b> |

<sup>1</sup> Students must enroll in PSYC 500B if thesis/project is not satisfactorily completed while enrolled in PSYC 500A.

**For graduate programs, the number of declared undergraduate major and the degree production over the preceding years of the corresponding baccalaureate program:**

The following data were retrieved from the Fall 2017 Fact Book for Psychology, which are the most recent numbers available:

2012-2013

Declared Majors Entering in Fall: 1,303

Conferred Degrees: 319

2013-2014

Declared Majors Entering in Fall: 972

Conferred Degrees: 422

2014-2015

Declared Majors Entering in Fall: 913

Conferred Degrees: 356

2015-2016

Declared Majors Entering in Fall: 1,006

Conferred Degrees: 383

2016-2017

Declared Majors Entering in Fall: 1,091

Conferred Degrees: 377

## Fiscal Impact to Change an Existing Program

Indicate programmatic or fiscal impact which this change will have on other academic units' programs, and describe the consultation that has occurred with affected units:

N/A

Provide a fiscal analysis of the proposed changes:

N/A

How will the above changes be accommodated within the department/College existing fiscal resources?

N/A

Will the proposed changes require additional resources?

No

What additional space, equipment, operating expenses, library, computer, or media resources, clerical/technical support, or other resources will be needed?

No additional resources are required for the proposed program changes

Estimate the cost and indicate how these resource needs will be accommodated:

N/A

### Reviewer Comments:

**Erin Rose Ellison (ellison) (Mon, 10 Mar 2025 19:51:10 GMT):** Rollback: Per your request.

**Erin Rose Ellison (ellison) (Tue, 18 Mar 2025 20:50:40 GMT):** Please address minor edits requested for rationale, unit counts, etc.

**Erin Rose Ellison (ellison) (Tue, 18 Mar 2025 20:51:04 GMT):** Rollback: Please address minor edits discussed re: rationale, unit counts, etc.

**Katie Dickson (katedickson) (Fri, 23 May 2025 20:40:37 GMT):** Rollback: In preparation for the summer 2025 Curriculum Workflow software update, all course and program proposals have been moved out of Workflow. Submissions to Workflow will resume Monday, August 11, 2025. Please contact Academic Services at [catalog@csus.edu](mailto:catalog@csus.edu) with any questions.

Key: 388