

Applied Behavior Analysis Student Handbook



Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis

*Department of Psychology
California State University, Fresno*

Fall 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

On behalf of the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) graduate program faculty, I would like to congratulate you on your admittance to the Master's degree program in ABA! We are excited to have you all here and to support you in meeting your academic and career goals as you contribute to the health and vitality of the Psychology Department and the ABA program. This handbook is designed to give you a brief description of the procedures involved in obtaining a master's degree in ABA. As you advance toward your degree, please don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions, talk to your thesis advisor, reference this handbook, or visit the Division of Graduate Studies website for the most recent thesis and graduation requirements and many relevant forms, policies, and funding opportunities (<http://fresnostate.edu/academics/gradstudies/>).

Make the most of your time in the Psychology department and the ABA program. Take as many opportunities as possible to learn from faculty and fellow students, fulfill your roles to the best of your ability, and enjoy your time with us!

Best Wishes,

Dr. Jackson
ABA Graduate Program Coordinator
Department of Psychology

CONTENTS

Department Overview.....	
Program Overview.....	
Program Mission, Goals, and Objectives	
Mission.....	
Goals.....	
Objectives	
Coursework	
Core Courses.....	
Independent Study.....	
Coursework Sequence.....	
Steps Toward Obtaining a Graduate Degree in Psychology	
Graduate Standing	
Advancement to Candidacy	
The Thesis.....	
Graduation Procedures.....	
Rules and Regulations.....	
Probation and Disqualification.....	
Administrative Academic Probation (AAP)	
Academic Disqualification	
Ethics and Standards.....	
Grievance Procedures and Dispute Resolution.....	
Practicum Training.....	
General Requirements	
Practicum Course.....	
Practicum Supervision	
Professional Development.....	
ABA Club	
Memberships in Professional Organizations and Conference Attendance.....	
Colloquia and Dept Activities	
Professional Organizations and Conferences	
Subscriptions to Journals.....	
Student Advising.....	
Model of Advising Procedures.....	
Evaluation and Feedback	
Coursework / Teaching	
Practicum / Supervisor	
Research / Mentorship	
Financial Aid.....	
Federal Aid	
Division of Graduate Studies and University Support.....	
College and Department Support	
Useful Websites	
Current students, Past students, and Alumni	

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis is one of three graduate degrees offered by the Department of Psychology. The department is one of the largest on campus, with over 1,300 undergraduates and 75 graduate students across three programs. We have over 20 full-time faculty members and many part-time faculty who represent a wide range of theoretical orientations and areas of application in psychology. Our faculty currently engages in various active research programs with undergraduate and graduate students. Students are encouraged to visit the department website to familiarize themselves with all faculty and their research interests. Faculty descriptions are at this link:

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/csm/psych/facstaff/faculty/fulltime.html>

Psychology Department Chair

Lorin Lachs, Ph.D.

Core ABA Graduate Faculty and Instructors

Marianne L. Jackson, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Professor

ABA Graduate Program Coordinator

Alyssa N. Wilson, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Associate Professor

Jovonnie Esquierdo Leal, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Assistant Professor

Jp D. Moschella, M.A., BCBA

Lecturer

Angelica Aguirre, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Lecturer

Affiliated Behavior Analysts

Erin Chrysafis, M.A., BCBA

Supervising Behavior Analysts

ABA Services @ Fresno State

Abril Lopez-Rufino, M.A., BCBA

Supervising Behavior Analysts

ABA Services @ Fresno State

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Consistent with the mission of California State University, Fresno, the Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis strives to make student success our priority. To this end, we embrace a culture of diversity and inclusion, advance our distinction in science, professional programs, and community engagement, produce transformative scholarly research and creative works that target regional issues with global significance, exemplify the ethical stewardship of capital and human resources, and develop institutional, community, and intellectual leaders. These aims are achieved through a variety of educational experiences, including rigorous coursework, supervised fieldwork (practicum), mentored research (thesis), and facilitation of student interaction (e.g., research meetings, membership in the campus ABA Club, attendance at department events, community outreach, etc.).

In line with University values, the Psychology department and Applied Behavior Analysis program encourage and protect free inquiry and statement, thus ensuring a forum for the generation, discussion, and critical examination of ideas. The mentorship model of student guidance and supervision emphasizes the importance of quality teaching and the close interaction between faculty and students, intended to stimulate scholarly inquiry and discourse, inspire creative technical competencies, and support research and dissemination.

The Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis is a minimum two-year, full-time graduate program and requires a minimum of 44 units of coursework. The coursework meets the objectives set out by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) 6th Edition Test Content Outline (TCO) in all areas. In addition to coursework, students should complete between 10-20 hours per week of practicum experience during both years of the program (including summer) to meet the minimum BACB requirements of 1500 hours of supervised experience. The program provides campus-based, paid practicum placements, support, and supervision for all students, contingent on satisfactory performance in their placement, as outlined in the contract with their supervising BCBA and the policies of the practicum site and CSU Foundation. The ABA program is designed to produce active, effective, and ethical graduates who are prepared for national certification by the BACB and competitive job placements within the field of behavior analysis. Program requirements also prepare interested students for doctoral studies in competitive Ph.D. programs in behavior analysis.

PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

MISSION

The mission of the ABA Master of Arts in Psychology is to provide comprehensive education and training in Applied Behavior Analysis, producing culturally responsive scientist-practitioners who meet the needs of diverse communities and populations through research, theory, and application.

GOALS

The Goals and Student Learning Outcomes for the Applied Behavior Analysis Master's degree program are related to the overall goals of the Psychology department, but also have goals and outcomes specific to the field of study.

GOAL 1: THEORY AND CONTENT IN PSYCHOLOGY

Student Learning Outcome: Students can demonstrate conceptual mastery of an area of emphasis in depth.

1. Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of theory and research in the following areas related to Applied Behavior Analysis: philosophical underpinnings, concepts and principles, measurement, data display, and interpretation.

GOAL 2: METHODOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY

Student Learning Outcomes: Students can understand and be able to use major research methods and applied technologies in Applied Behavior Analysis, including design, data analysis, and evaluation.

1. Students can apply various research methodologies in research, including but not limited to, single-subject methodologies and designs.
2. Students can collect and analyze data accurately and reliably for research and applied purposes.
3. Students can explain the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) and APA guidelines for the ethical treatment of human research participants, clients in treatment, staff in training, and other relevant populations, and can identify violations of these ethical codes.

GOAL 3: CRITICAL THINKING, LOGIC, AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Student Learning Outcomes: Students can demonstrate the skills and attitudes of critical thinking and sound decision-making in coursework, application, and independent work.

1. Students can evaluate the logic and data of research, compare perspectives, theories, assumptions, and facts, and develop hypotheses based on the research literature.
2. Students can evaluate research findings and their application to socially relevant behavior change.

GOAL 4: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Student Learning Outcomes: Students can write clearly and effectively and can display effective oral communication skills.

1. Students can produce well-organized papers and essays without grammatical errors, utilizing APA format.
2. Students can compose and deliver oral presentations on a variety of topics in Applied Behavior Analysis to various audiences in a group setting.

GOAL 5: DIVERSITY AND AWARENESS

Student Learning Outcomes: Students can demonstrate awareness and analysis of topics and issues related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

1. Students can demonstrate an understanding and respect for cultural and individual differences by describing the biases, disparities, and inequities different communities face and how these impact our science and practice.
2. Students can evaluate their own biases and ability to work collaboratively with individuals with diverse needs and backgrounds.

COURSEWORK

Coursework for the program meets the requirements for the Master of Arts (M.A.) in Applied Behavior Analysis within the Psychology Department. Given this, students are expected to master not only behavior analytic content but also develop a broad working knowledge of the field of psychology. A total of 44 units are required to

graduate, and the breakdown of these units into core classes and research units is shown below. Our coursework also meets all test content objectives set by the BACB for the 6th Edition. These can be viewed on the BACB website: [BACB TCO 6th Ed.](#)

COURSES

- PSYCH 221 Advanced Learning and Human Behavior (4)
PSYCH 222 Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in Behavior Analysis (3)
PSYCH 223 Verbal Behavior (4)
PSYCH 224 ABA for Organizations and Systems (4)
PSYCH 235 Philosophy in Behavior Analysis (3)
PSYCH 244 Measurement, Research Methods, and Statistics (4) *
PSYCH 245 Research Methods in Behavior Analysis (4)
PSYCH 268 Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis (1x4)
PSYCH 271 Behavioral Intervention and Consultation (3)
PSYCH 288 Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis (4)
PSYCH 289 Functional Assessment and Intervention (4)
PSYCH 299 Thesis (3-6) **

Total Units Required for Master's Degree in ABA 44

* This course includes the department's writing exam requirement

** As the culminating experience, the thesis units will also include a requirement to complete the Behavior Development Solutions modules to show competence and readiness for the BACB® exam. Enrollment with the software will be facilitated by the program coordinator and practicum instructor during the final semester of classes. Final proof of completion must be provided to the student's thesis advisor and the program coordinator prior to the completion of all thesis units.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Students should enroll in independent study units with a chosen faculty member each semester throughout their degree. These are units designed to allow students to focus on an area of study or conduct a project with a faculty member that would not be part of any scheduled coursework. This most often occurs when students are researching and preparing their thesis project (students cannot enroll in thesis units until they have completed a successful thesis proposal). Only 3 independent study units may be

recorded on a student's proposed course of study (on the advancement to candidacy paperwork). Additional independent study units taken are not recorded on the advancement to candidacy as they will result in the rejection of the paperwork by the Division of Graduate Studies. While independent study units can count toward the degree, they may not substitute for particular coursework unless under unusual circumstances, and this requires written permission from the graduate program coordinator. Independent study units can be submitted using the form and instructions provided on the Psychology Department website (<http://www.fresnostate.edu/csm/psych/forms.html>).

COURSEWORK SEQUENCE

Although there is some flexibility in the timeline for independent study and thesis units, coursework is designed to be cumulative, and courses should be taken in a prescribed order (listed below). Deviations from this may only occur with approval from the graduate program coordinator and the course instructor. Students will take one unit of practicum every semester during the first two years, and they must complete at least three thesis units.

- Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average on ALL coursework taken to remain in good standing in the program.
- No more than 13 units of transfer may be included in the 44-unit program. Transfer credit may be used toward program requirements only if the institution offering the work is accredited and would accept it for a comparable master's degree program. This may also have implications for the BACB Verification status of the individual student. Credit will be granted if the course is judged by the program coordinator and to be particularly relevant to the individual student's program. The student must present appropriate documentation, including official transcripts of work completed and xerographic copies from the catalog of the institution where the transfer work was taken. Catalog copy and/or course syllabi must indicate: 1) the relevant course description; 2) the course may be used toward graduate credit at the institution where it was completed; and 3) course numbering and grading system (including whether the institution followed a semester or quarter grading system). Coursework from an institution outside the United States is not permitted for use toward the Master's degree unless it is part of the International Studies Abroad Program.

Year	Fall	Spring
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psych 244 Measurement & Stats* • Psych 288 Advanced ABA • Psych 222 Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues • Psych 268 Practicum • Independent study (w/thesis advisor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psych 245 Research Methods in ABA • Psych 289 Functional Assessment • Psych 268 Practicum • Independent study (w/thesis advisor)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psych 221 Advanced Learning and Bx • Psych 235 Philosophy • Psych 224 ABA in Org and Systems • Psych 268 Practicum • Independent study/thesis units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psych 223 Verbal Behavior • Psych 271 Beh Interv and Consult • Psych 268 Practicum • Independent study/thesis units

Note: For the purposes of financial aid, a full-time load is considered at least eight units of 200-level courses or 12 equivalent units from combined 200 and 100-level courses (equivalent units are calculated at 1.5 units for each 200-level unit and at face value for each 100-level unit).

STEPS TOWARD OBTAINING A GRADUATE DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY

The three major goals to accomplish in order to obtain a graduate degree at California State University, Fresno, are:

- admittance to graduate standing
- advancement to candidacy
- completing a thesis

Below are more detailed descriptions of how to accomplish each goal within the Psychology department.

GRADUATE STANDING

When a student is admitted to a graduate program, he or she is designated as either “classified” or “conditionally classified”. Due to the competitive admissions process in the Psychology department, conditionally classified

students generally are not admitted to the Psychology Master's degree programs; all entering psychology graduate students have admittance to graduate standing.

Classified graduate standing gives a student permission to work toward qualifying for candidacy for the particular program to which he or she has been accepted.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Advancement to candidacy gives a student permission to proceed toward qualifying for the degree and provides the student with a program of study that has been officially reviewed and approved by both the student's faculty and by the Graduate Dean. This important step confers on the student the status of candidate for the degree. It represents a commitment both on the part of the student and the degree program to complete the degree within a specified time limit according to the requirements published in a specific university catalog year.

For the ABA MA Program, eligibility requirements for advancement to candidacy include:

- Classified graduate standing
- A minimum GPA of 3.0 on all graduate coursework beginning from the date of embarking on the first course of the Master's degree
- Completion of PSYCH 244 (Measurement and Statistics in Psychology), PSYCH 222 (Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in Behavior Analysis), and PSYCH 245 (Research Methods in Behavior Analysis), with a grade of B or higher.
- Required courses must have been completed within the 5-year time limit for completion of all Master's degree requirements*
- Passing score on the Psychology department graduate writing examination. If a student fails this exam, they have a 2nd and 3rd chance to pass it in the upcoming Spring and Summer semesters. If a student still does not pass the writing exam on the 3rd opportunity, they will be disqualified from the program.

*Students must complete their Master's degree within five years from the semester they are granted classified graduate standing by the Department of Psychology. Students who do not graduate within the mandated time period will need to repeat program requirements completed earlier in the program so that all program requirements are completed within the five-year limit. This can only be done with specific permission and must not exceed 2 additional years. Students failing to make progress toward graduation after this point may be removed from the program by consensus from the program coordinator and the department's graduate committee.

Formally advancing to candidacy. Campus policy requires a student to complete a *Petition of Advancement to Candidacy* as soon as he or she is eligible to do so. For the ABA Program, this should be done in the fall semester of the second year, providing all requirements have been met. Official filing of the paperwork required for Advancement to candidacy must be attained no later than the semester preceding the semester in which the student applies for graduation. All forms relevant to graduate requirements can be found on the [Division of Graduate Studies website \(http://fresnostate.edu/academics/gradstudies/ \)](http://fresnostate.edu/academics/gradstudies/).

Changes to proposed classwork. Once a student has been officially advanced to candidacy, the *Petition of Advancement to Candidacy* may be changed only on the written request of the student and his or her department via a *Program Adjustment Request* form.

COMPLETING THE THESIS

Across the California State University, Fresno system, graduate students must complete a comprehensive examination, a project, or a thesis in order to obtain a master's degree. The Master's degree in ABA requires the completion of an empirical thesis consistent with research practices in the field of psychology and the publication standards of the American Psychological Association. A thesis is the written product of the systematic study of a significant problem. It clearly identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, clarity of purpose, and accurate and thorough documentation.

Critical and independent thinking should characterize every project. Mere description, cataloging, compilation, and other superficial procedures are not adequate.

PROCESS FOR COMPLETING THE MASTER'S THESIS

- Identify a topic in cooperation with your faculty advisor.**

During the fall semester of the first year, students should begin to consider topics of interest to them that may serve as the basis for their thesis topic. Attendance at research meetings, discussions with faculty and students, and good old-fashioned observation can provide inspiration for a further literature search.

Topics selected for the thesis should reflect a solid understanding of the research literature and a potential to make a contribution to the field of psychology. Students are strongly encouraged to assist in the implementation of another research study during their first year.

□ **Write a thesis proposal.**

During the spring semester of the first year, students continue to work toward the development of a thesis proposal. The student will work with his/her faculty mentor to develop an appropriate experimental method to address the question raised and any other tasks relevant to the content of the thesis proposal.

The thesis proposal provides a comprehensive rationale and plan for the thesis research. It should include a literature review (comprised of a clearly organized description of the literature related to the proposed study), a method section (comprised of a technological description of the plan for conducting the study), a brief description of how data will be analyzed, and a discussion of what the possible outcomes might mean for the area of study (in a specific and general sense). Although different faculty members may have different styles of supervising this process, all students should expect to maintain regular contact with their faculty advisor while writing, and to submit several drafts and revisions of the proposal.

□ **Form a thesis committee.**

The thesis committee should be formed by the faculty and student, and when the thesis proposal is nearly completed. The committee consists of three members; the chair (thesis advisor) and two other committee members. At least two of the three committee members must be appointed members of the department of the student's degree program (i.e., tenured or tenure-track faculty). With requisite expertise, an individual who is not an appointed member of the department faculty in the student's program may serve as a third, "outside" committee member, with approval of the chair.

□ **Present the thesis proposal.**

Once the faculty mentor has approved the final draft of the thesis proposal, a thesis proposal meeting must be scheduled. Students are responsible for contacting all committee members to arrange a meeting time and to reserve an appropriate location for the meeting (e.g., the Psychology Department conference room). Students should deliver a hard copy and an electronic copy of the proposal to each committee member *at least two weeks prior* to the proposal date. They should also inform the Psychology Department staff of the title of the proposal, names of committee members, and the time, date, and location of the defense. They should ask their thesis chair for guidance in terms of the procedure and expectations for the proposal meeting. Often, students present a brief (15- 20 min) overview of the proposal, then answer questions posed by committee members. Generally, proposal meetings last approximately one hour. Based on student's responses to questions and the quality of the written document, the committee may choose to approve, modify, or disapprove the proposal. When modifications are agreed, committee members may request to see a revised document, or even request a second proposal meeting, prior to granting formal approval.

□ **Obtain formal approval of the proposal by the committee.**

When the committee accepts the student's proposal, the student and committee members will sign a *Thesis Committee Assignment Form* indicating the thesis title and committee members. (The *Master's Thesis Committee Assignment* form can be found in the Psychology Department office or at the [Division of Graduate Studies website](#)). **This form should be brought to the committee meeting.** The signed Thesis Committee form should be submitted to the Department of Psychology so it may be placed in the student's file. By signing the form, the student agrees to conduct the thesis as proposed. Should substantial changes be made to the original plan of the study, approval by the committee must be obtained in writing and placed in the student's file.

□ **Obtain appropriate Human Subjects clearances.**

All theses involving the use of human participants require approval by the Department of Psychology's Human Subjects Committee. Research conducted in collaboration with other organizations may also have to be

approved by their ethical review board. Research that poses more than minimal risk to participants, or involves a protected population, may also require approval by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Any research involving the use of non-human animal subjects requires approval by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The faculty advisor should be listed as the principal investigator, and the student should work closely with their advisor to complete the form and submit it to the appropriate committee/board. The IRB and IACUC require documentation of completion of federally approved training modules on the protection of research subjects by both students and their faculty mentors. **Collection of any data on human or non-human animal subjects prior to obtaining the appropriate approvals is an ethical violation and can result in dismissal from the program.** (See the university [Committee for Human Subjects](#) or [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) websites for application procedures and forms for departmental and university review).

□ **Register for thesis units.** (PSYCH 299).

Upon final approval by the thesis committee and human subjects committee(s), students should obtain a course permission number for thesis units from the Psychology Department office. Students must be advanced to candidacy prior to registering for thesis units.

□ **Conduct the research and write the final manuscript.**

During all steps of conducting the thesis research, students should communicate frequently with their faculty mentor. Once the data have been collected and analyzed, a final thesis manuscript can be written. This manuscript will include five main chapters: 1) an introduction chapter (comprised of an overview of the purpose and rationale for the study and a clear statement of the research question); 2) a literature review chapter (comprised of a clearly organized description of the relevant literature related to the proposed study); 3) a method chapter (comprised of a technological description of all procedures used in the study); 4) a results chapter (comprised of a description of all outcomes, including relevant figures and tables); and 5) a discussion chapter (comprised of a critical analysis of the research findings and identification of particular strengths and weaknesses of the study).

Similar to the proposal writing process, students should expect to submit

several

drafts and revisions prior to obtaining approval from the faculty mentor to schedule a final defense meeting.

□ **Defend the final thesis.**

Once the thesis chair has approved the final draft of the thesis manuscript, a thesis defense meeting may be scheduled. Students are responsible for contacting all committee members to arrange a meeting time and to reserve an appropriate location for the meeting (e.g., the Psychology Department conference room). They should also inform the Psychology Department staff of the title of the proposal, names of committee members, and the time, date, and location of the defense.

Students should deliver a hard copy and an electronic copy of the document to each committee member at least two weeks prior to the defense date. Once again, actual procedures for defending the thesis will differ by faculty chair. Often, students present a brief (20 minutes) overview of the thesis, then answer questions posed by committee members. Generally, final defenses require approximately one hour. Based on students' responses to questions and the quality of the written document, the committee may choose to approve or disapprove the thesis. Approved theses may require revisions, and committee members may reserve the right to see the revised document, or have a second defense meeting, prior to granting formal approval.

□ **Obtain final committee approval.**

Once the committee has approved the final version of the thesis manuscript, all committee members should sign the electronic thesis approval form. This is sent out by the Division of Graduate Studies once you have registered your intent to submit your thesis that semester (see DGS website: <https://fresnostate.app.box.com/s/w4161v4w7csi0ts5druszieps68bblo7>). Students should make sure that the format of the document is consistent with the APA Publication Manual and university standards (i.e., the thesis template). The Division of Graduate Studies Thesis Office offers thesis consultants to assist students with final manuscript preparation. The final approval form and formatting templates can be found on the [Division of Graduate Studies website](#).

- **Submit a copy of the final draft to the Division of Graduate Studies for review.**

The Office of Graduate Studies reviews all thesis documents for consistency with formatting guidelines. The final thesis draft should be submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies following the directions provided (a link to instructions on how to electronically upload the thesis document will be sent once all committee members have completed the electronic approval form). If there are problems with the manuscript format, the Division of Graduate Studies Thesis Office will request changes and assign a deadline for completion.

NOTE: The due date for submission of the *final* draft to the Division of Graduate Studies is well in advance of the end of the semester. Students should visit the Division of Graduate Studies website for specific deadlines.

- **Submit a *Master's Degree Clearance* form.**

The deadline for this will be listed on the Division of Graduate Studies website. It must be initiated by the student and then signed by the thesis advisor, program coordinator, and all relevant administrators. The student may not turn in the final form (this will be done by the department).

GRADUATION PROCEDURES

Students must have a graduation application on file in the Division of Graduate Studies in order to graduate. Degrees are not granted automatically.

Students must have a previously approved *Petition of Advancement to Candidacy* on file in the Division of Graduate Studies, a minimum grade point average of 3.0, and permission from the graduate coordinator to apply for graduation.

Students need to file a *Master's Degree Application* form, pay a \$35.00 non-refundable application fee, file a *Master's Degree Clearance* form, and submit a final draft of the committee-approved thesis.

For the *Master's Degree Application* form, the deadline is the first two weeks of the fall and spring semesters, or the first three weeks of the first summer session. For the final draft of the thesis, the deadline is approximately the 9th week of instruction. For the *Master's Degree Clearance* form, the deadline is the last day

of the semester or final summer term. Semester specific deadlines can be found on the Division of Graduate Studies Website.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

To qualify for the Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis, students must complete the following requirements established by the Division of Graduate Studies and the Department of Psychology.

- All degree requirements (coursework, practicum, and thesis) must be completed within a period of five years.
- University policy requires graduate students to be continuously enrolled in the university every fall and spring semester until the awarding of the degree. If students are given permission to graduate during the summer, they must maintain continuous enrollment in that term as well.
- Under specific circumstances (e.g., an educationally relevant or career-oriented opportunity, or extenuating personal circumstances), students may be exempt from registering for any units in the program for one semester only. This must be done with prior approval from the student's primary advisor and the program coordinator. Any more than one semester without enrollment (fall and spring only) will result in disqualification of the student and removal from the Master's Degree Program.
- Credit by examination may not apply toward the Master's Degree Program.
- Units taken as part of an undergraduate program may not apply toward the Master's Degree Program.
- No course used to obtain another Master's degree in this or any other department may be included in the program.
- Advancement to Candidacy must be obtained prior to the semester in which the student registers for thesis units.
- The student must attain a grade of B or higher in PSYCH 244.
- The student must have completed all of the coursework for credit (except practicum – this is a credit/no-credit class).

- The student must have passed the Psychology department Graduate Writing Examination
- The thesis must be completed and approved by the thesis chair and committee.
- The student must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Once a student has advanced to candidacy, they must achieve a grade of B or better in all graduate coursework.
- The maximum allowable load is 16 units when one or more courses in the 200 series are included. Requests for exceptions to this policy must be addressed to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.

PROBATION, DISQUALIFICATION, AND GRIEVANCES

ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMIC PROBATION (AAP)

Students enrolled in Master's degree programs may be placed on AAP for the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain the minimum GPA of 3.0 required by Title 5, California State Education Code;
- Withdrawal from a substantial portion of a program for two successive terms or for any three terms;
- Repeated failure to make progress toward the Master's degree; or
- Failure to comply with an academic requirement or regulation that is routine for all students or for a defined group of students.
- Upon the report of any of the above, a Graduate Evaluator will notify the program coordinator that a permanent note of probation will be placed on the student's transcript unless the Advisor asks in writing, by the specified due date, that the student instead be granted "informal probation." The department will be asked to monitor the student's progress in meeting the requisite goals for continuing toward achievement of the degree.

ACADEMIC DISQUALIFICATION

A student will be disqualified from the program if at any time he/she has earned two grades of D or below in required coursework. A student may retake one course in which he/she has obtained a grade of D or F, although there is no grade replacement in graduate coursework. If the student earns another D in any required coursework, he/she automatically will be disqualified from the program.

- Students are automatically disqualified if their cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0.
- Two semesters of AAP will lead to dismissal from the program.
- Students who are not enrolled (i.e., registered for units) for more than one fall or spring semester will be administratively dropped from the Master's Degree program.
- Students who have exceeded the 5-year limit set by the Division of Graduate Studies and who fail to make sufficient progress toward graduation may, upon agreement of the program coordinator and the department's graduate committee, be disqualified from the program.

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

Violations of university policy (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, sexual harassment) or the code of ethics for psychologists (e.g., conduct of research without proper approval or consent, breach of confidentiality) will be reported to the appropriate university administrators (i.e., Department Chair, Department Graduate Committee, Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students). These violations may result in disciplinary action, including probation or disqualification from the program. Students should review university policy/legal statements ([Code of Conduct](#)), as well as APA and BACB Ethics.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

A student-related dispute could arise from a decision or action in the course of official duty by a member of the faculty, staff, or administration of the California State University, Fresno. The decision or action could be alleged as discriminatory, contrary to accepted academic relationships and procedures, or

restrictive of the rights of any student of the university to fair treatment. The purpose of the dispute resolution process is to provide a mechanism for students to have a third party review the situation.

The student must first make a good faith effort to resolve the matter informally by talking with the individual concerned. If these resolutions are unsatisfactory, the student should pursue further informal resolution by talking with the individual's direct supervisor or department chair, and if necessary, the director of the unit or college/school dean. If resolution is not achieved through informal procedures, the student should contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students for assistance.

A detailed description of the dispute resolution process can be found at: <http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/senate/documents/APM%20415%20recvd%202.16.18.pdf>

Practicum Training

Our practicum is part of our ABA Program. Students should complete at least 1500 hours of supervised experience under this model. ABA graduate students conduct their supervised practicum hours through our university-based clinical services ([ABA Services @ Fresno State](#)). Continued inclusion in this supervised practicum experience is contingent on the conditions set out in the contract established between the supervising BCBAs and the student. Any form of gross misconduct or repeated failure to perform satisfactorily (as outlined in the contract and/or organizational policies) may result in removal from this placement. Under these conditions, students would be responsible for finding an alternative placement and supervising BCBA, which would result in a no-credit grade in that semester's practicum class. Any form of additional outside employment, outside of supervised practicum experience, is strongly discouraged.

General Requirements

All students are expected to accrue experience each semester and summer that they are enrolled in the program. During the first 2 years of the program, students work at their practicum sites and are not allowed to exceed 20 hours of paid time per week at their practicum sites during the academic year. Students are expected to work with their practicum placement to establish a schedule that will meet these requirements.

Practicum placements are intended to give students a broad range of behavior analytic experience, guided by the BACB Curriculum outline. Experiences include the following domains:

- Conducting assessment activities related to the need for behavioral interventions
- Designing, implementing, and monitoring behavior intervention programs
- Overseeing the implementation of behavior intervention programs by others
- Other activities normally performed by a behavior analyst that are directly related to behavior analysis, such as attending planning meetings regarding the behavior analysis program, researching the literature related to the program, and talking to individuals about the program; plus any additional activities related to oversight of behavioral programming, such as behavior analyst supervision issues or evaluation of behavior analysts' performance.
- Only activities that are considered behavior analytic in nature may count toward program requirements. Examples of activities that are not appropriate as experience activities include: attending meetings with little or no behavior analytic content, providing interventions that are not based in behavior analysis, doing non-behavior analytic administrative activities, or any other activities that are not directly related to behavior analysis. Details and updates on BACB requirements are available from the BACB website ([BACB Handbook](#)) and will be discussed frequently during the Practicum course meetings.
- Students may begin accruing supervised experience hours after attending the first class meeting of their graduate coursework.

Practicum Course

All students must register for one unit of practicum credit each semester for the first two years and attend a practicum class once per week. Although practicum supervision, issues, and competencies may be discussed during the practicum class, this hour of class time does not count toward your supervision hours, as it is a course requirement. Attendance at the practicum course is essential for ensuring compliance with, and relevant documentation of, the 1500 hours experience and mastery of all competencies required for eligibility to sit the BCBA exam. Additional practicum-related activities are expected to occur outside of the practicum class for approximately 10 additional hours per week. These include indirect and non-billable activities related to practicum training and professional development.

Practicum Supervision

Practicum Placement

Students will have the opportunity to request a preferred area of focus during their initial practicum training; however, this is not guaranteed, and students will be encouraged to gain experience across many areas of ABA services throughout their time. The various practicum experiences can be viewed here: [ABA Service Areas](#)

Supervision Requirements

Supervised practicum hours can begin as soon as the student has started their graduate coursework and has a supervision contract signed by each BACB providing supervision. Further supervision requirements are provided in the practicum class syllabus and discussed throughout practicum meetings. Adherence to these standards is the shared responsibility of both the student and the supervisor. Any issues or difficulties that arise during the supervision process should be discussed with the practicum course instructor, the relevant BCBA (whenever possible), and, when necessary, the program coordinator. These requirements can also be viewed in the [BCBA Handbook](#).

Attendance

At the beginning of the semester, a practicum schedule will be agreed upon between the student and the on-site practicum supervisor(s). Students will be expected to adhere to this schedule unless prior arrangements are made with the supervisor. Failure to attend scheduled practicum hours without notifying the on-site supervisor in advance is inexcusable and will result in disciplinary action, including possible loss of placement for the semester. All hours missed due to illness, family emergencies, conferences, etc., must be made up in accordance with the policies of the practicum site. All vacation time or planned time off must be requested according to site policies and approved by the supervising behavior analyst.

All supervision should be documented and tracked using the forms provided during the practicum class.

Ethical Behavior and Other Issues of Professionalism

Students are expected to adhere at all times to APA ethics, guidelines for responsible conduct set forth by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board, and the regulations set out by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations (<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/>). Of particular importance is the issue of confidentiality with regard to the names of children, parents, teachers, and other personnel. Engagement in unethical conduct will result in a review of the

incident(s) with program faculty and may potentially result in disqualification from the program.

Any major or repeated minor infractions of ethical standards or site-specific policies will result in a written warning that will be placed in the staff member's personnel file. Repeat occurrences may result in removal from the site and possible removal from the graduate program. Students should conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times while at the practicum site and are encouraged to check with the practicum supervisor regarding specific guidelines such as appropriate dress. Students are expected to be cooperative, tactful, and punctual at all times. Students should learn to advocate for their clients' needs and to work with other members of the community.

BACB Documentation

Supervisors and supervisees should review and sign a supervision contract at the start of supervised experience and again upon further revision of the contracts. The practicum supervisor will ensure that this is in place during the first week of the first semester. Students and supervisors are responsible for collecting documentation of supervision for each supervisory period on forms provided in practicum class. In addition, supervisors and practicum instructors are responsible for collecting copies of documentation for each one-week period. The BACB reserves the right to request this documentation at any time following an individual's application to take the certification exam. These forms can be found on the BACB website and will be reviewed and provided to students in practicum class.

Professional Development

All students should play an active role in furthering their education, experience, and professional development. There are many opportunities to do this within the ABA program, the Psychology Department, the university, the surrounding community, and the broader field of Behavior Analysis (on a state, national, and when possible, international level). This can often be facilitated by the relevant faculty and can be achieved through a number of related opportunities. In general, all faculty expect students to participate in the continued improvement of our program.

ABA CLUB

The ABA club is a student organization with an official faculty advisor (although all faculty may be involved in any major decisions regarding the club). As such students hold all of the officer roles and are responsible for the health, vitality, and development of the club. Major club responsibilities include engaging undergraduate and graduate students in activities related to ABA, organizing and implementing the

Annual Fresno State ABA Conference in the fall semester, organizing the Spring Speaker, and putting on a job fair for undergraduate and graduate students, along with a number of community service providers and colleagues. More specific details will be provided at the ABA club meetings. Other club activities include social events, fundraisers, reading groups, and community outreach.

DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Students are expected to represent the ABA program, Psychology department, College of Science Math, and Fresno State in a positive and professional manner at all times. In addition, students should be actively engaged in the ABA program and the Psychology department, attending colloquia, meetings with visiting faculty, talks provided by faculty in the department, job talks, graduate student interview events, and any department trainings recommended for all graduate students.

Each academic year, students elect a representative to attend ABA Program meetings. This student's role is to represent the student body's views and communicate any relevant information to the student body.

A meeting of all ABA faculty and students will be organized each semester to provide updates and recruit feedback on a number of program issues. This will be held on campus at a time that will be suitable for as many people as possible and with advanced notice to amend schedules whenever possible.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES

It is strongly advised that all students become members of the California Association for Behavior Analysis (CalABA), the Association for Behavior Analysis, International (ABAI), and other relevant behavior analytic organizations. This not only provides opportunities to be more broadly involved with the field of Behavior Analysis but facilitates attendance and participation in their annual conferences (conference fees are often greatly reduced for students and particularly student members). Ideally, students will present posters or papers at these conferences.

Students are expected to be active participants in our Fresno State ABA Club. This provides students with opportunities to network with other ABA programs, other students on campus who are interested in ABA, Fresno State ABA Alumni, and well-respected speakers at our annual conference (organized by the ABA Club and faculty). Active involvement in the ABA Club and other campus events can help offset conference expenses and provide many opportunities for professional development.

Other funding sources are listed below:

STUDENT ADVISING

All faculty members are committed to providing academic and social support to all students in the program. In addition, students are encouraged to engage in independent inquiry before requesting assistance from their major professor, the program coordinator, or another faculty member. Students are expected to engage in self-management and to attempt to acquire the necessary information on their own first. Therefore, students should seek answers to their questions from available sources (e.g., the student handbook, department or university websites, BACB website, syllabi, journals, etc.). If the information is not available from existing sources or is unclear, students should arrange a meeting with their mentor or program coordinator.

MODEL OF ADVISING

The ABA program operates within a mentorship model of student training. During the first semester, graduate students will begin their assigned mentor's research group (lab). This is typically decided at the point of admission, based on the fit of research interests, style of working, and available placements. Typically, this faculty member will advise the student's thesis research (usually as the thesis committee chair) and provide general advisement on the thesis process and other program activities. Students may also work on research projects with other faculty members upon mutual agreement by all faculty involved. Students may change thesis advisors during the course of the program if all involved parties approve the arrangement.

The program coordinator will communicate regularly via e-mail and program meetings regarding general issues of course sequences and practicum placements. Advising on specific course content should be addressed to the faculty member teaching the class. Specific practicum advisement should be directed toward the on-site supervisor and/or the instructor for the practicum course.

EVALUATION & FEEDBACK

To provide consistent feedback to students, encourage timely completion of program requirements, student performance is evaluated across all program domains at the end of every semester. This happens in a one-on-one meeting with the student's thesis advisor, and with prior input from other relevant faculty and supervisors.

Additionally, students are given the opportunity to provide feedback via their faculty advisor so that adjustments may be made to better meet the intellectual and professional needs of students and to improve program quality. A copy of the formal evaluation is provided to each student and a copy is kept by the advising faculty and program coordinator.

COURSEWORK / TEACHING

Student performance on coursework will be evaluated using the criteria included in the course syllabi. Faculty members are expected to provide timely feedback to each student on progress toward meeting criteria so that students have the opportunity to improve their standing in the course prior to receiving the final grade.

Students will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the instructor at the end of the semester in which a particular course is taken. This feedback is not provided to the instructor until after final grades have been assigned. However, faculty members are encouraged to solicit anonymous feedback from students during the course of the semester so that appropriate ongoing adjustments may be made to course content, format, or requirements.

Instructors will provide the faculty advisor with a brief summary of each student's performance at the end of the semester (to allow it to be included in the student's evaluation meeting).

PRACTICUM / SUPERVISION

Practicum supervisors will be expected to provide weekly written feedback on student performance using the standard form. In addition to weekly supervision meetings, all students must meet with their BACB supervisors approximately every 100 hours to review overall performance and progress. Students will also have the opportunity to provide feedback to the practicum course instructor at the end of the semester (and preferably during the semester, as well). Practicum supervisors will provide a brief summary to the program coordinator at the end of each semester (to allow it to be included in the student evaluation meeting).

RESEARCH / MENTORSHIP

The thesis chair will evaluate students' research progress. Although the program mandates no formalized mechanism for monitoring progress, students should ensure that they meet regularly with their mentor and solicit feedback on research progress. All appointed faculty will hold regular research meetings for advisees, but it is each

student's responsibility to seek feedback and input from their advisor throughout the research process. Faculty members are also encouraged to solicit input from students regarding the quality of mentorship and necessary adjustments to meet student needs.

Each year, the College of Science and Math (CSM) provides Faculty-Sponsored Student Research Awards that students can apply for in collaboration with their faculty advisor. These can help to cover the cost of research materials or other expenses. Students should discuss this with their advisor at the time of application. [FSSRAs](#)

PROGRAM EVALUATION

In addition to ongoing opportunities for feedback (for instructors and supervisors), students will be asked to complete an exit evaluation of their experience in the program. This will include all aspects of the program outlined in this handbook.

FINANCIAL AID

Please visit the university's financial aid office for general information and a discussion of your specific situation.

<https://studentaffairs.fresnostate.edu/financialaid/index.html>

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Department of Psychology
<http://fresnostate.edu/csm/psych/>
- California State University, Fresno
<http://www.fresnostate.edu>
- Division of Graduate Studies
<http://fresnostate.edu/academics/gradstudies/>
- University Human Subjects Committee
<http://fresnostate.edu/academics/grants/proposal/policies/irb.html>
- Behavior Analysis Certification Board
<http://www.bacb.com>

- American Psychological Association
www.apa.org
- California Association for Behavior Analysis
<http://www.calaba.org>
- Association for Behavior Analysis
<http://www.abainternational.org>