

The Virginia Applied Behavior Analysis Consortium Administrative Manual

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Applied Behavior Analysis Consortium



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Program Description

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a discipline devoted to understanding human behavior and to bringing about improvements in behavior and quality of life that are significant to the individuals involved. ABA does this through application of empirically validated, scientific methodology to problems and solutions. ABA has applications in general and special education at all levels; business and industry; therapy for individuals with autism and other disabilities; treatment of psychiatric disorders; family relationship counseling; general and specialty medicine, including geriatrics; and numerous other areas.

The Virginia Applied Behavior Analysis (VA-ABA) Consortium is comprised of four universities: George Mason University, Lynchburg College, Old Dominion University, and Virginia Commonwealth University. The Consortium was formed to deliver coursework approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB) via distance learning modalities by the member institutions. This allows individuals from across the state to participate in the Consortium. Participating universities also may have additional ABA programs available.

The VA-ABA Consortium's primary goal is to provide educators, potential educators, and related professionals with instruction in ABA that will broaden the range of empirically-supported teaching methodologies used to meet the academic, social, and behavioral learning needs of diverse students. The VA-ABA Consortium's secondary goal is to provide professionals with the educational and experiential requirements needed to complete the national BACB® Examination to become Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

Definitions

- A. "Member institution" refers to any one of the following universities: George Mason University, Lynchburg College, Old Dominion University, or Virginia Commonwealth University.
- B. "Home institution" is the member institution at which the participating student is enrolled.
- C. "Offering institution" is the member institution offering the course.

SECTION I:

VA-ABA Consortium Objectives, Coursework, and Supervised Experience

Learning Objectives

The coursework offered by the VA-ABA Consortium provides students with knowledge and activities that support the following learning objectives. Students who participate in the VA-ABA Consortium will:

1. Assess and utilize a range of empirically-supported teaching methodologies utilizing the principles of ABA that effectively meets the academic, communication, social, and adaptive learning needs of diverse students.
2. Design, implement, and monitor behavioral treatment programs utilizing the principles of ABA in schools, agencies, and training centers for people with and without disabilities.
3. Develop individualized programs that use the principles of ABA to support and enhance learning across environments and across areas of development and need within the context of a student-focused team.
4. Evaluate the performance of the individual and make appropriate alterations to instruction and behavioral treatment in a timely manner.
5. Implement effective and ethical behavioral programming utilizing the principles of ABA that promotes improvement as well as the dignity of the person receiving intervention.
6. Identify, summarize, and apply information required for the BACB® Exam.

Coursework

The VA-ABA Consortium provides six, three credit courses for a total of 18 credits. The coursework is a BACB® approved course of study at each university. Content of the courses is derived from the BACB's® Task List, Guidelines for Responsible Conduct, and Disciplinary Standards. Courses offered through the Consortium have common syllabi and educational outcomes developed by faculty teaching each course. Courses are numbered according to the member institution usual numbering practice and students at respective institutions will enroll in those specified courses. The course descriptions are as follows:

Applied Behavior Analysis: Principles, Procedures, and Philosophy

3 Credits -- Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor.

This course focuses on basic principles and procedures of ABA; identification of factors that contribute to behavioral problems and improved performance; and procedures that can be used to minimize behavioral problems, improve performance, teach new behaviors, and increase probability of behaviors occurring under appropriate circumstances. ■

Applied Behavior Analysis: Empirical Bases -- 3 Credits

Prerequisite, co-requisite, or instructor permission: *Applied Behavior Analysis: Principles, Procedures, and Philosophy* or permission of the instructor.

This course focuses on basic content of ABA. This course teaches how to implement behavioral procedures and develop behavioral programs for clients with fundamental behavioral needs. ■

Ethics and Professional Conduct for Behavior Analysts -- 3 Credits

Prerequisite, co-requisite, or instructor permission: *Applied Behavior Analysis: Principles, Procedures, and Philosophy* or permission of the instructor.

This course provides a basis in Virginia Behavior Analyst Licensure law, the Behavior Analyst Certification Board's® Guidelines for Responsible Conduct and Disciplinary Standards, and professional conduct consistent with the practice of ABA. ■

Applied Behavior Analysis: Assessments and Interventions -- 3 Credits

Prerequisite, co-requisite, or instructor permission: *Applied Behavior Analysis: Principles, Procedures, and Philosophy* or permission of the instructor.

This course further expands on basic content of ABA and teaches how to implement behavioral procedures and develop behavioral programs for clients with fundamental behavioral needs. ■

Applied Behavior Analysis: Applications -- 3 Credits

Prerequisite, co-requisite, or instructor permission: *Applied Behavior Analysis: Principles, Procedures, and Philosophy*; or permission of the instructor.

This course expands capability to deal with more complex behavioral situations, enabling ability to relate to more sophisticated professional issues and environments. ■

Applied Behavior Analysis: Verbal Behavior -- 3 Credits

Prerequisite, co-requisite, or instructor permission: *Applied Behavior Analysis: Principles, Procedures, and Philosophy* or permission of the instructor.

This course further expands capability to deal with more complex behavioral situations, and enables students to relate to more sophisticated professional issues and environments. ■

Supervised Experience

The supervised experience is designed for participants to apply the theoretical knowledge of ABA learned throughout the academic coursework in home, school, and community settings. As stated in the BACB® Experience Standards, 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 his/her clients.

Each member institution must provide the supervised experience and has developed its own policies and procedures. As a part of the VA-ABA consortium, each member institution will ensure all supervisors meet the criteria of the BACB® including having the BCBA® or BCBA-D® credentials and any required training. Supervised experience activities are those designated by the BACB® and may include:

- Conducting assessments related to the need for behavioral intervention.
- Designing, implementing, and systematically monitoring skill-acquisition and behavior reduction programs.
- Overseeing the implementation of behavior analytic programs by others.
- Training, designing behavioral systems, and performance management.
- Other activities normally performed by a behavior analyst that are directly related to behavior analysis such as attending planning meetings regarding the behavior analytic program, researching the literature related to the program, and talking to individuals about the program.

SECTION II:

Consortium Policies and Procedures

Consortium Governance

The VA-ABA Consortium manages its activities through an executive committee composed of one faculty representative from each member institution. The executive committee makes decisions about program policies and procedures, curriculum, Consortium membership, technology and tools, and budget.

Each member institution has designated a consortium coordinator at the university who is responsible for:

- A. recruiting students;
- B. verifying the eligibility of its students to enroll in a Consortium course;
- C. working with other consortium coordinators of the member institutions to ensure that participating students are properly registered in both the home institution and the offering institution;
- D. reporting any changes in enrollment of its students to the offering institution;
- E. acting as the reporter and/or receiver of grades;
- F. procuring student accommodations such as interpreter services;
- G. managing student records;
- H. providing technology support; and
- I. providing reports as required.

Student Records

Each member maintains the records of those students enrolled in its program. Transcripts of coursework are made available to students through normal processes utilized by each member institution. Any questions a student has about his/her records should be directed to the university in which they are enrolled for courses.

Award of Certificate

There are different options as to the nature of how the program is offered at each university. Options include offering:

- 1. Coursework and supervised experience,
- 2. Post Master's Certificate of ABA, or
- 3. Master's with concentration in ABA.

The options available at each university are determined by the university. Not all options are available at each university. The student's home university is responsible for awarding the degree or certificate to those students who successfully complete the 18 hours of coursework and other prescribed requirements as determined by each university.

Faculty

All Consortium faculty must meet the qualifications and standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and those of the BACB®.

Course and Program Evaluation

Courses in this program are evaluated at the conclusion of the term in which they are offered. Students, regardless of location, complete evaluation forms related for each course, faculty member, and related support services. At the conclusion of each cohort's program (18 hours), members of the four institutions will conduct an assessment of the program. Results of these evaluations are reviewed and analyzed by the executive committee. Regular meetings of the executive committee will have a curricular and instructional review component, thus providing a regular mechanism to review program quality.

Course Management, Delivery, and Sequencing

- A. The 6 courses will be offered using a cohort model. The executive committee will determine start dates, duration, and number of students accepted to the cohort.
- B. The executive committee creates an academic year calendar annually that rotates the responsibility for offering the coursework among the member institutions.
- C. Classes meet according to the calendar of George Mason University unless otherwise specified by the Consortium or the instructor for each course.
- D. All courses are offered through George Mason University's learning management system (Blackboard) in order to provide consistency in the student experience. Students from other member institutions must complete an administrative admission form in order to be granted access to Mason's Blackboard system. This form does not constitute enrollment, registration, or application to George Mason University. No additional fee is charged for use of this system.
- E. Students will be required to use a web-based portfolio program determined by the Consortium to act as the repository for selected course assignments.
- F. The offering institution will provide, in advance, the course description, syllabus, and pre-requisite requirements.
- G. The home institution is responsible for determining which of its students are eligible to register for a Consortium course and for ensuring that the student meets the prerequisites for the course, whether through prior course work or appropriate degree level.
- H. Each member institution shall determine the appropriate academic approvals required for its students to register through the Consortium. Such approvals may include the advisor, dean, and/or department chair of the area of instruction.
- I. The academic regulations of the home institution shall govern decisions about changes in course registration of the participating student. These changes pertain to dropping and adding courses and withdrawal from enrollment. Students should check with the university where they are enrolled regarding pertinent registration dates.

- J. The instructor of the offering institution shall employ the offering institution's grading system when recording grades. Students should check with their instructor regarding grading policies for each course.
- K. The consortium coordinator of the offering institution will securely forward grades to each home institution as soon as possible after faculty member reports grades. The consortium coordinator of the home institution for each university shall post the reported grade to a student's record. Students may access their grades in accordance with the policies and practices of their home university.
- L. If a student receives an incomplete, they must fulfill the course requirements by the earlier date of the home university or offering university. Students who receive an incomplete should contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss the required date of completion. The instructor will communicate to the other member institutions when an incomplete is offered and the ongoing status of the resolution of the incomplete.
- M. Grade appeal policies shall be those of the offering institution.
- N. Accommodations, including interpreter services, are arranged, as appropriate, between the offering and the home institution. Services shall be paid for by the home institution.
- O. The official transcript of a student's Consortium work shall be kept only at their home institution.
- P. The home institution shall treat work taken through the Consortium as resident credit.
- Q. For federal and state reporting purposes, students will only be counted in the student enrollment statistics of the home institution.
- R. Only the home institution in which the student is enrolled awards degrees or certificates.

Award of Grants and Other Funds

In the event that grants or other funds are awarded to the Consortium in support of the consortial arrangement, statements of work will be developed and the distribution of funds will be approved by the member institutions participating in this consortial arrangement and addressed in a separate written agreement signed by each party. Any grant funds awarded to a member institution individually will not be distributed among the member institutions.

SECTION III:

Participant Eligibility and Procedures

Eligibility for Program Participation

Eligible participants for the Consortium must have a minimum of a master's degree from an accredited university (see below) that was (a) conferred in behavior analysis, education, or psychology, or (b) conferred in a degree program in which the candidate completed a BACB® approved course sequence. Master's degrees must be conferred by:

- A. a United States institution of higher education listed in the *CHEA Database of Institutions and Programs Accredited by Recognized U.S. Accrediting Organizations*; or
- B. a Canadian institution of higher education that is a member of the *Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada* or the *Association of Canadian Community Colleges*; or
- C. an institution of higher education located outside the United States or Canada that, at the time the applicant was enrolled and at the time the applicant graduated, maintained a standard of training equivalent to the standards of training of those institutions accredited in the United States as demonstrated by World Education Services or by a member of the *National Association of Credential Evaluation Services* (BACB.com, 2013).

It is the student's responsibility to ensure their degree meets the requirements of the BACB®. Some member institutions provide qualifying master's degree programs that would allow concurrent enrollment in both programs while others require a completed qualifying master's degree for entry into the VA-ABA Consortium. Check with the member institution nearest you for entrance requirements. The BACB® requires a qualifying master's degree as a prerequisite for the BACB® exam.

Application Process

There are a limited number of spaces available to Consortium participants in each annual cohort. For each cohort, the Consortium will determine the number of students to accept. Each participating university will accept an equal number of students unless determined otherwise by the Consortium. In the event a participating university does not fill its quota, another university may accept additional students. This is determined by the Consortium. Each university reviews applications and accepts participants following the Consortium and member institution guidelines. Deadlines are decided by the participating universities and published on the Consortium website. Incomplete applications are not considered. Those applications that meet criteria but are not accepted to begin a cohort are added to a waiting list and applicants may be contacted prior to the start of the cohort to fill any vacated spaces. Applications from individuals not selected to begin a cohort and fully completed applications received after the deadline are not carried over to the next cohort application process, but must be updated and resubmitted. To apply, each applicant must complete all of the following steps:

1. Apply to the VA-ABA Consortium using the common online application at <http://kihd.gmu.edu/training-grants/aba-consortium/aba-application-process>;
2. Wait for notification from the Consortium that the applicant is eligible to apply for the program at the participant's nearest home institution;
3. Contact the nearest home institution for application to the graduate or non-degree program at that institution and any other specific admission criteria; and
4. Await confirmation from the home institution that the participant has been accepted to the Consortium and the home institution.

Course Location

It is the policy of the Consortium that students attending classes at university sites are expected to be physically present at those university sites during class time. However, there are situations in which students are unable to attend classes at the universities' sites and may be permitted to take as "remote site" students. To be considered a remote site student, students must be more than 90 minutes of one-way travel time to the closest participating university (under normal circumstance) OR have a documented medical need. A limited number of students may become remote site students. Determination of this is at the Consortium's discretion and students who meet the criteria do not automatically qualify to be a remote site student. See FAQ section for additional information.

Student Services

Each institution will ensure that students have access to all learning resources and services required for successful completion of the Certificate of Applied Behavior Analysis/BACB®-approved coursework sequence. Services and resources include, but are not limited to, library resources, faculty support, administrative resources, technology infrastructure, and similar services.

Student Academic Integrity and Conduct

Students are required to follow the regulations governing academic integrity and personal conduct at the offering institution. In the event of academic dishonesty or misconduct, the offering institution has the authority to proceed according to its regulations as far as the particular course and future enrollments are concerned. If the problem merits a change in the student's status, it shall be reported to the home institution's registrar by the offering institution's registrar. Supporting documentation will be sent to the home institution's registrar. The home institution may take any additional action it deems appropriate. The home institution will share the students' status with other Consortium institutions.

Student Tuition, Fees, and Financial Arrangements

Payment of tuition for courses taken through the Consortium will be made through the regular procedure of the student's home institution and will be based on the rate applicable there. Tuition and fees for each institution will remain at that institution. There will be no funding exchanged among institutions. There will be no follow-up payment reconciliation among the institutions. Should a significant enrollment imbalance develop, the issue will be addressed by the executive committee.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, the instructor for the course will determine whether the class will meet as scheduled. The instructor will e-mail all students should the course be cancelled or the schedule of the course be modified in any way. E-mail will be the primary means of communication and it is the students' responsibility to check e-mail for this information.

If a student determines they cannot attend class due to inclement weather, they must notify the instructor to discuss how information from the course may be obtained. It is at the instructor's discretion as to whether a student may make up any assignments that occurred during the class that was missed. It is the student's responsibility to obtain information from the class session.

SECTION IV:

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. Is there financial aid available for this program?

Federal financial aid of the type accessed through Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is not available for this program. However, students may apply for private student loans. Note that the cost of coursework may be reduced by discounts at the students' home institutions when available. Tuition rates will vary by institution and students should check with the university at which they are enrolled for more information.

2. May I enter the program if I do not have a qualifying master's degree (a) conferred in behavior analysis, education, or psychology, or (b) conferred in a degree program in which the candidate completed a BACB® approved course sequence?

Some member institutions provide qualifying master's degree programs that would allow concurrent enrollment in both programs while others require a completed qualifying master's degree for entry into the VA-ABA Consortium. Check with the member institution nearest you for entrance requirements. The BACB® requires a qualifying master's degree as a prerequisite for the BACB® exam. One of the VA-ABA Consortium's goals is to provide teachers with the educational and experiential requirements needed to sit for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board® Examination, therefore participation in the program is restricted to individuals who will be eligible for the BACB® exam. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their degree meets the requirements of the BACB®

3. I started an ABA program at another university. May I use these credits in the VA-ABA Program?

The decision to accept transfer credit rests with the home institution to which the student applies.

4. How will I know what courses to take and when to take them?

The VA-ABA Consortium operates on a cohort model with participants taking all required coursework with their cohort. Participants will be informed by their home institutions as to the sequence and scheduling of courses.

5. What happens if I have to drop out of a cohort?

Any student who drops out of a cohort will have to reapply to the next cohort in order to regain entry into the VA-ABA Consortium.

6. Where will I take the courses?

Students will attend at their home institution's physical site. A limited number of students who live a substantial distance from all of the universities will be permitted to stream the course from their home computers. This is at the discretion of the Consortium.

7. What if I live far away from all of the participating universities?

A limited number of students who live a substantial distance from all of the universities will be permitted to stream the course from their homes. This requires more than 90 minutes of one-way travel time to the closest participating university (under normal circumstance) OR a documented medical need. The following requirements must be followed:

Technology Requirements

- Have access to a PC (Macs will not run the required software).
- Have high-speed internet access for the duration of the course.
- Have the capacity and willingness to participate in class via long distance phone call (if the student's internet connection is down or there are technical problems with the conference equipment).
- Purchase a microphone and web camera (specifications to be provided by Consortium faculty).
- Ability to install certain software programs on their computer including Apple QuickTime or Windows Media Player and other plug-ins needed to view the class web stream and participate in sessions.

Procedural Requirements

- Participate in a required technology training prior to the start of the semester.
- Collaborate with site technical staff to ensure delivery.
- Follow all attendance/participation policies for each course. Students are expected to be present for the entire duration of the class and be an active participant using the web technologies. This may also require students to partner with other remote site students or students at another participating university during class to complete both in class and out of class activities. This may require remote site students to make long distance phone calls to participate.
- Obtain permission from the Consortium faculty member at their home university to take the course as a remote site student.
- Possibly attend class on-campus (or to their closest participating campus) 1-2 times a semester to participate in in-class labs or other class activities. Instructors will identify those nights by the first night of class if this is required.

8. How will I complete requirements for supervised experience required to sit for the BACB® exam?

Each institution provides a supervised experience option and has its own policies and procedures. Beginning with the second semester in the program, participants may apply for supervised experience and pay associated fees to their home institution. The home institution will work with the student to determine the details of the supervised experience including the dates of supervision, the supervisor, the number of hours to be completed during the semester, as well as the location of the supervision. Depending on the category of supervised experience offered by the institution, a student will be required to complete either 1500 hours (i.e., supervised independent fieldwork); 1000 hours (i.e., practicum); or 750 hours (i.e., intensive practicum). Supervisees will complete a pre-determined number of hours in the field and will meet with a supervisor in accordance with BACB® requirements for supervision. For all supervised experience categories, no fewer than 10 hours and no more than 30 hours may be accrued per week. Supervisees may accrue experience in only one category (i.e., supervised independent fieldwork, practicum, intensive practicum) at a time. Member institutions may vary in the supervision parameters. Students should contact their home university to discuss the options and parameters of supervision.

9. What if I already have someone on my worksite who can supervise me?

Supervision is a requirement of the BACB® but is not required by the VA-ABA Consortium. To meet the requirements so students can sit for the exam, each university offers supervision options, but students may arrange their own supervision. If a student does arrange his/her own supervision, it is the student's responsibility to ensure all BACB® requirements are met.

10. Does the grade I receive in a course affect continued participation in the consortium?

Yes. Participants must earn the grades required by their home institutions for continuance in a graduate program. Students may contact the consortium coordinator at their home university for this information.

11. What are the consequences for dropping a class after the drop/add deadline?

If a participant drops a Consortium course after the drop/add deadline for their home institution, the participant may then be required to pay the entire tuition of the dropped course including any added fees. It is the student's responsibility to find out the applicable add/drop dates for their home university each semester. Students must also ensure they follow their home university's add/drop procedures. Simply contacting the instructor or one of the consortium coordinators is not enough to constitute officially dropping or withdrawing from a course.

12. What are the consequences if I receive an incomplete (I) grade in a VA-ABA consortium course?

If a participant receives an incomplete (I) grade in a VA-ABA Consortium class, the participant must work with the instructor of the class to resolve the incomplete grade. The I grade must be resolved by the earlier of the home and offering institutions' respective deadlines.

13. In addition to course requirements, are there any other responsibilities of Consortium participants?

Consortium participants must familiarize themselves with the requirements of the program; the guidelines of their home institutions; and complete evaluations of the courses and program when asked. Upon completion of the program, participants are asked to provide durable contact information and to report to the consortium coordinator the results of BACB® exam attempts.

14. What is the procedure for receiving a certificate once the participant has satisfactorily completed the coursework requirements?

If your home institution offers a certificate or degree, then the home institution's consortium coordinator will send a form to the registrar requesting the notation of program completion on the participant's transcript and provide a certificate of coursework completion to the participant.

15. Can students participate in class at one of the universities that is not their home university?

If a student wishes to attend class at an alternate university than their home university, students must obtain permission from the consortium coordinator at their home university. The consortium coordinator at the home university will collaborate with the university the student wishes to attend to make this determination.

16. When students have a question, who should they contact?

If a student has a question about a course they are currently taking or their grades, students should always contact their instructor for that course first. All other questions, including those about enrollment, registration, tuition, supervision, and other questions should be directed to the consortium coordinator for the university where the student is enrolled. The consortium coordinator can then direct the student to the appropriate person if needed.

17. Can I use my personal e-mail while taking courses?

Students will receive communication only through their university issued e-mail addresses. Students should obtain their university e-mail address as soon as possible after being accepted. A student's university e-mail will also serve as their login information for Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking their university e-mail.

18. Where do I get my books?

Students will receive information prior to the start of each semester about which books are required for their upcoming courses. Students may purchase their books at the university bookstore, if available, or at any of their preferred vendors. On occasion, a particular text or course packet may only be available through one source. If this is the case, the instructor for the course will notify students about how to obtain the required materials.

APPENDIX A:

Member Institution Contact Information

Name	Mailing Address	Phone/FAX/EMAIL
<i>George Mason University</i>		
Christine H. Barthold Consortium Coordinator; Faculty	Graduate School of Education 4400 University Dr., MSN 1F2 Fairfax, VA 22030	(703) 993-5450 (phone) (703) 934-2195 (fax) choffner@gmu.edu
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