M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis
Program Handbook
University of Michigan-Dearborn
College of Education, Health, & Human Services

2025

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn! Behavior analysis is a scientific approach to understanding behavior that focuses on describing, explaining, and predicting behavior, and examining the functional relationships between behavior and environmental events. Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the application of basic behavioral processes and principles, to address socially significant problems and issues, using scientific principles. Behavior analysts are the professional practitioners in the field of behavior analysis and use the science of behavior to assess the function of behavior, develop interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions. Behavior analysts are found across a variety of professions implementing the scientific principles of behavior to change behavior across different disciplines and environments.

You are embarking on a robust program that seeks to engage students in the applied and experimental domains of behavior analysis through coursework, applied experiential learning, and research. The program includes training in the principles of behavior, behavior change procedures, conceptual issues in behavior analysis, experimental analysis of behavior, behavioral assessment, research methodology, ethics, and contemporary issues in the field.

Through coursework firmly grounded in theory, with an emphasis on the application of theory to practice, the program seeks to produce competent, science-focused practitioners who examine socially significant problems in a conceptually systematic manner.

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement

The mission of the M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn is for its graduates to develop an understanding of the depth, breadth, and scope of behavior analysis. Through coursework and practical experiences firmly rooted in the science of behavior, the program seeks to train highly skilled behavioral practitioners who utilize data-based, empirical approaches to develop socially valid and culturally responsive treatment for those they serve.

Program Objectives

1. Explain and describe the theory of behaviorism and its philosophical foundations;

2. Describe and provide examples of the critical concepts and principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA);

3. Describe and apply research methodology and measurement strategies used in the implementation and management of ABA;

3. Describe and apply the principles of ABA in relation to individuals within a range of clinical, educational, pre-vocational/vocational, home, and community settings;

4. Describe and apply behavioral assessment procedures, including identification of target behaviors, developing operational definitions, conducting functional behavior assessment/functional analysis, and interpretation of assessment data;

5. Accurately measure, graphically display, visually analyze, and interpret behavioral data, including functional analysis data;

6. Describe ethical issues related to ABA service delivery;

7. Describe and apply principles of experimental design, including single-subject research methodology;

8. Develop behavior change procedures based upon the results of a behavioral assessment that are socially significant, client-informed, and culturally responsive;

9. Identify and describe effective supervisory and performance management practices utilizing behavior analytic principles;

10. Define and identify the basic principles of learning;

11. Describe applied interventions in terms of the basic concepts and principles of behavior analysis;

12. Describe and explain contemporary issues in the field of ABA and the applications of the science of behavior to matters of social significance.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Structure

The program consists of 36 credit hours of coursework, practical experiential learning, and an applied project. Significant emphasis is placed on a firm foundation in the principles of behavior and the application of those principles to a variety of contexts. Also integrated within all coursework is additional training and BACB test preparation with Behavior Development Solutions modules.

Training Model

The program's training philosophy is based on the scientist-practitioner model in which students in training as practitioners of applied behavior analysis be provided with a strong foundation in research and practice in the science of behavior. Students are trained as clinicians who use research and embrace the scientific approach to influence and guide their practice. The program integrates theory (through coursework in the theoretical foundations of the science of behavior), practice (through supervised experiential opportunities in clinical settings), and research (through developing proficiency as a consumer of research and by producing research).

Program Outcome

Upon successful completion of all university coursework, supervised professional experience in an ABA clinical setting (separate from M.S. in ABA program requirements), and passing the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) examination, students are eligible to apply to the BACB for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and the State of Michigan Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA) credentials.

Program Faculty

Kim Killu, Ph.D., LLP, BCBA-D, LBA, Professor of Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis: Dr. Killu has been a faculty member at the University of Michigan-Dearborn since 1996. She obtained her Ph.D. in Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis from The Ohio State University. Dr. Killu developed the program, directs the program, and serves as the academic advisor for all students.

Lindsay Croghan, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA, Clinical Assistant Professor: Dr. Croghan joined the program in 2025. She obtained her Ph.D. in Behavior Analysis from Western Michigan University. Dr. Croghan primarily directs and oversees the practicum placements and applied project requirements in the program.

Angela Capuano, Ph.D., LP, BCBA-D, LBA, LEO Lecturer I: Dr. Capuano serves as an Instructor in the Applied Behavior Analysis program. She obtained her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Bowling Green State University.

Gary Carone, MS, LLP, LMSW, BCBA, LBA, LEO Intermittent Lecturer: Mr. Carone has been teaching in the Applied Behavior Analysis program since 2022. He is a graduate of the Clinical Behavioral Psychology program at Eastern Michigan University where he obtained his ABA training. He also provides Registered Behavior Technician training and has done so at the University of Michigan-Dearborn since 2017.

Admission

Admission to the M.S. in ABA program is offered in the fall semester of each academic year. The application priority deadline for all materials is March 15; the hard deadline for applications will be May 15. Applications submitted by these deadlines will be reviewed as they are received. Class sizes are limited so applicants are strongly encouraged to apply and have all application materials submitted before the posted deadline.

Admission Requirements

The minimum requirements for program admission are as follows:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
- Official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended
- 3.0 GPA or higher on submitted transcripts
- Two professional letters of recommendation
- Personal statement

The Office of International Affairs lists additional requirements for international students.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is set by the University of Michigan Board of Regents each year. Information regarding tuition and fees is posted and updated in the spring/summer of each year for the subsequent academic year. The University also provides students with a Graduate Tuition Calculator.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available from a variety of sources. Students should seek out the Office of Financial Aid for further information and assistance.

Academic Advising

Upon admission to the program, each student is required to meet with the program director to a) discuss the process of obtaining the BCBA credential; b) to review the program's requirements; and c) to develop an individualized Plan of Study. The program director serves as the academic advisor for all students in the program. Students should meet with their academic advisor at least once per academic year, or more frequently if necessary. Students are encouraged to review their academic progress through Degree Works. Academic advisors work with students from their admission to the program through completion, providing assistance with program and degree requirements, registration, navigating through college and university policy, or directing students toward other resources.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The M.S. in ABA program is a 36-credit hour program consisting of coursework, experiential learning opportunities, and a culminating, applied project. Courses are offered in a prescribed sequence and summer enrollment is necessary to be able to complete the requirements of the program. Courses are offered on campus during the evening hours. All students begin the program in the fall semester. If a student is not able to enroll in a given semester, the time to complete all degree requirements and/or financial eligibility may be affected because all required courses are offered only once per academic year.

Required Coursework

EDC 506   Applied Behavior Analysis I: Principles of Behavior* (3 credits)

EDC 507   Applied Behavior Analysis II: Behavior Change Procedures* (3 credits)

EDFP 507   Applied Behavior Analysis II Practicum* (1 credit)

EDC 516   Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis* (3 credits)

EDFP 516   Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum* (1 credit)

EDC 580   Behavioral Assessment* (3 credits)

EDFP 580   Behavioral Assessment Practicum* (1 credit)

EDC 621   Experimental Analysis of Behavior (3 credits)

EDC 622   Science & Human Behavior (3 credits)

EDC 623   Ethics in Applied Behavior Analysis* (3 credits)

EDC 625   Contemporary Issues for ABA Practitioners (3 credits)

EDC 634   Behavioral Principles for Supervision, Training, & Performance Management (3 credits)

EDK 697   ABA Applied Project I: Proposal Development & IRB Approval (1 credit)

EDK 698   ABA Applied Project II: Data Collection (1 credit)

EDK 699   ABA Applied Project III: Written Product & Oral Presentation (1 credit)

* Prerequisite to Applied Project I, II, & III

Elective Coursework

The completion of <u>one elective course</u> is required in the program. Students may select from the following approved electives:

EDC 508   Introduction to Developmental Disabilities (3 credits)

EDC 514   Early Childhood Education Special Needs (3 credits)

EDC 539   Child Maltreatment and Trauma (3 credits)

EDC 561   Educating the Exceptional Child (3 credits)

EDT 530   Assistive Technology (3 credits)

Any deviation from the list of approved electives must be approved by the program director and the Professional Standards Committee.

Experiential Learning

Students have three experiential learning opportunities throughout the program:

> EDFP 507   Applied Behavior Analysis II Practicum (taken concurrently with EDC 507)

> EDFP 516   Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum (taken concurrently with EDC 516)

> EDFP 580   Behavioral Assessment Practicum (taken concurrently with EDC 580)

In order to complete practica requirements, students are required to be employed in an ABA setting and with access to a supervising BCBA. The University provides additional supervision for practica experiences. All practica experiences are completed at a student's place of employment. Time spent completing the requirements for the practica cannot count toward the supervised hours required for the BCBA credential. In addition, no time spent completing the practica requirements should be completed as part of a student's job responsibilities and should be done so "off the clock."

Applied Project

Students are required to complete an applied project based upon concepts and principles in the field of applied behavior analysis. The Applied Project is a culminating work of scholarship with the purpose of developing competence in defining a research problem, designing an appropriate methodology to address the problem, conducting an investigation, and reporting results. The Applied Project is a systematic investigation and scholarly research project that involves all dimensions of the coursework covered in the M.S. in ABA program. Students must have an overall GPA of 3.0 and have completed the following courses with a grade of C or better before pursuing the Applied Project: EDC 506; EDC 507; EDC 516; EDC 580; EDC 623; EDFP 507; EDFP 516;

EDFP 580. Permission of the instructor is also required for registration. Completion of the applied project requires enrollment in three 1-credit courses across three separate semesters. Students will be evaluated at each of the three stages of the applied project. Grading for each stage is pass/fail. Students are strongly encouraged to develop an applied project that can be submitted for publication consideration.

Students will work under the guidance and oversight of a doctoral-level core faculty member for the completion of the Applied Project. Students must also select a second, associated faculty for consultation and involvement with relevant expertise in the area of investigation. The associated faculty need not necessarily be a faculty member in the ABA program. Thus, a committee of two individuals is formed. Students are encouraged to consider Applied Project topics throughout their coursework and to develop any initial ideas or preliminary conceptualization of a problem to investigate. Consulting with any program faculty member to develop further these ideas and conceptualizations prior to the Applied Project is highly recommended.

Students may choose to complete the requirements for the Applied Project at their place of employment (with appropriate employer approval). No investigation for the project may be conducted during a client's treatment time or a student's scheduled time of employment. Project participants (i.e., clients) may not be billed directly nor may the insurance of any client be billed for any assessment or treatment carried out during their Applied Project participation. Routine clinical work is not acceptable for the Applied Project. That is, the project must address questions that are not typically addressed through daily clinical work.

Behavior Development Solutions (BDS) Modules

The Applied Behavior Analysis program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn has contracted with Behavior Development Solutions (BDS) to offer students access to their curriculum supplement and exam preparation tools. BDS offers a rigorous and thorough training program related to all elements covered in the program's coursework and the certification exam. Throughout this course, you will progress through the assigned BDS modules to not only assist you in learning the course material, but also to achieve fluency in the content in preparation for the certification exam. Completion of the assigned BDS modules is required for this course and your final course grades will, in part, be based upon your performance on these modules.

Time Limit to Complete Degree

Students are expected to complete all requirements for the M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis within five calendar years.

Graduation

Upon successful completion of all program requirements, students are eligible for graduation. Students should apply for graduation when they register for their last semester of classes. Students must also complete the Exit Survey. The purpose of the Exit Survey is to provide the College with feedback on the program, feedback that serves as a guide for future program development.

It is important to note that applying for graduation is not to be confused with signing up to participate in the graduation ceremony.

Transcripts & Diplomas

The Registrar's Office provides assistance to students with official transcripts, verification of enrollment/grades, and diplomas.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Integrity

The University of Michigan-Dearborn values academic honesty and integrity. Each student has a responsibility to understand, accept, and comply with the University's standards of academic conduct as set forth by the Code of Academic Conduct, as well as policies established by the schools and colleges. Cheating, collusion, misconduct, fabrication, and plagiarism are considered serious offenses. Violations will not be tolerated and may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the University.

Students should review the Academic Code of Conduct.

Student Rights and Code of Conduct

When students choose to accept admission to the University of Michigan-Dearborn, they accept the rights and responsibilities of membership in the University's academic and social community. Issues related to Academic Rights, Student Rights, Student Conduct, Scope of Violations, Resolution Process, and Sanctions are available through the Student Rights and Code of Conduct web page.

Academic Standing

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of B (3.0 on a 4.0 point scale) or better to remain in good academic standing.

Note that the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) requires that students earn a grade of "C" or better in all courses. Any course completed with a grade below "C" must be repeated. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 in any given semester will be placed on academic probation and notified in writing by the College's Office of Student Success. Failure to raise one's GPA to a 3.0 or above after more than two semesters, at any point during their program, will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Students should review the Academic Actions and Exceptions as put forth by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Readmission

Students who were previously enrolled but have not registered for any courses for one calendar year or more are automatically placed on inactive status. To enroll, inactive students must apply for Graduate Readmission. Note that the application for readmission is not the same process as when students originally applied to the program.

Petitions

Students may petition to request an exception to an academic rule or policy. Examples of petitions may include: taking an elective course that is not on the program's list of approved electives; dropping a course past the drop deadline, retroactively withdrawing from the semester, taking an off campus course, etc.

Transfer Credit

The University maintains specific requirements for its transfer credit policy. Only in consultation with the program director, select graduate coursework earned at another accredited institution may be transferred toward the requirements for the M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis degree. The student should provide the program director with an official transcript with the final course grade, a copy of the course catalog description of the course from the other institution, and a course syllabus. Students may transfer in no more than six credit hours and the hours may not have been used for the completion of another degree.

Incident and Complaint Reporting

The University of Michigan-Dearborn is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, welcoming and responsive environment for all students, faculty, staff and visitors on campus. The university has one central area to report incidents of discrimination, harassment, hate, bias, sexual assault, instances of concern, safety and campus community wellbeing, student conduct issues and grade grievances. Reporting crimes directly to the police department is encouraged. Calls to the police department are handled immediately.

Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office

The Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office (ECRT) facilitates and supports the University's efforts to ensure equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.

LINKS to ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Registration Timetable and **Drop/Add Policies**: Students should consult the Registration Timetable for their specific day to register. Likewise, specific deadlines are posted for adding and dropping courses during the course of the semester.

Overrides: The Office of Student Success provides registration overrides. Permission of instructor is also required.

Tuition: The tuition and fees schedule is updated yearly.

Scholarships/Financial Aid: The Office of Financial Aid is available to assist students with resources for financing their degree programs.

UM-D Library: University of Michigan-Dearborn students have access to the physical and electronic resources at the Mardigian Library. Students also have access to the resources available at the Flint and Ann Arbor campuses.

Computer Access On and Off Campus: Information Technology Services (ITS) is available to provide support for students' on and off campus support.

Email: All faculty, staff, and students at the University of Michigan-Dearborn are provided with an email account. Students should use their UMICH email account for all correspondence related to university or course matters. The university email account should be checked regularly as it is the only address that will be used for communication by the university, college, department, program, and faculty.

Bookstore: Textbooks for courses are available through the campus bookstore found in the Renick University Center.

LINKS to CAMPUS RESOURCES

UMID Card (MCard): Currently registered students can obtain a new/replacement photo ID card at the Information Desk at the Renick University Center. The ID card is necessary for several campus operations such as the library or ITS services.

Parking: Students should obtain a parking permit and park in designated student spaces.

Instructional Technology Services: ITS provides computing services and assistance on and off campus.

Canvas Support: Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) used across campus. Students will need to access Canvas for all courses within the program.

Counseling and Psychological Services: CAPS offers in person and remote counseling services, at no charge, to students. An after-hours crisis phone line is also available.

Disability and Accessibility Services: The University strives to make learning accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability, please contact Disability Services who will be able to assist with reasonable accommodations. Students will need to register with Disability Services each semester they are enrolled as soon as they have their schedule for the term. Disability Services can be reached at 313-593-5430 or disabilityservices@umich.edu.

Department of Public Safety: Campus Safety is available 24/7 to provide assistance. They may be contacted at 313-593-5333. For emergency assistance contact 911.

CEHHS Office of Student Success: The College's Office of Student Success (OSS) is central to the supports provided to students and faculty.

Career Services: The Office of Career Services Career Services provides assistance to students and alumni with career exploration and planning, job preparation, and job search skill development.

LINKS to BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS RESOURCES

Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB)

BCBA Handbook

BACB 6th Edition Test Content Outline (TCO)

State of Michigan/Licensing and Regulatory Affairs for Behavior Analysts

Association for Behavior Analysis International

Association of Professional Behavior Analysts

Behavior Analysis Association of Michigan

B.F. Skinner Foundation

Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies

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