

# ***Behavior Analysis***

## **GRADUATE TRAINING HANDBOOK**

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

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***The Behavior Analysis Graduate Training Handbook describes the policies, procedures, expectations, and requirements for graduate training in the Behavior Analysis Graduate MA and Ph.D. Programs within the Department of Psychology. Students are responsible for knowing the contents of this document. Students in the MA Hybrid program should consult the program directors for information specific to that program.***

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND TRAINING MODEL

**MISSION;** The Behavior Analysis (BA) graduate programs provide intense training in the conceptual, basic, and applied foundations of behavior analysis. In addition to giving students substantial training in a core specialty area (e.g., autism and developmental disabilities, health or safety, behavioral pharmacology, experimental analysis of behavior, or behavioral neuroscience), the program exposes students to a broad range of applied and experimental areas through coursework, research, and applied experiences.

The program offers two graduate degrees: a Masters of Arts (MA) in both traditional on-campus and hybrid curriculum sequences, and a Philosophy of Science (Ph.D.) in Behavior Analysis. The curriculum is designed so that degree completion falls within as a 2-3 (MA) and 4-5 (Ph.D.) year time frame.

The MA program prepares students for doctoral study or employment at the MA level in developmental disabilities, mental health, substance abuse, education, government, and business and industry. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program prepares students for roles as professors and researchers in college or university settings, researchers in government or business settings, or systems-oriented applied positions in the human services.

The programs include training in basic principles of behavior, behavior-analytic theory, research methodology, applied behavior analysis, and ethics, and offers specialized training in other areas such as behavioral neuroscience and behavioral pharmacology.

Students in the MA program are admitted either under a Thesis option, or a Project option. The Project option is for students who aim to become practitioners. Students interested in becoming practitioners for the treatment of autism and developmental disabilities can choose between our on-campus MA program or our hybrid MA program.

On campus programs are accredited by the Behavior Analysis Accreditation Board (“BAAB”) of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (“ABAI”) to award Masters of Arts in Behavior Analysis and Doctor of Philosophy in Behavior Analysis.

The MA program consists of a verified course sequence (VCS) approved by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) which prepares students to sit for the exam to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Students in the MA program also complete the necessary practicum training as part of the curriculum.



## PROGRAM GOALS AND TRAINING MODEL

The Program's core goals and the related objectives are as follows:

1. Provide comprehensive training in behavior analysis that will serve as a basis for specialized training during later years of graduate or post-doctoral study.
  - a. Students will develop a strong knowledge-base of conceptual, theoretical, and applied issues in behavior analysis
  - b. Students will develop knowledge of scientifically supported behavioral applications relevant to a variety of applied problems.
  - c. Students will develop knowledge of research methods, which includes at the Ph.D. level, statistical analysis
2. Establish professionalism and ethicality.
  - a. Students will understand and commit to the APA, ABAI, and relevant BACB ethical codes
  - b. Across professional contexts students' appearance, language, and conduct will be marked by integrity, accountability, and ethicality
3. Instill in students a professional identity that fosters lifelong learning and engagement in the broader behavior-analytic and psychological community.
  - a. Students will pursue professional development via participation in regional, national, or international organizations as members
  - b. Students will pursue professional development by attending and participating in conferences, workshops, colloquium, and professional trainings
4. Instill in students an awareness and openness toward individual and cultural diversity.
  - a. Students will acquire knowledge of individual differences and cultural diversity
  - b. Students will demonstrate a respect for and ability to work with diverse individual
  - c. Students in applied areas will be aware of the impact of him/herself on clients
5. Establish in students the skill set to consume and conduct empirical research.
  - a. Students will be nested in an active research community with an identified mentor
  - b. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and behave in accord with human subjects and animal subject protections
  - c. Students will seek individualized experiences in research methods and experimental design issues relevant to their research interests
  - d. Students will demonstrate an ability to comprehensively evaluate a substantive area of the research literature
  - e. Students will demonstrate an ability to review the strengths and weaknesses of the scientific literature in a targeted domain, link that review to an applicable research question, and develop a research design to provide information relevant to answering that question
  - f. Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and integrate the research findings into the broader scientific literature in a relevant domain
6. Students seeking certification by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) will obtain the necessary preparations to apply for certification and successfully pass the BACB examination.
  - a. Students seeking BACB certification will take courses in the VCS to acquire the applied and professional skills designated by the BACB tasklist.
  - b. Students seeking BACB certification will learn the skills necessary to function effectively in a specialized service setting during external practicum
7. Students will have the ability to orally communicate their research and applied projects in professional settings
  - a. Applied students will be able to orally present case materials in a concise, organized, and comprehensive way
  - b. Students will be able to orally present research in a concise, organized, and comprehensive way
  - c. Interested students will be afforded the opportunity to serve as a course instructor demonstrating their capacity to serve as an educator in psychology.

*The granting of a graduate degree in Psychology by Western Michigan University is not considered a basic right for all students admitted to a program: it is incumbent upon students to demonstrate mastery in each aspect of their area of specialty and to demonstrate professional competence. Students in our graduate programs should be prepared to devote themselves to the study of the science and practice of behavior analysis and be professionally engaged in the department and in professional organizations relevant to their specialization. Our graduate students are also expected to behave ethically, with respect for diversity, and to act professionally as public representatives of our programs.*



## ADMISSION TO THE BA GRADUATE PROGRAMS

**A. Applying.** Complete application instructions and deadlines for the BA graduate programs can be found at: <https://www.wmich.edu/psychology/academics/graduate/apply>.

**B. Admission Criteria.** The criteria for admission are found at: <https://www.wmich.edu/psychology/academics/graduate/ba> In general, criteria include:

- A preferred Graduate Record Examination score (the combined Verbal and Quantitative Scores);
- A preferred minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.00;
- A minimum grade of B in each graduate psychology course and an overall grade point average of 3.5 in graduate courses and practica;
- Research and/or applied experience;
- Strong letters of recommendation;
- Available positions in the program. Meeting or exceeding these criteria qualifies the applicant for review but does not guarantee admission to the department or any of its programs.

**C. Mentorship model.** Note that the on-campus MA and Ph.D. programs adhere to a mentorship model. Upon admission, students are assigned to train under the supervision and mentorship of a specific faculty member who will also serve as the student's project, thesis, and/or dissertation chair. Prior to the submission of the program application, applicants to the on-campus programs are encouraged to contact faculty members whose specialization matches their academic interests to discuss the possibility of that person serving as a mentor the following academic year. Applicants will include a rank-ordered list of preferred mentors on the application. Faculty will consider this preference when determining the faculty mentor, but the requests do not guarantee that students will be assigned to that mentor; assignments will depend on student/faculty interests and space availability. Students in the hybrid MA program are mentored by the hybrid MA program directors.

### **D. Admission to the Master of Arts Program**

Applicants are accepted into the Master of Arts program by the Behavior Analysis Program Committee. Students in the M.A. program are admitted either under a Thesis option or a Practicum option. Each admitted student will have an advising committee composed of a faculty member who is approved to serve as the thesis or project advisor, and two faculty sponsors who are members of the graduate faculty.

### **E. Admission to the Doctoral Program**

Applicants are accepted into the doctoral program by the Behavior Analysis Program Committee. Each admitted student will have a Dissertation Committee composed of a minimum of two faculty members who are approved to serve as doctoral chairpersons, and one faculty sponsor who is a member of the graduate faculty. A fourth member is added to this Committee with approval of the Graduate College upon the student's achievement of candidacy status and prior to the acceptance of the dissertation proposal.

The faculty member agreeing to serve as the dissertation chairperson (advisor) does so with the understanding that he/she will assume all responsibilities for the student's academic and professional advising, as well as the primary supervision of any research requirements, including the doctoral dissertation, and the comprehensive examination. The faculty member serving as first sponsor does so with the understanding that he/she will assume the responsibility of the chairperson in the chairperson's absence or if a new chairperson is required. The first sponsor must be an approved doctoral chairperson.

The faculty member serving as second sponsor does so with the understanding that he/she will provide academic and professional support as requested by the doctoral student. The second sponsor must be a member or associate member of the WMU graduate faculty.

The Dissertation Committee represents the student's personal education committee, and these three individuals assume the primary responsibility for the development and guidance of the student's career in the doctoral program at Western Michigan University.

Students who are admitted to the doctoral program before completion of the Master of Arts degree must complete the Master of Arts degree with thesis. Students who have earned a Master of Arts but did not complete a Masters Thesis must complete a research project equivalent to a Masters Thesis which is written, defended, and approved by department sponsors who comprise the student's Dissertation Committee (see section X below). Students who have previously earned a Masters thesis should not enroll in thesis credits.

**F. Transfer credits.** Courses may be transferred to the BA graduate programs by petition. See section below on [Course Transfer and Substitution](#) and [University Requirements](#).

**G. Non-Discrimination Policy.** *It is the policy and commitment of the entire Department of Psychology not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, handicap or Veteran status in its educational programs, students programs, admissions, or employee policies. The Department of Psychology complies with all requirements of the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the 1972 Amendments, Executive Order 11246 as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and all other pertinent state and federal regulations.*

## BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS PROGRAM FACULTY

**Jonathan Baker**, Faculty Specialist, (269) 387-4355, [jonathan.c.baker@wmich.edu](mailto:jonathan.c.baker@wmich.edu)

- Applied research in Behavioral Gerontology, including the assessment/treatment of behavioral excesses and developing programs that remediate behavioral deficits in older adults with Neurocognitive disorders/dementia, treatment adoption and verbal behavior.
- Applied research in staff training in aging/intellectual disabilities human services
- Translational research in Behavioral Gerontology

**Lisa Baker**, Professor, (269) 387-4484

- Behavioral pharmacology of addictive drugs
- Preclinical screening of addictive drugs for abuse liability including drug discrimination, conditioned place preference, and behavioral sensitization procedures
- Preclinical screening of novel psychiatric medications for pharmacotherapeutic potential.

**Anthony DeFulio**, Assistant Professor, (269) 387-4459, [anthony.defulio@wmich.edu](mailto:anthony.defulio@wmich.edu)

- Contingency management and health incentives
- Behavioral economics
- Experimental analysis of behavior/behavioral pharmacology

**Jessica Frieder**, Associate Professor. (269) 387-4495, [jessica.frieder@wmich.edu](mailto:jessica.frieder@wmich.edu)

- School-based applications of behavior analysis
- Social skills training
- Self-monitoring and self-management
- Assessment and treatment of severe problem behavior
- Practitioner, teacher, and caregiver training

**R. Wayne Fuqua**, Professor, (269) 387-4474, [wayne.fuqua@wmich.edu](mailto:wayne.fuqua@wmich.edu)

- The management of health risk behaviors
- Developmental disabilities
- Dissemination of behavior analysis to practitioners
- Extension of behavior analysis to social issues, such as climate change and sustainability

**Amanda Karsten**, Faculty Specialist II, (586) 286-2029, [amanda.karsten@wmich.edu](mailto:amanda.karsten@wmich.edu)

- Autism and Developmental disabilities
- Practitioner training

**Kelly Kohler**, Faculty Specialist, (269) 387-4481, [kelly.kohler@wmich.edu](mailto:kelly.kohler@wmich.edu)

- Autism, BATS training system

**Richard Malott**, Professor, (269) 387-4481

- Autism, BATS training system ([dickmaott.com](http://dickmaott.com))
- Organizational behavior management.

**Stephanie Peterson**, Professor, Department Chair, (269) 387-4479, [stephanie.peterson@wmich.edu](mailto:stephanie.peterson@wmich.edu)

- Dimensions of reinforcement
- Choice between communication and problem behavior for children in the applied setting,
- Behavioral technology
- Literacy and special education

**Cynthia Pietras**, Associate Professor, (269) 387-4464, [cynthia.pietras@wmich.edu](mailto:cynthia.pietras@wmich.edu)

- Experimental analysis of human and nonhuman behavior
- Human behavioral pharmacology



- Verbal behavior and Radical Behaviorism

**Alan Poling**, Professor, (269) 387-4483, [alan.poling@wmich.edu](mailto:alan.poling@wmich.edu)

- Experimental analysis of behavior
- Autism and other developmental disabilities
- Behavioral pharmacology
- Clinical psychopharmacology

**Denise Ross**, Associate Professor, (269) 387-4925, [denise.ross@wmich.edu](mailto:denise.ross@wmich.edu)

- Behavior analysis in PK-12 schools
- Verbal behavior
- Curriculum design in elementary and high schools
- Reading comprehension

**Ron VanHouten**, Professor, (269) 387-4471, [ron.vanhouten@wmich.edu](mailto:ron.vanhouten@wmich.edu)

- Traffic safety
- Simulation research
- Community and organizational psychology

The BA Program also relies on the expertise of other departmental faculty for support.

## GENERAL GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students should be familiar with graduation requirements listed in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Each student's program of study is determined by the consultation between the student and the graduate advisor and thesis/dissertation committee of the program in which the student wishes to study. At the Ph.D. level, the exact distribution among courses and research will depend may vary from one student to another. The program of study will contain a significant amount of practical experience and/or research: MA students are required to complete a six credit hour master's thesis or project. Doctoral students will be required to register for and prepare a dissertation for 15 hours of graduate credit. Students may request a copy of their progress on their program of study from the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant at any time. A minimum grade of "B" is required in all graduate course work.

The Behavior Analysis Ph.D. program entails fulfillment of the [Residency Requirement](#) (described below) which involves completion of at least an academic year or two consecutive semesters of full-time study on the campus.

## COURSE TRANSFER AND SUBSTITUTION

Students should review the [Graduate Catalog](#) for the most up-to-date information about what credits can transfer for the MA and Ph.D. programs.

Up to 12 credit hours may be transferred into the BA M.A. program. Up to 36 (37 beginning Fall 2020) credit hours may be transferred into the BA Ph.D. program. In order to transfer credits into the program, the student must follow the course substitution process. When pursuing a course substitution, the primary consideration is the equivalence between the petitioned course and the Program's course in terms of content covered, depth of coverage, and how current the content coverage is. The procedure to petition for a course substitution requires completing the *Petition of Waiver/Substitution Form* (see [Appendix A](#)), identifying both the Program course and the petitioned course. Attached to the petition should be a complete description of the goals and requirements of the petitioned course in the form of a course syllabus, name of the instructor, the texts required, the date taken and the university at which the course was completed. Proof of your completion of that course with a grade of "B" or better must also be provided to the committee (i.e., via a transcript). Petitions to substitute required courses must be approved by the WMU faculty teaching the equivalent program course, the student's advisor, the BA Program Chair, and the Department Graduate Training Chair. Additional requirements may be imposed by the Program faculty member whose course is being petitioned for substitution (e.g., examinations). Petitions to substitute electives when there is no course equivalency require approval from the student's advisor, the BA Program Chair, and the Department Graduate Training Chair.

**Petition of waiver/substitution process.** When preparing to submit one or more Petitions of Waiver/Substitution, the student should set up a meeting with his or her advisor and bring all syllabi for the petitioned courses to that meeting. The student and the advisor should review the syllabi and identify all potential matches from the WMU BA curricula (along with any acceptable electives with no course equivalency). Once agreement is reached between the student and his or her advisor, the advisor should sign all relevant Petition forms. The student should then give the forms to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant who will route the forms through the WMU faculty teaching the equivalent program course (except in the case of no course equivalency), the BA Program Chair, and the Department Graduate Training Chair. Once all signatures have been obtained, the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant will then include these petitions in the student's Program of Study for approval by the Dean of the College.

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### MASTER'S DEGREE

MISSION: The Master of Arts in behavior analysis in the Department of Psychology at Western Michigan University prepares students for doctoral study work or for work at the M.A. level with individuals and organizations in autism/developmental disabilities, mental illness, health and substance abuse, community mental health, education, government, business and industry.

#### A. Instructional Competencies

A minimum of 37 hours in an approved program of study is required, and a minimum grade of B is required in all coursework in the program. Content areas include:

1. Principles of Learning and Motivation (3 hours)
2. Theoretical Issues in Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
3. Professional Issues (3 hours)
4. Applied Behavior Analysis (7-10 hours)
5. Research Methods (3 hours)
6. Experimental Analysis of Behavior (3 hours)
7. Master's Thesis or Master's Project (6 hours)
8. Professional Experience (6 hours)
9. Electives (3 hours)

#### ABAI Verified Course Sequence

As part of their MA degree, students seeking certification by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) must complete:

- PSY 6050 Professional and Ethical Issues in Psychology
- PSY 6080 Current Research in Applied Behavior Analysis
- PSY 6100 Conditioning and Learning
- PSY 6260 Behavioral Assessment
- PSY 6270 Supervision in ABA
- PSY 6650 Behavioral Interventions
- PSY 6760 Skinner's Behaviorism

These are the courses in our Verified Course Sequence that meets the 5th Edition Task List requirements for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board. If you do not complete them or if you substitute courses for these in your curriculum, you may not be approved by the board to sit for the exam. Completion of these courses and the required supervised field experience is needed to qualify to sit for the exam. This does not guarantee that you will be certified, only that you will be able to sit for the exam. Students are encouraged to check for changes and updates for BACB certification at <http://bacb.com>

Below are the specific course requirements for each competency area.

**Western Michigan University - Department of Psychology  
Behavior Analysis MA Requirements (37 credit hours)**

<b>AREA 1</b> <b>Principles of Learning and Motivation</b> 1 classes (3 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6100	Conditioning and Learning (3 credits)	None
<b>AREA 2</b> <b>Theoretical Issues in Behavior Analysis</b> 1 class (3 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6760	Skinner's Behaviorism (3 credits)	9 credit hours of graduate study in PSY
<b>AREA 3</b> <b>Professional Ethics</b> 1 class (3 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6050	Professional and Research Ethics (3 credits)	None
<b>AREA 4</b> <b>Applied Behavior Analysis</b> 2-3 class (7-10 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6260	Behavioral Assessment (3 credits)	Prerequisite: PSY 6100 with a "B" or better.
	PSY 6650	Behavioral Approaches to Treatment (4 credits)	PSY 6080 and PSY 6100
	Students seeking BCBA certification must take PSY 6270 as well		
	PSY 6270	Supervision in ABA (3 credits)	Prerequisite: PSY 6100 with a grade of "B" or
<b>AREA 5</b> <b>Research Methods</b> 1 class (3 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6080	Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 credits)	Courses in applied behavior analysis.
<b>AREA 6</b> <b>EAB</b> 1 class (3 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6110	Current Research in Experimental Analysis (3 credits)	Prerequisite: PSY 6100 or PSY 6166.
<b>AREA 7</b> <b>Master's Thesis or Project</b> 6 credits	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 7000	Master's Thesis	Department and Graduate College approval
	PSY 7050	Master's Project	Advisor approval
<b>AREA 8</b> <b>Professional Experience</b> 6 Credits	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 5980	Special projects in Psychology	Consult with advisor
	PSY 5990	Practicum in Psychology	Consult with advisor
	PSY 6910	College Teaching Practicum	Consult with advisor
	PSY 7100	Independent Research	Consult with advisor
<b>AREA 9</b> <b>Electives</b> 0-1 class (0-3 credits) Courses cannot meet requirements in more than one area	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 5000 & 6000 courses	<i>Various offerings in Department of Psychology. The course must be relevant to your career goals as a behavior analyst and approved by your advisor prior to enrolling in that course. This can be a course from outside the Department of Psychology.</i>	Consult with advisor

## **B. Master's Degree Practicum and Internship Requirements**

The jobs and duties of Master of Arts level psychologists are quite varied. So too, are the activities for which practicum credit is given within the Psychology Department's master's programs. Direct client contact is the major defining characteristic of appropriate practicum activities. The client contact should involve a significant behavior analysis and behavior change component, and may occur within the context of service delivery, administration, consultation, program development, program evaluation, staff training, or similar activities.

(a) Definition of Practicum (PSY 599): The primary purpose of a practicum experience is training as opposed to service delivery. Practica are more specialized than internship experiences in terms of populations, settings and procedures. Supervisors for practica may be either university faculty and/or agency professionals. One supervisor is assigned primary responsibility for the trainee. All practica must include a written evaluation of the trainee submitted to the thesis chair in order for that experience to count within the master's program.

(b) Practicum Procedures: Master's practicum activities must be approved in advance by the student's thesis chair. Satisfactory completion of these hours must be accompanied by evaluation forms from the student and the practicum/internship/field experience supervisor. If a site is not on a previously approved list of sites, a petition must be submitted to the master's program committee prior to enrolling in or completing the activity.



## C. Research Requirements: MASTER'S THESIS

**Individuals who must complete Master's Thesis.** The completion of a master's thesis is a formal requirement of M.A. students pursuing the Thesis option.

**Purpose of Master's Thesis.** The Master's thesis is recognized as the first major and independent academic achievement of a graduate student's career. The thesis represents a creative research effort which should advance the student's knowledge, skill, and understanding in research methodology. Although the thesis experience is intended to produce a contribution to the professional literature, its primary purpose is to provide an opportunity for the student to develop initial competency in research methodology and to begin the establishment of an area of expertise within the discipline. The thesis is not intended to be as extensive as a doctoral dissertation, and one thesis may vary from another in purpose, length, and complexity as appropriate to the career goals of the student and as agreed upon by the student's advisor and Thesis Committee.

Minimum MA Thesis Components:

- Abstract
- Literature review
- For experiments, a clear definition of the purpose or experimental question, and how the research will contribute to the science of behavior analysis
- For experiments, the thesis must include a detailed description of methods, including the rationale for IV, DV and experimental design
- For experiments, the thesis must include a description of results, including graphs of data when relevant
- Discussion/Conclusion
- Bibliography in APA style

Any written document should be written in APA style must conform to the requirements of the graduate college

**Thesis committee.** For the thesis research, the student is required to assemble a committee of three persons from the departmental faculty. The chair of the thesis will typically be the student's assigned advisor. The faculty member serving as the thesis chair will assume all responsibilities for the primary supervision of the student's thesis development process. The faculty member serving as first sponsor does so with the understanding that he or she will assume the responsibility of the chair in the chair's absence or if a new chair is required. The remaining two committee members must be from the WMU Department of Psychology. The student must complete a *Committee Appointment Form* (see [Appendix B](#)) and obtain signatures during the thesis oral proposal (or in advance if a committee member cannot personally attend the proposal).

**Written structure of Master's Thesis.** The thesis should be written in a scholarly form according to The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses, Specialist Projects, and Dissertations* (found on the Graduate College website under the "Dissertation and Theses" section within the "Current Students" section). All aspects of the thesis must meet the requirements of the Graduate College and be acceptable to the three members of the student's thesis committee. The thesis should include a clear statement of purpose, documented by an appropriate review of the literature, a description of the experimental procedure that allows replication of the study, a clear and appropriate presentation of the data, and a discussion of the obtained data that integrates the findings with the research literature presented in the introduction. See here for details and the current Guidelines:

<http://www.wmich.edu/grad/current-students/dissertation>

**Master's thesis process.** The following sequential steps must be followed to complete a master's thesis:

1. *Request to serve on thesis committee:* In consultation with his or her advisor, the student should identify potential members to serve as the student's thesis committee (see details above regarding

the composition of the committee). The student may informally inquire about a potential member's tentative interest in serving on the committee early in the process. However, the student will need to formally request members to serve on the committee and this should only be done after significant progress has been made on a written proposal. The student's advisor will provide consultation on when the student has made sufficient progress to make a formal request.

2. *Written proposal:* A written proposal will be submitted to the chair of the student's program committee. If the proposed thesis is a research study, the proposal will include a review of the literature, a statement of the research problem, a rationale for the research, a detailed methods section, a results section that describes the potential results and how the data will be analyzed, and a reference list. If the thesis has a theoretical contribution, the proposal should identify the topic area and the scope of the proposed work. The proposal should be of sufficient detail and include sufficient references to allow the thesis committee chair to determine the relevance and value of the topic selected. The chair will evaluate the proposal with respect to: the scholarly contribution of the thesis to the field, methodology, style (APA and Graduate College Guidelines), grammar, and structure. Once the chair is satisfied with the proposal, a copy of the written proposal will be distributed to each committee member. The written proposal must be received by the thesis committee at least two weeks prior to the proposal defense.

The proposal must conform to the formatting standards outlined in the Graduate College *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses, Specialist Projects and Dissertations*, along with the guidelines described in the latest edition of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. For the purposes of the thesis, the Graduate College Guidelines supersede the APA Publication Manual Guidelines. Therefore, wherever the two sets of guidelines conflict, students will follow the Graduate College Guidelines.

3. *Oral proposal:* The student must hold a formal oral proposal and both the student and the thesis chair must be physically present for this proposal. At least one thesis committee member in addition to the chair must be physically present as well and the student must make a good faith effort to accommodate faculty schedules so that all members are present. Videoconferencing is acceptable if scheduling conflicts prevent the attendance of all members. In the event that a committee member is completely absent (not there in person or via videoconferencing), the absent member's comments and decision on the acceptability of the proposal must be formally received before the beginning of the oral proposal defense. Because many faculty members are not employed by the university during summer I and summer II semesters, students are strongly urged to schedule the oral proposal during the fall and spring semesters. The student should consult with the Department's Administrative Assistant for reserving a conference room.

As part of the oral proposal, students will give a formal presentation of their proposed thesis plan, covering the literature and proposed methodology. This presentation should last approximately 20-30 minutes and will be followed by questions from the thesis committee. If the thesis committee is not satisfied by the oral proposal, revisions may be requested. In the case of major revisions, it may be necessary to hold another oral proposal defense, no earlier than one month after the prior oral proposal defense. Students should bring the *Graduate College Doctoral Dissertation, Thesis, or Specialist Project Proposal Approval Form* (see [Appendix D](#)) to the defense. Once signatures have been obtained, students should turn the form in to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant.

4. *Ethics review board:* All research involving human subjects must be approved by the HSIRB before data collection can begin. Any research involving animals must be approved by the IACUC. The HSIRB and/or the IACUC may require revisions of the original thesis proposal. If any major deviations from the proposal are required, the student may need to meet with the committee members to inform them of the required changes and to once again obtain their approval. The Thesis Committee Chair will be responsible for determining whether or not Thesis Committee re-approval is needed after Ethics Review Board approval.

Details on HSIRB: <http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb/> Details on IACUC: <http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/animals>

5. *Registration for Master's Thesis credits:* The student must file a signed *Permission to Elect* form (see [Appendix C](#)) and receive approval from The Graduate College prior to initially registering for thesis credits (PSY 7000). The student should consult with his or her advisor regarding the best semester to begin enrollment in thesis credits. Once registration has begun, the student is required to maintain continuous thesis enrollment until the document is fully approved by the department and The Graduate College. The student does NOT need to fill out the *Permission to Elect* form again after the initial filing.
6. *Data collection:* Data collection may proceed only after final approval by both the Thesis Committee and the relevant Ethics Review Board(s).
7. *Deviations:* If any major deviations from the proposal are required, the student will meet with the committee members to inform them of the required changes and to obtain their approval.
8. *Written thesis:* The written thesis must meet the guidelines outlined above for the Written Proposal, except that the document will be a complete version including results, data analysis, and discussion. The document must be changed to past tense and meet the guidelines of the APA Manual. As with the proposal version, the final written thesis must also conform to the formatting standards outlined in the *Graduate College Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses, Specialist Projects and Dissertations*. The student will submit the completed thesis to the Chair of the thesis committee. The chair will provide the student with a list of any required revisions within two weeks of receiving the thesis draft. After the student has revised the thesis to the satisfaction of the chair and considers it to be in final form, a copy of the thesis will be distributed to each committee member. Similar to the written proposal, the written thesis must be received by the thesis committee at least two weeks prior to the oral final thesis defense.
9. *Oral final thesis defense:* When all necessary revisions are made for the written thesis the student is ready for the oral defense of the thesis and may schedule the oral defense. Because many faculty members are not employed by the university during summer I and summer II semesters, students are strongly urged to schedule the thesis orals during the fall and winter semesters. The student will obtain agreement from all committee members with respect to the date and time of the oral defense. The Psychology Department Graduate Training Administrative Assistant will schedule the oral defense. The oral defense must be scheduled through the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant at least 10 working days in advance of the defense date. The process for the Oral Thesis Defense is the same as the Oral Proposal, except that the student presentation should last approximately 30-40 minutes to allow for the additional material related to results and discussion.
10. *Final approval:* If, in the opinion of all of the members of the committee, the oral defense and written thesis are acceptable, the members of the committee will sign the *Thesis Oral Defense Approval* form (see [Appendix E](#)) and the *Graduate College Thesis Approval* form (see [Appendix F](#)). The student will need to submit the final thesis along with all relevant forms, including the *Thesis Check-In* form (see [Appendix G](#)), to the Graduate College and receive their final approval as well.

## **MASTER'S PROJECT**

If a student is pursuing a terminal Masters degree and is interested in a career as a practitioner (not as an academic and researcher), then a MA project may be completed instead of a MA thesis. The steps outlined above should be followed but the student should enroll in PSY 7050 Masters Project instead of PSY 7000 Masters Thesis.

The project will document the student's efforts to solve a problem of social importance using techniques of applied behavior analysis. The student must produce a permanent product (e.g., oral presentation with slides, APA-style manuscript; obtain format approval from your graduate mentor) that demonstrates how he or she defined the problem, implemented evidence-based assessment and intervention procedures, and interpreted his or her results using the conceptual and empirical foundations of the discipline. Written materials must

contain a relevant literature review, a description of procedures and results (i.e., original data), a conclusion, and project-informed considerations for future applications. The primary purpose of the project is to develop competency in the design, implementation, and evaluation of ABA solutions in a socially important context. Master's-level projects that are completed in place of a thesis are not submitted to the Graduate College for approval. Students who may pursue doctoral studies are advised to complete a Master's thesis and not a project; students should consult with their graduate advisor.

**Minimum MA Project Components:**

- Summary of behavior-analytic literature relevant to the project
- Clear definition of socially-relevant problem and goal of behavior-analytic intervention
- Description of student's implementation of a behavior-analytic, evidenced-based assessment/intervention procedures (method)
- Description of results produced by the project, including visual displays of original behavioral data
- Conclusion (summary of outcome)
- Discussion/future considerations
- Bibliography in APA style

For other MA graduation requirements see section below on [UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS](#).

## DOCTORAL DEGREE

The Doctor of Philosophy program in behavior analysis at Western Michigan University prepares students for teaching, applied work and research involving behavioral pharmacology, business and industry, community mental health, developmental disabilities (including autism), education, government and substance abuse.

### A. Instructional Competencies

Beginning Fall 2020, the Doctoral program requires a minimum of 79 credit hours, a minimum grade of B is required in all coursework in the program, the completion of a thesis (a thesis completed at the Master's level may qualify), the completion of a dissertation, and the completion of a competency exam (to be completed at least one semester before defending the dissertation). Content areas include:

1. Principles of Behavior Analysis (3 credits)
2. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues in Behavior Analysis (6 credits)
3. Professional Ethics (3 credits)
4. Applied Behavior Analysis (10-13 credits)
5. Research Methods and Statistics (6 credits)
6. Experimental Analysis of Behavior (6 credits)
7. Master's Thesis or Project (6 credits)
8. Professional Experience (6-12 credits)
9. Electives (15-21 credits)
10. Doctoral Dissertation (12 credits)

Courses count toward the Ph.D. program in Behavior Analysis only after the student has completed all courses in an M.A. program, including the M.A. thesis or M.A. project requirement

Below are the specific course requirements for each competency area.

Curriculum to take effect Fall 2020. Check the BA website for current requirements.

**PROPOSAL: Western Michigan University - Department of Psychology  
Behavior Analysis Ph.D. Requirements (79 credit hours)**

<b>Area 1: Principles of Behavior Analysis (3 credits)</b> 1 class (3 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6100	Conditioning and Learning*	None

<b>Area 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues in Behavior Analysis</b> 2 classes (6 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6760	Skinner's Behaviorism *	9 credit hours of graduate
	AND ONE OF THE FOLLOWING		
	PSY 6710	Complex Behavioral Processes and Their	Prerequisite: PSY 6700
	PSY 6740	Verbal Behavior	PSY 6100
	PSY 6870	Behaviorism and the Philosophy of Science	PSY 6760, PSY 6100 or PSY 6166.
	PSY 6580	Cognitive Processes	None

<b>Area 3: Professional Ethics</b> 1 class (3 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6050	Professional and Research Ethics*	None

<b>Area 4: Applied Behavior Analysis</b> 3 classes (10-13 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6260	Behavioral Assessment*	Prerequisite: PSY 6100
	PSY 6650	Behavioral Approaches to Treatment* (4 credits)	PSY 6080 and PSY 6100
	PSY 6090	Advanced Seminar in Applied Behavior	PSY 6080
	FOR STUDENTS SEEKING BCBA CERTIFICATION:		
	PSY 6270	Supervision in ABA*	Prerequisite: PSY 6100

<b>Area 5: Research Methods</b> 2 classes (6 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6080	Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis*	Prior course in applied behavior analysis
	PSY 6340	Experimental Design and Analysis I	Elementary course on statistics

<b>Area 6: EAB</b> 2 classes (6 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 6110	Experimental Analysis of Behavior	Prerequisite: PSY 6100 or
	AND ONE OF THE FOLLOWING		
	PSY 6140	Special Topics in EAB	Prerequisite: PSY 6100 or
	PSY 6130	Behavioral Pharmacology	

<b>Area 7: Master's Thesis or Project</b> 6 credits	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 7000	Master's Thesis (Students completing a thesis-equivalent experiment who already have earned a MA degree should enroll in PSY 7350 and NOT enroll in PSY 7000)	Dept. & Graduate College approval
	PSY 7050	Master's Project	Advisor approval

<b>Area 8: Professional experience</b> 6-12 credits	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 5470	Practicum: Organizational Performance	Instructor approval
	PSY 5980	Special Projects in Psychology	
	PSY 5990	Practicum in Psychology	
	PSY 6910	College Teaching Practicum	
	PSY 6950	Doctoral Internship in Behavior Analysis	
	PSY 7100	Independent Research	



	PSY 7120	Professional Field Experience	
	PSY 7350	Graduate Research	(for students completing a thesis substitution)

<b>Area 9: Electives</b> (15 -21 credits)	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	Any other 5000 or greater graduate level course offered in the WMU Psychology Department or other department after discussion with the student's advisor		

<b>Area 10: Doctoral Dissertation</b> 12 credits	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>
	PSY 7300	Doctoral Dissertation	Dept. & Graduate College approval

<b>Research Tools</b> <i>Students must complete two research tools. Both of the listed options in the row must be completed for one research tool. Grouped tools indicate possible combinations. Other research tools may be petitioned. No class may count in more than one research tool.</i>	<b>Combination</b>	<b>Courses</b>	
	Research support	PSY 6920 and PSY 6080	PSY 6100 or instructor approval. Courses in applied behavior analysis.
	Statistics concentration 1	PSY 6340 and PSY 6350	An elementary course on statistics. PSY 6340 (or some other course covering the analysis of variance)
	Research support 2	PSY 6920 and PSY 6340	PSY 6100 or instructor approval. An elementary course on statistics.
	Statistics concentration 2	PSY 6350 and PSY 6360	PSY 6340 (or some other course covering the analysis of variance), Prerequisites for 636: 6350.
	Research methods	PSY 6080 and PSY 6340	Courses in applied behavior analysis. An elementary course on statistics.
	Statistics concentration 2	PSY 6350 and PSY 6360	PSY 6340 (or some other course covering the analysis of variance), Prerequisites for 636: 6350.

<b>Professional and Scholarly Activity</b>	Comprehensive examination or alternative approved scholarly achievement (Must be approved by dissertation committee; consult with graduate advisor)
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\* Courses part of the BACB Verified Course Sequence

## **B. Master's Thesis/Project Requirements for Ph.D. Students:**

The completion of a Master's Thesis or Project is a formal requirement of Ph.D. students.

- i. **Ph.D. students who have not earned a MA degree and are pursuing a MA Thesis.** Students should follow the steps for completing the Master's Thesis outlined above.
- ii. **Ph.D. students who have not earned a MA degree and are pursuing a MA Project.** Students should follow the steps for completing the Master's Project outlined above.
- iii. **Ph.D. students who are entering with a MA degree and completed a MA thesis or project at another institution.** Doctoral students who have obtained a master's degree in psychology elsewhere and previously completed a Master's thesis or project may waive the thesis or project requirement following review and approval of the thesis/project by a thesis-substitution committee consisting of their dissertation chair and two other members of the behavior-analysis graduate-training committee. The thesis-substitution committee may request an oral defense of the thesis or project prior to approving the substitution. Students may be asked to demonstrate research competency by completing additional research activities before the transfer form is signed. A signed **Thesis transfer defense form** ([Appendix E](#)) must be submitted to the graduate training administrative assistant. Appeals to decisions of the thesis substitution committee may be made by submitting a letter describing the basis for the appeal, along with a copy of the thesis/project, to the chair of the Behavior Analysis graduate training committee who will submit the appeal to the BA program for review. A decision letter will be sent to the student by the BA program chair.
- iv. **Ph.D. students who are entering with a MA degree and who did not complete a thesis or project.** Students who are admitted to the Ph.D. program with a completed Master's Degree but who have not completed a Masters thesis or project are required to complete a thesis or project as part of the Ph.D. curriculum. Students should follow the steps for the Master's Thesis or Project outlined above except that students should register for PSY 7350 Graduate Research while completing the research INSTEAD of PSY 7000 Masters Thesis and should not submit the final document to the graduate college. A **Thesis Defense form** must be submitted to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant.
- v. **Ph.D. students who are entering with a MA degree and completed a MA project at WMU or another institution and who, after consultation with their advisor, decide to complete a thesis.** Students who are admitted to the Ph.D. program with a completed Master's Degree but who have completed a Masters Project and decide, after discussion with their advisor, to complete a Master's Thesis should follow the steps for the Master's Thesis outlined above except that they should register for PSY 7350 Graduate Research while completing the research INSTEAD of PSY 7000 Masters Thesis and should not submit the final document to the graduate college. A signed **Thesis Defense form** ([Appendix E](#)) must be submitted to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant.

## **C. Practicum and Internship Requirements**

The jobs and duties of Ph.D. level psychologists are quite varied. So too are the activities for which practicum credit is given within the Department's doctoral programs. Direct client contact is the major defining characteristic of appropriate practicum activities. The client contact should involve a significant behavior analysis and behavior change component. The client contact may occur within the context of service delivery, administration, consultation, program development, program evaluation, staff training, or similar activities.

### **Definitions:**

- i. **Practicum (PSY 5990/6990):** The primary purpose of a practicum experience is training as opposed to service delivery. Practica are more specialized than internship experiences in terms of populations, settings and procedures. Supervisors for practica may be university faculty and/or agency professionals. One supervisor is assigned primary responsibility for the trainee. Practica must include a written evaluation of the trainee submitted to the Graduate Training Committee and the Graduate College in order for that experience to count within the doctoral program.

- ii. Professional Field Experience (PSY 7120): The primary purpose of the Field Experience is service delivery as opposed to training in specific psychological techniques. Focus is on integrating many previously learned skills into a coherent professional role within the usual operating constraints of a service agency. Supervision and daily activities are under the direction of the assigned agency supervisor. One supervisor has primary responsibility for the trainee, although the trainee may rotate roles and/or supervisors within the agency.

**Procedures:**

- i. Doctoral practicum activities must be approved in advance by the student's Dissertation Advisor. Satisfactory completion of these hours must be accompanied by evaluation forms from the student and the practicum/internship/field experience supervisor. If a site is not on a previously approved list of sites, a petition must be submitted to the Behavior Analysis Graduate Training Committee prior to enrolling in or completing the activity.
- ii. A student may petition any practicum credit taken at the Master's level.
- iii. Individuals who are employed in a professional setting with an M.A. in Psychology may petition to have that experience apply toward the Ph.D. practicum requirement. Since such individuals are normally remunerated, each clock hour of practicum activity credited requires two clock hours of full-time employment.

**D. Two Research Tools**

Research tools are designed to provide the candidate with a proficiency in a restricted content area that is essential to the development, implementation, interpretation and dissemination of research. In general, this proficiency is defined by the completion of 5-6 credit hours of course work within a specific academic context. Courses used to fulfill a research tool requirement may be used to fulfill other requirements within the program. The two research tools must be approved by the Behavior Analysis Graduate Training Committee which specifies the criteria of proficiency, although proficiency is usually considered as a minimal grade of B in required course work.. Several research tools are pre-approved (see Ph.D. curriculum above). Listed below are examples of approved research tool areas, although the specific selection would be dictated by the research interest of the candidate and approved by the Graduate Training Committee.

1. Communication Skills

Foreign Language: Satisfied by demonstrating reading proficiency as demonstrated by scoring at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or above on the Foreign Language competency Exam or passing with a grade of B the second of a two course sequence in the reading knowledge of a language. (ii) English Variants: Satisfied by demonstrating competence in American Sign Language through accepted testing procedures or by completion of a two course sequence in Braille or American Sign Language with a grade of B or better. Other communication methods may also be considered by the committee.

2. Data Evaluation

- i. Computer Programming: Satisfied by completing 5-6 credits in computer usage (minimum grade of B): The computer courses may not be subdivided to fulfill the requirements of two tools. A petition must be submitted to the Dissertation Committee prior to registering for computer classes. The student may also demonstrate a competency in Computer Usage which was acquired via self-study during the graduate training period.
- ii. Statistics: Satisfied by completion of 6 credit hours of advanced statistics:
  - a. PSY 6340 Experimental Design and Analysis 1
  - b. PSY 6360 Experimental Design and Analysis 1
  - c. PSY 6350 Correlation Methods
  - d. PSY 6370 Advanced Data analysis
- iii. Research Design and interpretation. Satisfied by completion of 6 credit hours
  - a. PSY 6080 Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis
  - b. PSY 6340 Experimental Design and Analysis 1

3. Research support. Grant writing: Satisfied by completing 6 credits in grant writing and research methods:
  - a. PSY 6920 Grant Writing in the Behavioral Sciences
  - b. PSY 6080 Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis

#### **E. Comprehensive Examination or Equivalent Activity**

Additional requirements of the Ph.D. program include the satisfactory completion of one comprehensive examination or equivalent activity. The delineation of the topic and scope of these activities is primarily the responsibility of the doctoral student in consultation with his or her Dissertation Committee. Approval is required by the student's Dissertation Committee.

- I. **Comprehensive Examination** : The comprehensive examination is designed to provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate proficiency in an area of study within Psychology. The student, in conference with the Dissertation Committee, should define an area of the research and professional literature which is appropriate for intensive study. Academic competence in this area may then be demonstrated by the completion of an essay examination, which is read and evaluated by the Dissertation Committee and one independent reader selected by the Dissertation Committee from members of the graduate faculty, or the fourth member of the Dissertation Committee as approved by the Graduate College. The completed examination and the approval form signed by the four readers is placed in the student's doctoral file. While the members of the Committee may obtain counsel and advice from other members of the academic community, each committee member is responsible for reading and evaluating the comprehensive examination. Procedures for the conduct of the Comprehensive Examination include the following steps:
  1. **Submission:** The doctoral student must submit to his/her Dissertation Committee a written proposal which identifies the topic or topics to be examined and a list of readings associated with each topic. If the student wishes, sample questions may be included in the proposal.
  2. **Review:** The student's Advisor and Dissertation Committee should then review the proposal and accept, reject or modify the proposal to the satisfaction of all committee members. In altering the proposal, the Committee may delete, supplement or propose new areas of concentration. If a committee member lacks expertise in the area of the proposed comprehensive examination, he/she may request replacement by another member of the Graduate Faculty for the limited purpose of evaluating the comprehensive exam. The temporary replacement must be approved by all members of the student's committee.
  3. **Student Reaction:** The student must then be given the opportunity to react to the Committee's recommendations. If acceptable, an examination date should be set. If not acceptable, the student should arrange a meeting with the Committee to propose and negotiate changes until there is mutual agreement. The Graduate Training Administrative Assistant, the testing supervisor, must be notified one week in advance to make arrangements for the date, time and place of the exam.
  4. **Question Construction and Submission:** Once the examination date is set, the committee chairperson must construct the examination and seek feedback and/or additions from the dissertation committee. The examination should consist of 4 or more questions. The committee chairperson will give the testing supervisor the test questions.
  5. **Completion of Examination:** Completion of the approved examination should require approximately four hours but not more than six hours of effort. The examination may be administered in two sessions of up to three hours per session, with a break for lunch, providing that the student does not have access to examination questions prior to beginning each separate examination session. The student is required to write the examination in a supervised setting and the session is considered to be a closed- book examination.
  6. **Computer procedures:** The testing supervisor will check to ensure that the computer is blank of relevant materials and not connected to the internet. Upon completion and during the break, the student should submit a copy to the testing supervisor.

7. **Exam Scoring:** The examination is read and evaluated by three committee members and a fourth person (either a committee member or a non-committee member). The results should be returned to the chairperson within two weeks from the date of the examination.
  - a) **Scoring of Questions:** Each question is to be scored as "pass" or "fail." Only those answers that approximate the quality and completeness expected of advanced graduate students on a similar essay question should be scored as "passing". In order to pass the comp exam, no single question may be scored as "fail" by more than one examination reader. That is, a student is considered as having failed the comp exam when two or more readers rate the same question(s) as "fail."
  - b) **Rewrites:** If the student fails one or two exam questions, the failed questions may be rewritten one time following the process described above, and this rewrite must occur within 90 days. If the student fails to pass any exam question on the rewrite, the entire comp exam must be rewritten within 90 days of the second failure (see Second Chance, below), using different exam questions over a different topic.
  - c) **Second Chance:** If the student fails more than two exam questions on the first examination, the entire comp exam must be rewritten within 90 days of the failure, using different exam questions over a different topic. If the student fails 1 or 2 rewritten questions (see Rewrites, above), the student may also elect to retake the examination.
  - d) **Re approval:** If the student fails two or more exam questions on the second administration of the exam, the Behavior Analysis Graduate Training Committee must decide whether to approve further examination.
8. **Communication of Results:** The dissertation chairperson meets with the student and reports the results; the student may request to meet with other members of the Committee. The results of the examination are conveyed to the Behavior Analysis Training Committee by the dissertation chairperson on the appropriate form. A copy of the examination is placed in the student's file.
9. **Comprehensive exam completion form:** Once the comprehensive examination is complete the signed completion form (**Appendix H**) needs to be submitted to the graduate training Administrative Assistant.
10. **Exam location:** All competency examinations must be taken on campus under the supervision of department faculty and/or staff and may not be taken at remote sites

II. **Petitions to substitute a scholarly publication for the comp exam:** There are also two possible substitutions for the comprehensive examination. To request one of these alternatives, the student should submit to his or her dissertation committee a petition form (see **Appendix A**) to which the student attaches a copy of the article or grant and its reviews. Students must have their comprehensive exam approval form (see **Appendix H**) signed by the dissertation committee.

1. Scholarly Publication. The first involves the student formally petitioning to substitute a scholarly publication for the comp exam. To request this alternative, the student should submit to his or her dissertation committee a petition form to which the student attaches copies of one or more articles or other publications. In reviewing the petition, the committee will consider all the following evaluative criteria:

- a) the article(s) should demonstrate proficiency in an area of study that displays substantial breadth;
- b) the area of demonstrated proficiency should be related to the discipline of psychology;
- c) the article(s) should represent a scholarly contribution to the discipline as evinced by publication or acceptance into a reputable peer reviewed journal;
- d) there should be clear demonstration that the student has made substantial contribution to the preparation of the article(s) (e.g., be listed as first author) and
- e) The content of the comp exam substitution may overlap with the thesis or dissertation content. However, the comp cannot represent the primary publication of the student's thesis or dissertation data as these are already used to satisfy the thesis or dissertation milestone. A conceptual or comprehensive review paper based on the thesis or dissertation may be acceptable. Examples of acceptable scholarly publications include first-authored discussion articles, literature reviews, and research articles. Non-examples include published abstracts, brief (e.g., 3-4 pages)

commentaries, and brief book/software reviews. The student's dissertation committee may reject the petition based on the criteria above or for other reasons if the petition does not constitute, in the committee member's judgment, an equivalent activity. The student's dissertation committee may request that the student present an oral presentation of the topic represented by the petition and answer questions posed by the dissertation committee before making a final judgment as to the status of the student's petition. A petition to substitute a scholarly publication for the comp exam must be signed by all members of the student's dissertation committee.

2. Grant Submission. The second possible comp exam substitution comes in the form of a submitted (or funded) grant proposal to a federal granting agency. The narrative portion of the grant proposal must contain a relevant literature review. If the grant is not funded, evidence must be documented that a favorable review was received from the granting agency. Approval of petitions for grant proposals as comp exam substitutes is at the discretion of the dissertation committee. The student's dissertation committee may reject the petition based on the criteria above or for other reasons if the petition does not constitute, in the committee members judgment, an equivalent activity. A grant proposal may be based on a student's dissertation topic. The student's dissertation committee may request that the student present an oral presentation of the topic represented by the petition and answer questions posed by the dissertation committee before making a final judgment as to the status of the student's petition. A petition to substitute a scholarly publication for the comp exam must be accompanied by a memorandum of support signed by all members of the student's dissertation committee.

## **F. Candidacy**

Once all program requirements and the comprehensive evaluation is complete students should now apply for doctoral candidacy. See the graduate college website for information: <https://wmich.edu/grad/doctoral-candidacy>



## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

The doctoral dissertation is intended to be the major academic achievement of the doctoral student's career at Western Michigan University. The dissertation represents a creative research effort which should advance knowledge in an area of the discipline. The findings of this research should be compiled in a scholarly form which meets the requirements of the Graduate College and which is acceptable to the student's Dissertation Committee. The dissertation must meet the same standards and process as the Master's thesis, except where noted below. As such, students completing a dissertation should familiarize themselves with the thesis requirements as well.

**Literature Review:** A scholarly review of literature related to the student's dissertation topic is to be included either as a chapter or as an appendix in the student's dissertation. The review must be a comprehensive and scholarly treatment of a literature related to the dissertation research. Like other parts of the dissertation, the literature review should be prepared according to the guidelines of the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association with deviations allowed only as required to meet Graduate College Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations and approved by the student's Dissertation Committee.

The BA Program encourages publication of the doctoral dissertation and endeavors to facilitate publication through the use of the American Psychological Association style manual; however, neither the need for publication nor the style manual format should be used to defend undue brevity or failure to discuss all of the theoretical and methodological issues as would be expected in a scholarly activity. The manual serves only as a writing guide; all aspects of the research from the proposal to its presentation must be approved by the four members of the student's Dissertation Committee.

**Dissertation committee.** For the dissertation research, the student is required to assemble a committee of four professionals. The chair and first sponsor of the dissertation will typically be the student's assigned advisor. Two committee members, beyond the dissertation chair, must be from the WMU Department of Psychology. The fourth committee member must be from outside of the full-time department faculty. The outside member may be an adjunct faculty member from the Department of Psychology or a doctoral-level professional selected in consultation with the dissertation chair. Potential candidates for outside members include WMU faculty from outside of the Department of Psychology, faculty from other universities, and non-faculty professionals who meet the criteria for graduate faculty status. Each member of the committee (including the outside member) must be either a member or an associate member of the graduate faculty; the committee chair must be a full member of the graduate faculty. To determine whether an outside committee member is a member or associate member of the graduate faculty, please review the current list of graduate faculty members, along with the application for Graduate Faculty appointment, available on the Graduate College website, under Graduate Faculty (see: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/faculty-staff>). If the outside member is not currently Graduate Faculty, the student should ask his or her advisor to seek membership for the outside member. All members of the dissertation committee will also serve on the doctoral comprehensive examination committee. Substitutions of committee members may be allowed in unusual circumstances at the discretion of the dissertation director and BA Program Chair or program committee. The student must complete a *Committee Appointment Form* (see [Appendix B](#)) and obtain signatures during the dissertation oral proposal defense.

**Doctoral dissertation process.** The doctoral dissertation will follow the same process steps as the master's thesis, with the important exceptions noted below. Students should also make themselves aware of the dissertation deadlines for the year they intend to graduate:  
<http://wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-deadlines>

1. *Request to serve on dissertation committee:* The process for requesting committee members is the same for the dissertation as it is for the thesis. However, students should note the unique details regarding the composition of the committee (see sections on *Dissertation committee* above).

2. *Written Proposal*: The expectations for the written dissertation proposal are similar to the thesis.
3. *Registration*: The student must file a signed *Permission to Elect* form (see [Appendix C](#)) and receive approval from The Graduate College prior to registering for dissertation credits (PSY 7300). Once registration has begun, the student is required to maintain continuous dissertation enrollment until the final document is fully approved by the department and The Graduate College. The student does NOT need to fill out the *Permission to Elect* form after the initial filing.
4. *Oral Proposal*: The process for the oral proposal of the dissertation is similar as the thesis process though the dissertation proposal is expected to reflect the greater scientific contribution and scope of the dissertation. Students should bring the *Graduate College Doctoral Dissertation, Thesis, or Specialist Project Proposal Approval Form* (see [Appendix D](#)) to the oral proposal. Once signatures have been obtained, students should turn the form in to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant.. Students who are assessed as satisfactory will have both their proposal approval form (see [Appendix D](#)) signed.
5. *Ethics review board*: The student must follow the same ethical guidelines for the dissertation as established by the thesis process.
6. *Data collection*: Data collection may proceed only after final approval by both the Dissertation Committee and the relevant Ethics Review Board(s).
7. *Written dissertation*: The expectations for the written dissertation are the same as those for the written thesis.
8. *Oral final dissertation defense*: All students must successfully pass the comprehensive exam at least one semester before their oral final dissertation defense. Unlike the oral final thesis defense, the oral final dissertation defense will be publicized in the Western Michigan University News and other appropriate university publications. The oral defense cannot be scheduled during semester breaks or when the university is not officially in session. An abstract of the dissertation must also be sent with the oral exam announcement (see [Appendix I](#)) to the Graduate College representative at least 10 days prior to the scheduled date of the oral defense. In total, the student should schedule a minimum of 2 hours for the entire defense to allow for the presentation and evaluation. Additionally, the university requires that the doctoral candidate must have applied for graduation, be currently listed in an active graduation class, and the candidate's graduation audit must show that all requirements except the defense and submission of the dissertation have been met. At least three members of the student's committee (including the dissertation chair) must be present at the oral final dissertation defense. The oral defense may not be scheduled without a graduation audit and clearance from the Office of Graduation Auditing that completion of all program requirements except the dissertation has taken place (See Graduation section of handbook).
9. *Evaluation of Defense and Final approval*: If, in the opinion of all of the members of the committee, the written dissertation, dissertation presentation, and defense examination are all acceptable, the committee members will sign the *Oral Defense Approval* form (see [Appendix J](#)) and the *Dissertation Approval* (see [Appendix K](#)) form. The student will need to submit the final dissertation along with all relevant forms, including the *Graduate College Dissertation Submission* form (see [Appendix L](#)), to the Graduate College and receive their final approval.

For other Ph.D. graduation requirements see the section below on [UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS](#).

## RESEARCH ETHICS REQUIREMENTS

All research, including but not limited to theses and dissertations, must be conducted in an ethical manner. Per University requirements, all new graduate students are required to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course in Elearning <https://wmich.edu/grad/current-students/responsible-research>.

In addition, before beginning any research the following **must** be completed:

- 1) All students must complete the CITI Ethics Training modules before conducting research. Details on the CITI program can be found here: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>
- 2) All research conducted with human subjects must be formally approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) and research involving non-human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) at WMU before research can be begin. Only full-time faculty or staff may serve as Principal Investigators; all graduate students must be designated as Student Investigators for the purposes of research reviewed by the HSIRB, even if the student is intended to be the primary author on subsequent publications or presentations. The HSIRB will evaluate both the protection of human subjects and the suitability of the research methodology. Details on the HSIRB can be found here: <http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb/> Details on the IACUC can be found here: <http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/animals>

## CHECKLISTS FOR RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

### Checklist for Master's pre-proposal

- Review MA graduation process <https://wmich.edu/grad/masters-graduation>
- Completed program of study form
- Completed committee appointment form
- Complete permission to elect form for thesis/project credits (check with your graduate advisor)

### Checklist for Master's thesis/project oral proposal:

- Written Proposal (sent at least two weeks earlier)
- Conference Room and Projector reserved
- Committee Appointment Form complete & ready to sign by committee
  - o Give to Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards
- For theses, 2 copies: Graduate College Proposal Approval Form (complete & ready to sign)
  - o Give a copy to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards
  - o Give a copy to the Graduate College afterwards
- Formal Presentation ready

### Checklist for Master's thesis/project pre-defense:

- Check defense deadlines for graduation <https://wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-deadlines>
- Apply for graduation and graduation audit – check deadlines well in advance <https://wmich.edu/registrar/graduation/>

### Checklist for Master's thesis final defense:

- Written Thesis/Project (sent at least two weeks earlier)
- Conference Room and Projector reserved
- Thesis or Project Defense Approval Form (complete & ready to sign)
  - o Give to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards
- For theses include 2 copies: Graduate College Thesis Approval Form (complete & ready to sign)
  - o Give 2 copies to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards to forward to graduate college. Ensure that forms are forwarded
- Formal Presentation

### Checklist for Ph.D. pre-comp:

- Review Ph.D. graduation process <https://wmich.edu/grad/doctoral-graduation>
- Completed program of study form
- Completed committee appointment form
- Complete permission to elect form for dissertation credits (check with your graduate advisor)

### Checklist for Ph.D. comprehensive examination and oral defense:

- Committee Appointment Form. If your 4th committee member is not a faculty member from Western Michigan University, you must obtain a vita from them and give it to the psychology graduate training administrative assistant.
  - o Give to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards
- List of comp exam questions developed by examiners or complete alternative
- Schedule comp exam or distribute substitution documents
- Complete Comprehensive Examination or Substitution Petition
- Conference Room and Projector reserved for oral defense if requested
- Formal Presentation of comprehensive exam if requested

- Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Approval Form
  - Give to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards

**Checklist for dissertation oral proposal:**

- Written Proposal (sent at least two weeks earlier)
- Conference Room and Projector reserved
- 2 copies: Graduate College Proposal Approval Form (complete & ready to sign)
  - Give one copy to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards
  - Give one copy to the Graduate College afterwards
- Formal Presentation

**Checklist for Dissertation pre-defense:**

- All program requirements must be completed the semester before you plan to defend.
- Check defense deadlines <https://wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-deadlines> Defense must take place at least one week before dissertation submission deadline
- Notify the graduate training administrative assistant before you apply for graduation. This person will complete the program of study form for you and will send to graduation audit.
- Apply for graduation and graduation audit – check graduation application deadlines well in advance <https://wmich.edu/registrar/graduation/>
- The dissertation defense scheduling form must be completed. Contact the graduate training administrative assistant for form and room information. Send one copy to the Graduate College at least two weeks before you plan on defending, and the other copy to the psychology graduate training administrative assistant. Failure to complete other steps may result in a delay for defense approval.

**Checklist for dissertation final defense:**

- Schedule defense. Defense must take place at least one week before dissertation submission deadline
- Notification must be submitted to the Graduate College at least two weeks prior to defense date
- Written Dissertation (sent at least two weeks earlier)
- Clearance from Office of Graduation Auditing to hold oral defense
- Oral exam announcement (sent at least 10 days earlier)
- Conference Room and Projector reserved
- Oral Defense Approval Form (complete & ready to sign)
  - Give to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant afterwards
- 3 copies: Graduate College Dissertation Approval Form (complete & ready to sign)
  - Give 3 copies to the Graduate College afterwards
- Formal Presentation
- Completed dissertation and accompanying forms turned in to the Graduate College along with the Dissertation Check-in Form.
- Submit defended dissertation to the Graduate College by the deadline for graduation submission <https://wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-deadlines..>

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK**

Students have the opportunity to evaluate the pedagogy of courses at the end of each semester. Students also are encouraged to provide feedback on the BA program in an ongoing fashion. One method is through the Behavior Analysis Graduate Student Organization (BAGSO). The Behavior Analysis Program Committee meets monthly during the academic year to discuss program goals and objectives and other relevant training and program matters. The BA program committee consists of all behavior analysis faculty and a BAGSO representative (usually the President of BAGSO) and the BA Program assistant. The first agenda item at each meeting typically consists of a discussion of any issues BAGSO has to bring before the faculty. These may include announcements and any general training and program matters, but also may include specific items that have been brought to the BAGSO representatives by their membership, either directly or anonymously. The BAGSO representative remains in the BA Program meeting after his/her agenda item has passed and is able to participate in all non-confidential training matters that are discussed.

Students are also welcome to direct feedback on the BA graduate programs to the BA program chair.

## LICENSURE

The BA Ph.D. program is not designed to prepare students for state licensure as a licensed psychologist. However, students may take graduate courses and seek internship opportunities to prepare themselves for licensure. It is recommended that students hoping to obtain licensure in Michigan complete the following:

- One class in Psychopathology (PSY 6200 Adult Psychopathology, PSY 6210 Developmental Psychopathology).
- Two Assessment courses (PSY 6810 Assessment I and 6830 Assessment II)
- Two treatment courses (Either 6610 Psychotherapy, PSY 6640 Behavior Therapy, PSY 6680 Adult or PSY 6690 Child behavior therapy or PSY 6650 Behavioral Approaches to Treatment).
- Students will also need to obtain:
  - (1) 500 h of supervised clinical practicum (by a licensed psychologist)
  - (2) 2000 h of clinical internship (APA accredited)\*
  - (3) 2000 h in a clinical postdoctoral position (APA accredited).

Students should carefully check the licensure laws in the state where they wish to practice and know that licensure laws differ across states. For Michigan licensing requirements visit the Department of Licensing and Regularlatory Affairs (LARA) website: [https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600\\_72603\\_27529\\_27552---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_27552---,00.html).

\*Internship and Licensing Law: Michigan law currently requires that a student complete 2,000 clock hours of professional internship in an organized health care setting meeting the approval requirements of the licensing board. All BA students pursuing licensing should enroll in PSY 6950. Care must be exercised in selecting the appropriate internship site, as not all available sites are acceptable to the licensing board. The student and the Dissertation Committee should work together when planning the option for licensing. Although the Psychology Department will assist the student in obtaining an internship site and a licensed psychologist as a supervisor, primary responsibility falls upon the student to apply for, arrange supervision of and complete experiences under this requirement. All internships must include a written evaluation, submitted to the Behavior Analysis Training Committee and Graduate College before such experience may be counted as part of the doctoral program requirements. The written evaluation of this 2,000 hour experience must conform to board requirements in terms of specific duties performed, number of hours directly supervised by a licensed psychologist and number of hours indirectly supervised, as well as evaluation of the quality of the performance.

## FUNDING

Assistantships and fellowships may be available to graduate students. There are also various funding opportunities offered by the Department of Psychology and Western Michigan University. Here is a listing of some of the opportunities that students could pursue.

- Departmental Graduate Assistantship
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/assistantships>
- Graduate College Dissertation Completion Fellowship
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/diss-complete>
- Thurgood Marshall Fellowship
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/marshall>
- Martin Luther King/César Chavez/Rosa Parks Future Faculty Fellowship
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/kcp>
- WMU Graduate Education and the Professoriate (GEP) Fellowship
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/gep>
- Graduate Student Research Grant
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/gsrq>
- Graduate Student Travel Grant
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/gstg>
- University Dames Endowed Scholarship Grant
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/dames>
- Gwen Frostic Doctoral Fellowships
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/frostic>
- Patricia Lee Thompson Dissertation Award
  - Details: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants/thompson>

The list above is not intended to be an exhaustive listing and additional opportunities may be sought through various university and community announcements.

Students should indicate their desire for an assistantship to their graduate mentor. Because the department's budget and teaching needs vary each year, there is no set number of awards available in any given year.

Information and policies on graduate student appointments are found here: <https://wmich.edu/grad/current-students/appointments>

Graduate student employees on a graduate teaching assistantship should be aware of their rights and responsibilities as described in the Teaching Assistants' Union (TAU) agreement.

Graduate funding is subject to the conditions described in the letter of appointment. Procedures for unsatisfactory performance, general disciplinary provisions, and appeals for students on teaching assistantships are described in the TAU agreement. The BA Program committee may recommend to the department chair that a graduate student's funding be terminated for inadequate progress in the program, violations of academic integrity or violations of the WMU Student Code.

TAU agreement:

<https://www.wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/agreements/agreements-tau>



## ANNUAL STUDENT EVALUATION

The Behavior Analysis Program Committee carries general decision-making authority regarding the adequacy of a student's preparation at each phase of training. The BA Program Committee will formally evaluate each student annually. The student participates in the evaluation process by completing and providing to the faculty (each spring) an up-to-date CV and a Graduate Student Annual Review (GSAR) document (see [Appendix N](#) for a sample; the actual GSAR will be sent via email and may differ slightly from the Appendices). Submission of these documents is considered a professional requirement and failure to do so according to the timeline and format requested will directly affect the substance of the annual evaluation in the relevant domain.

In the GSAR, students detail their academic performance, professional activities, research and scholarly activity, teaching, and professional development endeavors from the prior year. The faculty use the student CV and GSAR information along with course grades, individual experiences with student in the laboratory, classroom, or practicum, and other program evaluations, to provide narrative and numerical ratings in the areas of academic performance and program progress, ethical and professional behavior, development of research skills, development of professional skills, development of teaching skills, personal and professional development, and suitability to function as a professional. The GSAR will be reviewed by the faculty advisor and the BA program committee. Afterwards, the student's faculty advisor will review the evaluation narrative and numerical scores with the student and ask the student to sign the document.

When ratings of 3 are given on the GSAR, indicating less than generally satisfactory performance or progress through the program, the annual review narrative will provide explicit instructions on matters that need to be remedied in the next review cycle for the evaluation scores to improve. A probation period may be initiated, and the student will be provided with a detailed remediation plan by the BA chair or faculty advisor. If problems are not remediated the student may be dismissed from the program.

The student has the right to appeal any annual evaluation by submitting a letter of appeal to the BA Program Chair within 30 days of the date on which they received the feedback. The BA Program Chair will take the appeal to the BA Program Committee. If the appeal is not granted by the BA Program Committee, the student has another 30 days from the date on which the appeal is denied by the BA Program Committee to submit a letter of appeal to the Chair of the Psychology Department. The Graduate College is the final level of appeal within the University on matters relating to academic performance of graduate students.

Remediation, if warranted in connection with any phase of training, will emanate from the BA Program Committee. However, with respect to matters directly pertaining to the student's research, the relevant thesis or dissertation committee exercises decision-making authority as it pertains to evaluating the acceptability of progress toward completion of the study and the ultimate adequacy of the project for completion of the relevant program milestone. However, if in the course of conducting research, matters arise that bear on determination of the student's broader ability to function as a scientist-practitioner psychologist (e.g., breaches of ethical and professional behavior), these matters will be taken to the BA Program Committee (see below) and, at a minimum, will be considered by the BA Program Committee in the student's annual evaluation. At all times, the student's advisor provides guidance to the respective committees.

The BA Program Committee reserves the right to decide at any point in a student's training that a formal remediation plan be implemented to address an identified problem. These special reviews which occur outside the annual review process can be initiated at any time at the request of a member of the BA faculty via the BA Program Committee. If the BA Program Committee decides a remediation plan is warranted, the plan will be formally presented to the student in writing by the BA Program Chair or the student's graduate advisor. Appeals of the remediation plan are to be taken first to the BA Program Committee by submitting a letter of appeal to the BA Chair within 30 days of date on which they received the feedback. If rejected by the BA Program Committee the next round of appeal is to the Department Chair and the Graduate Training Committee Chair of the Department of Psychology. The Graduate College is the final level of appeal within the University on matters relating to academic performance of graduate students.

## STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

### Rationale

Becoming a professional psychologist requires that the candidate acquire more than academic knowledge and practical skills. The psychologist must be prepared to assume a coherent professional role defined by a clear code of ethics, standards for training and provision of psychological services, various Federal and state laws and rules, and policies of relevant professional associations.

### Standards

Students are expected to behave in a manner that enhances, and not devalues, the profession. One student's misconduct diminishes not only the previous good work of the student, but also the accomplishments of other students, faculty, and the profession as a whole. Behavior Analysis graduate students are expected to abide by the policies and procedures of the Graduate College as specified in the *Graduate Catalog* <http://catalog.wmich.edu/index.php?catoid=31> and the *WMU Student Code* <https://wmich.edu/conduct/code>, the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) Policy, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Policy and other policies set forth by the University and the Psychology Department. All BA students are expected to adhere to the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>, and Behavior Analysis Certification Board <https://www.bacb.com/ethics/ethics-code/> in all areas of professional, social and personal conduct. Students are expected to learn and comply with various Federal and state laws and rules that govern the rights of pupils in education, patients in mental health settings, clients in various social service agency settings, and other legal requirements relevant to the student's practice of psychology. Students are expected to learn and comply with laws and rules governing certification or licensing of psychologists in the state in which the student engages in the practice of psychology.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The program honors fully the University's policy on academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for making themselves aware the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog, found online (<http://wmich.edu/registrar/catalogs>) that pertain to Academic Integrity. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity, and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe that a BA student has been involved in academic dishonesty, the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

## GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM

### Inadequate Academic Progress

As indicated above, all students are evaluated through normal course work, practicum evaluations, research proposal, comprehensive exam, and defense evaluations, as well as through a formal annual evaluation by the BA Program Committee. Any determination that a student is not making adequate progress through the program in any of the areas evaluated will be grounds for warning, probation, and potential dismissal if not remediated. See BA handbook section on [ANNUAL STUDENT EVALUATIONS](#).

### Professional and Ethical Violations

Any determination that a student (a) is not functioning as a professional in the field, (b) has engaged in academic misconduct, or (c) has failed to abide by the WMU Student Code, WMU policies, codes of research ethics, or other ethical codes noted in the BA handbook section on [STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT](#) above may be grounds for dismissal.

### Reporting

Behavior Analysis graduate students are obliged to report allegations of misconduct, violations of the ethical codes listed under the BA handbook section [STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT](#), as well as legal charges or convictions, and public health- and safety-related fines or tickets to the Chair of the Department and Chair of the BA Program Committee within 14 days of the event.

### Procedures

Academic Misconduct and violations of the WMU Student Code will be brought to the Office of Student Conduct. Students should be aware of those policies and procedures as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.

Details on Graduate Catalog - <http://wmich.edu/registrar/catalogs>

Details on WMU Student Code - <https://wmich.edu/conduct/code>

For other professional and ethical violations, the Behavior Analysis (BA) Program Committee will initiate an investigation of the allegations of misconduct. The Chair of the BA Committee will inform the student of the investigation and the nature of the allegations. During the course of the investigation, the student may continue to take courses and work on program requirements; however formal award of credits toward the degree may be withheld pending the outcome of the review. The BA Committee may also withhold formal approval of further program requirements until the student can resolve the misconduct allegations to the satisfaction of the BA Program and other relevant concerned parties. Prior to the BA Program arriving at a judgment regarding the validity of the allegations and the appropriate disciplinary action, the student will be offered the opportunity to appear before the BA Committee to defend himself/herself against the allegations.

The BA Program Committee may recommend a range of actions in disciplining graduate students engaging in professional and ethical misconduct, up to dismissal from the BA Graduate Program. Students will be notified in writing of the consequences of ethical and professional violations by the BA Program Chair.

### Dismissal

A decision regarding termination from the Behavior Analysis MA or Ph.D. program will be made by majority vote by faculty members in the BA Program. If the BA Program Faculty make the determination to dismiss a student from the program, the student will be notified in writing by the BA Program Chair.

## **Appeals**

Students may appeal a dismissal decision, except a dismissal for violations of academic integrity. Policies for appealing program dismissal are found in the graduate catalog. <http://catalog.wmich.edu/index.php?catoid=31>.

The accepted bases of program dismissal appeal are:

- a) The program dismissal decision was made in a manner inconsistent with University policy or the program policy.
- b) The program dismissal procedures were not followed.
- c) Evaluation/performance standards were arbitrarily or unequally applied.
- d) The student's status, as dismissed from the program, will remain unaltered until a successful appeal is completed

## MICHIGAN RESIDENCY STATUS

The BA Program is proud of its strong reputation and ability to recruit students nationally and internationally who are interested in receiving intensive training in behavior analysis. There is no residency requirement for M.A. students. However, students who plan to apply to the BA Ph.D. program upon completion of the M.A. program are encouraged to seek residency at the start of their second year of the M.A. program. The general residency requirement for doctoral students is one academic year (two consecutive semesters) of full-time study on campus. Full-time study is defined as enrollment in 6 credit hours during both the Fall and Spring semesters. For those students admitted to the Ph.D. program who are United States citizens from states other than Michigan, it is expected that you attempt to establish residency in the state of Michigan by the start of your second year in the Ph.D. program.

Visit the WMU Registrar's website (<http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/policies/residency>) for detailed information regarding obtaining residency status and for the residency application.

## UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the departmental rules, policies, and requirements, the university and the Graduate College have their own requirements that students must fulfill. For a full listing of requirements, please review the graduate catalog <http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/catalogs/> and visit the Graduate College website at <http://www.wmich.edu/grad>.

### 1. Transfer Credits

**Master's program.** A student enrolled in the BA Master's program must complete a minimum of 24 semester hours at Western Michigan University. Because the BA Master's program is a 37 credit hour program, any credits transferred into the BA program from other universities may not exceed 13 semester credit hours. Graduate credit may be transferred from other institutions provided:

- The credits were earned at an institution accredited for graduate study and are of "B" grade (3.0) or better. Moreover, the student's overall grade point average for all graduate work taken at the other institution must also be "B" (3.0) or better. [Honor points and grades earned at another institution do not transfer to Western Michigan University. Transfer credit will be recorded on the Western Michigan University transcript at "Credit" (CR) only and will not be calculated into the honor points earned and the grade point average at Western Michigan University.]
- The credit is earned within a six-year period prior to graduation from Western Michigan University, is represented on an official transcript of the other institution, and is identified on that transcript as graduate credit.
- The student's department verifies that the transfer credits contribute to the student's degree program and includes them in the student's *Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study* (see [Appendix O](#) and **Degree Course and Program Requirements, p. 5**).
- The graduate dean approves the inclusion of the transferred credits in the student's Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study.

**Doctoral program.** Some doctoral students attend Western Michigan University (WMU) after earning a master's degree elsewhere, and their subsequent course work is completed at WMU. A student enrolled in the BA Doctoral Program must complete a minimum of 30 course credit hours **plus** 12 dissertation credit hours at WMU. Because the BA Doctoral Program is a 78 credit hour program (anticipated 79 for fall 2020), any credits transferred into the doctoral program from other universities may not exceed 36 semester credit hours (30 course credit hours and 6 thesis credit hours). Graduate credit earned at another institution after admission to the doctoral program is eligible for transfer provided all criteria listed above (Master's program) are met with the following exception:

- The credit is earned within a seven-year period (as opposed to six for the Master's program) prior to graduation from Western Michigan University, is represented on an official transcript of the other institution, and is identified on that transcript as graduate credit.

### 2. Enrollment for PSY 7000 and PSY 7300

Forms for 7000/7300 require graduate college approval. Registering for them requires a signed *Permission to Elect* form (see [Appendix C](#)). These forms must be returned to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant to be submitted for this signature. Once the form is approved and you receive the email from the graduate college as such, you may register yourself for the class. If your section is full, email the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant to enroll you. You are responsible for self-registering each semester. The same semester you take 7000/7300 for the first time, you need to turn in your committee form. 7000/Thesis requires 3 members from within the department. 7300/Dissertation requires 3 members from within the department and 1 outside reader. If a committee member is not a WMU faculty member, please get an updated CV from them so the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant can ensure they have Graduate-Faculty status, which allows them to be on a committee.

**Fall Semester Registration.** If you waited until the week school starts to turn in your forms, you may not get approval before add/drop ends. If this is the case, you will be required to do a late add with the registrar once approval comes back. The late/add form requires more signatures, which are the student's responsibility to obtain.

**Spring Semester Deadline.** If you intend to take PSY 7000/7300 in the Spring semester, return your forms to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant BEFORE [November 1st](#).

### 3. **Required Continuous Enrollment:**

Once you start taking PSY 7000/7300 you must take at least 1 credit each in **every fall and spring semester until you graduate. The courses must be part of your program of study.** If you are graduating in a summer session, you must take at least 1 credit during that summer session only (not both, just the one you are graduating in). Thus, if you defend in Summer 2, but are not graduating until Fall, you must take 1 credit in Fall.

### 4. **Time Limits**

○ **Master's program.** All work accepted for the degree program must be completed within six years preceding the date on which the master's degree is conferred. All work must be completed satisfactorily by the day of graduation. Extensions beyond the six years may be granted by the dean of the Graduate College for such legitimate reasons as illness, injury, or hardship. In such situations, the student and department must demonstrate how the student will bring up to date the content knowledge from courses taken more than six years before the projected date of graduation.

○ **Doctoral program.** All work accepted for the degree program must be completed within seven years preceding the date on which the doctoral degree is conferred. All work must be completed satisfactorily by the day of graduation. Extensions beyond the seven years may be granted (see above).

### 5. **Graduation**

Review graduation requirements at the graduate college. <https://wmich.edu/grad/current-students/graduation>  
To qualify for graduation, students must have fulfilled all degree and University requirements and obligations. The graduation process requires students to apply for graduation by submitting an *Application for Graduation Audit* (see [Appendix P](#)). A \$45.00 fee (as of 2019) will be applied to the student account. Doctoral students should apply at least two semesters prior to intended graduation date. The application deadlines are as follows:

- Fall Semester Graduation (December) August 1
- Spring Semester Graduation (April) December 1
- Summer I Session Graduation (June) February 1
- Summer II Session Graduation\* (August) February 1

\*No Commencement Exercises in August

**Graduation audit.** The graduation audit, initiated by the submission of the Application for Graduation, is a process by which a student's academic record is examined to make sure all the requirements for the degree have been met. A graduation auditor in the Registrar's Office conducts the audit, and its outcome depends greatly on the completeness and appropriateness of the materials contained in the student's academic record. Students should ensure that the following requirements are met and the following documents are contained in their academic record before applying for graduation:

1. A Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study is completed ([Appendix O](#) for the MA program, [Appendix Q](#) for the PhD program), approved by the advisor and graduate dean, and filed in the Registrar's Office with the appropriate graduation auditor.
2. All transfer credit, if applicable, is approved, and the Graduate Transfer Credit form is appropriately signed by the advisor and the graduation auditor.
3. All completed course work (and other program requirements, where applicable) coincides with the Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study.



4. Where applicable, all relevant documents are filed attesting to the approval of committee appointments, passing of comprehensive examinations, completion of research tools, successful defense of thesis or dissertation, fulfillment of any residency requirement, and compliance with the continuous enrollment requirement within the time limit allowed for the completion of degree requirements.

Students who do not meet all degree and University requirements will be removed from the graduation class automatically. Such students must change their graduation date. Under no circumstances will any student be graduated with a class if the student's academic record does not show complete fulfillment of all requirements within thirty days after the established commencement date.

Students who wish to change from one graduation class to another need to complete a change of graduation date form. The graduation auditor will not automatically move the student to another graduation class. No fee is charged for submitting a change of graduation date form.

## APPENDIX – LINKS TO GRADUATE FORMS

All forms (except GSAR and fellowship applications) should be submitted first to the Graduate Training Administrative Assistant

### A. Petition of Waiver/Substitution Form

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2018/Course%20Substitution%20Waiver.pdf>

### B. Committee Appointment Form

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2015/committee-appointment.pdf>

### C. Permission to Elect Form

[https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2018/Permission%20to%20Elect\\_0.pdf](https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2018/Permission%20to%20Elect_0.pdf)

### D. Doctoral Dissertation, Thesis, or Specialist Project Proposal Approval Form

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2017/proposal%20approval.pdf>

### E. Thesis/Project Oral Defense Approval Form

- Thesis: <https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2014/Thesis%20Defense.pdf>
- Project: <https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2014/Project%20Defense.pdf>
- Thesis Transfer Defense:  
<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2014/Thesis%20Transfer%20Form.pdf>

### F. Graduate College Thesis Approval Form

<https://wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-approval>

### G. Thesis Check-In Form

[https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2018/thesisproject\\_checkform\\_0.pdf](https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2018/thesisproject_checkform_0.pdf)

### H. BA Program Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Approval

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2018/Comp%20Exam%20Approval.pdf>

### I. Oral Exam Announcement

See Defense Scheduling: <https://wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-forms>

### J. Dissertation Oral Defense Approval Form

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2014/Dissertation%20Defense.pdf>

### K. Graduate College Dissertation Approval Form

<https://wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-approval>

#### **L. Dissertation Check-In Form**

[https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2018/diss\\_checkform\\_0.pdf](https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2018/diss_checkform_0.pdf)

#### **M. Graduate Student Funding Opportunities**

<https://wmich.edu/grad/forms>

#### **N. Graduate Student Annual Review (GSAR) Form**

Updated forms may be emailed to students. Check with the BA Program Chair:

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2014/GSAR.pdf>

#### **O. Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study Master's Level**

Example below but see the Psychology Dept. Graduate Training Administrative Assistant  
<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u108/2015/wmu-grad-permanent-program.pdf>

#### **P. Application for Graduation Audit**

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u135/2015/Graduate%20Graduation%20Application.pdf>

#### **Q. Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study Doctoral Level**

Example below but see the Psychology Dept. Graduate Training Administrative Assistant  
[https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2015/doctoral-programofstudy\\_1.pdf](https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2015/doctoral-programofstudy_1.pdf)

#### **R. Admission to Doctoral Candidacy**

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/other/u582/2018/DAC%20Admission%206.6.18.pdf>