



M.S. Program in Applied Behavior Analysis

Internship Guidelines

2026-2027

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Introduction

Students in the M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) will graduate having completed *all of the necessary requirements for taking the Board Certified Behavior Analyst® (BCBA®)* examination. Requirements include 315 hours of graduate behavior-analytic coursework¹, as well as 2000 hours of supervised experience. Even though the coursework is delivered on campus by the ABA faculty, clinical experience may be pursued off campus with local service providers. These providers have agreed to abide by the guidelines developed by the CSUS faculty outlined within this document.

Given that clinical experience is a fundamental skill set of certified behavior analysts, it is important that students receive the best clinical training possible. Thus, these guidelines were created to standardize the experience/supervision provided to CSUS students, as well as to guarantee minimum quality standards.

¹ All experience and supervision hours should have been accrued prior to graduation. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.® (BACB®) does not state a specific time limit on the completion of the requirements for certification, with the exception of clinical experiences/internships, which must be completed within a five-year period (i.e., the start-date and end-date may not be more than five years apart).

Internship Structure ²

Supervision

The purpose of supervision is to improve and maintain the behavior-analytic, professional, and ethical repertoires of the supervisee and facilitate the delivery of high-quality services to their clients. Effective behavior-analytic supervision includes:

- Development and communication of performance expectations
- Observation, behavioral skills training, and delivery of performance feedback
- Modeling technical, professional, and ethical behavior
- Guiding behavioral case conceptualization, problem-solving, and decision-making repertoires
- Review of written materials (e.g., behavior programs, data sheets, reports)
- Oversight and evaluation of the effects of behavioral service delivery
- Ongoing evaluation of the effects of supervision

In-person, on-site supervision is preferred. When distance supervision occurs, synchronous (real-time) observation is encouraged. Supervision may fall into the following categories:

- Individual: Individual supervision of interns must occur within every supervisory period, which is defined by the BACB® as *one month*. During individual supervision, the supervisor must observe and provide feedback to the supervisee on their behavior-analytic activities with a client in the natural environment.
- Group: Group supervision may be conducted in small groups (no more than 10 supervisees regardless of the number of supervisors in the room) *for no more than half of the total supervised hours* in each supervisory period. The remainder of the total supervision hours in each supervisory period must consist of individual supervision (also see Group Supervision course below).

Multiple Supervisors Providing Supervision at One Organization:

The BACB® encourages supervision from multiple supervisors. Organizations may elect to have multiple supervisors assist with the student's training to ensure adequate supervision and contact hours. If organizations opt into this option, we request that the organization identify a *lead supervisor* the helps organize training within the organization. This *lead supervisor* agrees to coordinate training processes with the ABA faculty and meet twice per year.

² Adapted from the BACB Handbook (December 29, 2023 update)

Activities

Individuals pursuing certification should spend their time on activities that are behavior-analytic in nature and are related to the current version of the BACB® Task List/Test Content Outline. Activities may fall under the categories of restricted and unrestricted.

Adapted from the BACB®:

Type of Activity	Definition	Details
Restricted	An activity that involves the delivery of therapeutic and instructional procedures directly to clients	These activities are optional and must not make up more than a certain percentage ³ of fieldwork hours.
Unrestricted	An activity that best exemplifies the work of a behavior analyst who oversees and develops programs and systems for others to implement	These activities are required and must make up a certain percentage (or more) of fieldwork hours.

The table below distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate activities for **unrestricted experience**:

Appropriate Activities	Inappropriate Activities
- Assessment activities related to the need for behavioral intervention (e.g., stimulus preference assessments, functional assessments, staff performance, curriculum assessments such as the VB-MAPP)	- Attending meetings with little or no behavior-analytic content
- Designing and systematically monitoring skill acquisition and behavior reduction programs for clients (e.g., researching the literature, plan development and implementation, graphing and data analysis)	- Providing interventions that are not based in behavior analysis (e.g., sensory integration, floor time)
- Overseeing the implementation of behavior-analytic programs by others and any activities related to the oversight of behavioral programming (i.e., supervisory type activities, training, designing behavioral systems, performance management)	- Doing non-behavior analytic administrative activities (e.g., filing, making copies)
- Attending planning meetings (i.e., meetings with funding sources) and consulting with others (e.g., collaborating professionals, consultation with area experts) about the program	- Completing non-behavioral assessments (e.g., diagnostic or intellectual/intelligence assessments)
- Planning and conducting research if applied in nature and initiated at the clinical setting (even if co-supervised by faculty member). This is the type of research that would serve to evaluate the effectiveness of a clinical intervention.	- Completing research (of any kind) required by the graduate training program (pre-thesis and thesis research). This activity will not help students gain the clinical skills necessary for supervisory-type employment as a BCBA.
- Other activities deemed by the supervisor to be appropriate (i.e., normally performed by a behavior analyst that are directly related to behavior analysis)	- Any other activities that are not directly related to behavior analysis

³ *Restricted activities (i.e., direct implementation of behavioral programs) may not count for more than 40% of the accrued experience.* The BACB® monitors (and audits) applications to ensure that no more than 40% of the accrued experience hours include the direct implementation of behavioral programs.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors are responsible for providing the following:

- Supervision of at least 5% of the student's hours per supervision period. This includes at least one hour (cumulative) of individual supervision of direct implementation with the client during a supervisory period.
- Sign BACB® supervision forms after each supervisory period. Copies of these forms must be retained by supervisor and student for a minimum of seven years
- Use behavioral skills training to teach new skills as appropriate, per activity type
- Model technical, professional, and ethical behavior as outlined in the BACB® [*Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*](#)
- Provide performance feedback throughout the course of supervision and training, regardless of activity type
- Guide behavioral case conceptualization, problem-solving, and decision-making repertoires
- Model research-based clinical decisions by providing rationale and relevant literature
- Review written materials (e.g., programs, data sheets, reports)
- Train on the oversight and evaluation of the effects of behavioral services
- Evaluate the effects of supervision
- Train toward and sign off on skills included in the "Internship Competency Checklist" (see below)
- Complete CSUS "Internship Semester Evaluation Form" once a semester (see below)
- Communicate with CSUS faculty on any concerns that may arise
- Provide opportunities for CSUS faculty to observe delivery of services by either interns or supervisors as needed
- Be fluent with the BACB®'s [*Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*](#), and immediately address any potential/suspected breaches of ethics with interns. If issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, report to faculty supervisor.
- Inform faculty of internship openings for the following Fall by February 1st
- Meet with faculty members at least twice per year for continued development of the internship program

Lead Supervisor Qualifications

- A master's degree in Psychology, Education, or ABA
- Be certified as a BCBA® with no current disciplinary sanctions, and have at least ONE year of supervisory experience prior to providing supervision
- Be listed as an approved supervisor by the CSUS faculty (see below)
- Completes ongoing CEUs in supervision

Student Responsibilities

As part of their supervision and training, students should be prepared to:

- Adhere to all established agency-specific protocols/procedures/guidelines, etc.
- Be present and ready to complete supervisory activities with assistance
- Notify supervisor of any cancellations in advance and reschedule a mutually agreeable time to complete the observation
- Accept and incorporate feedback provided, with the ultimate goal of demonstrating skills trained to proficiency
- Submit written materials by timelines provided
- Engage in open and frequent (minimum of one time per Supervisory Period) communication with Supervisors
- Complete the minimum weekly work hours, as specified by agency-specific internship contract. *Students are expected to complete all experience and supervision hours prior to graduation. Some agencies place a strict timeline for accruing hours (e.g., two years).*
- Have supervision forms ready and obtain supervisor signature after each supervisor period (students and supervisors must retain copies of these forms for seven years)
- Track experience and supervision hours accrual on a weekly basis
- Obtain supervisor signature on the “Internship Competency Checklist”
- Obtain supervisor signature on the “Internship Semester Evaluation Form”
- Be fluent with the BACB®’s [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#) and immediately report any potential/suspected breaches of ethics to supervisor. If issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved with supervisor, report to faculty supervisor.
- Maintain internship materials (see guidelines below)
- Keep a signed copy of this document in their internship binder

Internship Materials

Students are responsible for maintaining a shared cloud storage folder with CSUS faculty and their direct supervisor for keeping the following materials:

- Signed Supervision Contract
- Signed Internship Guidelines (document above)
- Copy of BACB® Task List/Supervision Requirements
- Copy of BACB® Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts
- Copy of all trainings
- Hour Log (%) and completed, signed Supervision Forms
- Blank Supervision Forms
- Articles discussed during supervision meetings
- Any notes
- Any evaluations (that can be shared)

- Signed Internship Competency Checklist (one per semester)
- Signed Internship Semester Evaluation Forms (one per semester)
- Blank copies of Internship Semester Evaluation Form

DISCLAIMER: *Internship hours/supervision may be unpaid. It is the student's/intern's responsibility to make time within their schedule to practice skills not directly related to direct implementation outside of regular work hours, especially for those students/interns who hold direct level positions within their agency. The total number of acceptable direct implementation (i.e., restricted) hours must not exceed 40% (i.e., 800 hours) of the total experience hours (i.e., 2000 hours).*

Faculty Responsibilities

CSUS Faculty Advisors should:

- Review internship materials
- Meet with service providers once per year to review internship program
- Make sure that providers adhere to the aforementioned guidelines
- Arrange observation of student delivered services, when necessary and if possible
- Assure that students are meeting their minimum internship hours, as specified in their internship contract
- Meet with students once per semester to review their “Internship Competency Checklist” and “Internship Semester Evaluation Form”
- Provide copies of syllabi to supervisors to avoid duplication of trainings
- Provide pro-bono trainings for approved internship sites as mutually agreed upon
- Model professional and ethical behavior

Supervision Course:

The CSUS faculty recognize the workload associated with supervising and training an aspiring BCBA[®]. We also recognize that some service providers deliver focused, rather than comprehensive, behavior analytic services. Thus, students also will be enrolled in a supervision course during the first two years of their graduate degree to ensure comprehensive training prior to certification.

In addition to rounding out competencies, the supervision course aims to assist service providers with indirect and supervision hours. Contingent on the service provider agreeing to list the supervision course instructor as a site supervisor, the supervision course instructor will work with the student and service provider to ensure fieldwork hours are met prior to graduation. This entails listing the course instructor as as a supervisor on the “multiple supervisors at one agency” contract. The student and supervision course instructor agree that no client information (HIPAA/ protected health information) will be disclosed during group supervision or in development of indirect hour documentation.

Topics covered in the 4-semester supervision course include:

- Administration of behavioral skill assessments including the Vineland, SRS-2, VB-MAPP, ABLLS, etc.
- Development of skill acquisition (verbal, social, adaptive behavior) protocols
- Development of behavior reduction protocols
- Creation and use of graphs to monitor skill acquisition and behavior reduction programming
- Administration of functional behavior assessments (indirect, descriptive, and experimental assessments) to inform intervention
- Use of effective strategies for receiving and delivering feedback
- Preparation and monitoring of behavioral trainings for behavioral and nonbehavioral professionals

- Actionable steps to practice cultural humility and consideration of the importance of cultural responsiveness in the development of trainings, assessments, and interventions

Internship Site Approval Requirements

1. Internship Contract
 - It should be clear that the internship contract is different from the “employment” contract
 - Service providers/supervisors are not allowed to charge students for supervision at any point during or after completion of the internship program
2. Copies of CVs from all potential supervisors
 - Eligibility: BCBA® for at least one year of supervisory experience. Must complete a BACB® approved 8-hour supervision course and maintain supervision CEUs for at least one year
3. Willingness to provide samples of behavioral programming during initial and ongoing meetings between service providers and CSUS faculty to help align supervision provided at CSUS and at the internship site. This may include samples of:
 - Goals or tasks generated for the internship program
 - Progress measures towards goals/tasks
 - Group supervision trainings
 - Permanent response products to be completed by interns
 - Data sheets/data collection methods
 - Behavior acquisition lessons
 - Behavior intervention plans
 - Initial training protocols (e.g., conditional discrimination, errorless teaching, reinforcement)
 - Ethics code trainings

DISCLAIMER: We recognize that much of the information requested above might be considered proprietary. However, the purpose for obtaining this information is for faculty advisors to gain a better understanding of students' experiences. All materials obtained will be kept confidential and returned to service providers within four weeks. No copies will be made.

Internship Program Approval Form

To become a recommended practice/internship site, service providers agree to meet the requirements specified on the “Internship Program Requirements Checklist” (above).

The undersigned have agreed to abide by the guidelines described above.

This agreement is valid for two years.

Service Provider Signature: _____

Service Provider (Company): _____

Supervisor’s Name and BCBA#: _____

Student Faculty Advisor’s Signature: _____

Student Faculty Advisor’s Name and BCBA-D #: _____

Supervision Course Faculty Advisor’s Signature: _____

Supervision Course Faculty Advisor’s Name and BCBA-D #: _____

Internship Semester Evaluation Form

*This form is to be completed by the Intern and Supervisor once a semester.
It is due to the Faculty Advisor each Fall and Spring*

Intern: _____ Agency: _____

Supervisor: _____ BCBA #: _____

Semester Under Review (circle one): *Fall* *Spring* Year: _____

1. Cumulative Experience (Restricted + Unrestricted) Hours: _____ Cumulative Supervision Hours: _____
 Cumulative Restricted Hours: _____ Cumulative Unrestricted Hours: _____
 Cumulative Group: _____ Cumulative Individual: _____

2. Working sufficient hours (combined restricted and unrestricted) to complete internship within the agreed upon timeline (circle one): *YES* *NO*

If no, explain: _____

Remediation Plan/Comments (use back if necessary): _____

3. Progress towards internship goals (circle one): *No progress* *Steady Progress* *Excellent Progress*

If no progress, explain: _____

Remediation Plan/Comments (use back if necessary): _____

4. Professionalism and employment expectations (circle one): *Satisfactory* *Steady Progress* *Unsatisfactory*

If unsatisfactory, explain: _____

Remediation Plan/Comments (use back if necessary): _____

Upon signing, I am agreeing that I have reviewed and understand the feedback on this form.

Student Intern: _____ Date: _____

Internship Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Adviser: _____ Date: _____

Internship Competency Checklist

Name: _____ Faculty Adviser: _____

Internship Site: _____ Internship Supervisor: _____

CSUS Start Date: _____ Employee Start Date: _____ Internship Start Date: _____

Introduction and General Instructions:

The Internship Competency Checklist describes the practical skills necessary to prepare for board certification and success in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA). The M.S. program in ABA at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) strives to provide its students with the opportunity to come into contact with the practical experiences needed to gain these skills through approved internship placements in the Sacramento community. All M.S. students are expected to appropriately and successfully engage in these activities.

The Internship Competency Checklist will be used throughout each M.S. student's internship and should be used as 1) a self-evaluation tool and 2) a feedback tool for both internship supervisors and faculty advisors. As such, graduate-level interns are responsible for maintaining this document. This document will be used in semester evaluations conducted by internship supervisors and the faculty adviser to review each student's progress toward internship goals. Competency ratings should be used to establish subsequent objectives and additional experiences. The faculty adviser will use the Internship Competency Checklist to inform their narrative on the Graduate Student Progress Report that is due to the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator (October 15 in Fall semesters; February 15 in Spring semesters). Each student's internship supervisor will also complete the Internship Semester Evaluation Form before the semester evaluation, and this form will be attached to the Graduate Student Progress Report. Copies of the Internship Competency Checklist will be retained in the student intern's personnel file at the internship site and in the student's academic file in the faculty adviser's departmental office. A final copy of ratings for all semesters will be retained in the employee file at the approved internship site.

Measurement:

Skills will be documented as either "in progress" or "mastered" before each semester evaluation. Skills will be documented as "in progress" if the intern has been exposed to the skill at least one time. Mastery is defined below for each particular skill.

The skills attained should be documented by permanent product in the personnel file whenever possible

<i>I. Policies and Procedures</i>	In Progress Date	Supervisor Initials	Date Reviewed	Supervisor Initials	Notes
Orientation to Internship Guidelines; Review Internship Contract (as required by the BACB)	N/A	N/A			

<i>II. Assessments (Initial/Progress)</i>	In Progress Date	Supervisor Initials	Mastered Date	Supervisor Initials	Definition
Observe Initial/Progress Assessment					Observe at least two different criterion/standardized assessments used for initial/ progress assessments.
Assist in Initial/Progress Assessment					Help prepare, conduct, and score at least two initial/progress assessments as described above.
Conduct Preference Assessment					Conduct at least two types of preference assessments (e.g., MSWO, paired-stimulus, free-operant).
Assist in Writing Reports for Funding					Help prepare, graph or summarize data to be entered in report, help update progress on current goals, and propose future goals/aims.

<i>III. Stakeholder Meetings/Trainings</i>	In Progress Date	Supervisor Initials	Mastered Date	Supervisor Initials	Definition
Observe Stakeholder Meeting					Observe a minimum of two parent meetings conducted by supervisor on case.
Assist in Leading Meeting					Help prepare meeting agenda/discussion points. Take notes during meeting. Lead meeting if appropriate.
Observe Stakeholder Training					Observe a minimum of two parent trainings conducted by supervisor on case.
Assist in Leading Training					Help prepare training agenda/discussion points. Lead training if appropriate (at least one).

<i>IV. Behavior Acquisition</i>	In Progress Date	Supervisor Initials	Mastered Date	Supervisor Initials	Definition
Develop lesson targeting language (e.g., verbal operant training)					Write or modify a minimum of two lesson plans to target a verbal operant (any topography of mands, tacts, intraverbals, etc.). Lesson must specify data collection system, prompt type and hierarchy, schedule and type of reinforcement and error correction procedure.
Develop lesson targeting pro-social behavior (e.g., turn-taking)					Write or modify a minimum of two lesson plans to target a pro-social behavior (e.g., responding to name, turn

					taking, inviting someone to play). Lesson must specify data collection system, prompt type and hierarchy, schedule and type of reinforcement and error correction procedure.
Develop lesson targeting adaptive behavior (e.g., toileting, meal prep.)					Write or modify a minimum of two lesson plans to target adaptive behavior (e.g., toileting, hand washing, meal preparation). Lesson must specify data collection system, prompt type and hierarchy, schedule and type of reinforcement and error correction procedure.
Develop lesson targeting pre-academic skills (e.g., matching, math, reading)					Write or modify a minimum of two lesson plans to target pre-academic skills (e.g., discrimination training, spelling). Lesson must specify data collection system, prompt type and hierarchy, schedule and type of reinforcement and error correction procedure.
Collect Baseline					Collect baseline data prior to intervention for skill acquisition lesson using at least two types of recording systems (e.g., partial interval, whole interval, frequency, momentary time sampling).
Collect Intervention					Collect data during intervention that matches the system used during baseline (e.g., partial interval, whole interval, frequency, momentary time sampling). Analyze current trends and compare intervention data with baseline data to assess for progress.
Collect Treatment Integrity					Collect ongoing data during intervention to assess fidelity of implementation and identify potential treatment drift.
Graphing Progress					Graph baseline and intervention data for at least two lessons. Use visual analysis to evaluate progress/make changes to programing.

<i>V. Functional Assessment</i>	In Progress Date	Supervisor Initials	Mastered Date	Supervisor Initials	Definition
Observe Descriptive Assessment					Observe supervisor conduct descriptive assessment (e.g., ABC data, scatter plot) for at least two clients.
Assist with Descriptive Assessment					Help supervisor collect data on descriptive assessment (e.g., ABC data, scatter plot) and analyze data for at least two clients.
Observe Functional Analysis					Observe supervisor conduct an experimental FA of any type (e.g., latency, IRT, trial-based, brief standard) for at

					least one client. If not applicable, alternative assignment would be to review two articles on different FA types.
Assist with Functional Analysis					Help supervisor conduct an experimental FA of any type (e.g., latency, IRT, trial-based, brief standard) for at least one client. If not applicable, alternative assignment would be to prepare and conduct a mock FA (videotaped).
Graph Functional Behavior Assessment data					Prepare graph of FBA data whether real or mock (use APA guidelines).

<i>VI. Behavior Reduction</i>	In Progress Date	Supervisor Initials	Mastered Date	Supervisor Initials	Definition
Develop Behavior Intervention Plan to Weaken Behavior					Write or modify at least two behavior intervention plans based on function hypothesized or identified via functional assessment. Plan must specify data collection system, antecedent manipulation, consequence manipulation, and functionally equivalent replacement behavior.
Collect Baseline					Collect baseline data prior to intervention for behavior reduction plan using at least two types of recording systems (e.g., partial interval, whole interval, frequency, momentary time sampling).
Collect Intervention					Collect data during intervention that matches the system used during baseline (e.g., partial interval, whole interval, frequency, momentary time sampling). Analyze current trends and compare intervention data with baseline data to assess for progress.
Collect Treatment Integrity					Collect ongoing data during (behavior reduction) intervention to assess fidelity of implementation and identify potential treatment drift.
Graphing Progress					Graph baseline and intervention data for at least two reduction plans. Use visual analysis to evaluate progress/make changes to the plan.