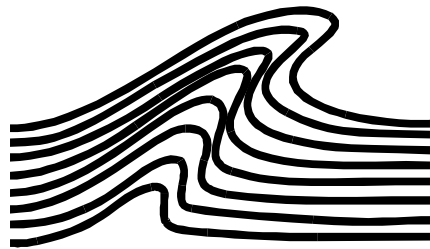


The University of Nevada, Reno
Department of Psychology



Behavior Analysis Masters Program
Student Handbook

2008-2009

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

The University of Nevada, Reno is a fully accredited, doctoral degree granting institution, serving approximately 14,000 students in 30 graduate and 70 undergraduate degree programs. The Department of Psychology is made up of three doctoral degree programs, including an APA accredited Clinical Program and an Experimental Program, in addition the ABA accredited Behavior Analysis Program. The Experimental and Behavior Analysis Programs also offer Master's degrees. There are 20 faculty members in the Department, and approximately 400 undergraduate majors and 120 graduate students in the various programs on campus. An additional 120 students are enrolled in off-campus Master's degree programs in Behavior Analysis in the United States and Canada. The campus Master's degree program in Behavior Analysis is also accredited by the ABA.

BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS PROGRAM

Behavior Analysis is a sub-division of the discipline of Psychology, distinguished by a unique philosophical, theoretical, and methodological orientation. The philosophical orientation is one of naturalistic monism. Historical and contextually-situated behavior-environment relations constitute its subject matter. Its method is experimental, with aims of description, prediction, and control of its subject matter. It has also a distinctive, widely applicable, and effective technology.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Behavior Analysis Program at the University of Nevada, Reno, is to strengthen Behavior Analysis as a scientific discipline and as a professional occupation.

Program Goals

The Behavior Analysis Program operates on a self-capitalization model, wherein faculty members have revenue-generating responsibilities in addition to regular academic duties. The survival of the program depends on the success of this model, and its transformation over time into a more stable system. A necessary condition for the accomplishment of the program's mission is the survival of the program. Hence, one overarching goal of the Behavior Analysis Program is:

Goal 1: To assure the survival of the Behavior Analysis Program.

Some of the means by which this goal may be accomplished include: Engendering conceptual support for the program from the discipline; securing support from UNR for transition to a stable program model; and providing service to the Department of Psychology and the University.

The survival of the program is not a sufficient condition for the accomplishment of its mission, however. Strengthening the discipline and profession of Behavior Analysis entails operating in such a manner as to demonstrate continuous improvement in the program's effectiveness in achieving this outcome. Hence, the second overarching goal is:

Goal 2: To demonstrate continuous improvement in program outcomes indicative of the accomplishment of its mission.

The means by which we may accomplish this goal is to articulate, implement, monitor, evaluate and modify our practices based on continuously collected data. The program operates in accordance with a Total Performance System (TPS) for this purpose.

To accomplish these first two goals, it is necessary to enlist the participation of all program members, and to do so in such a way as to foster enthusiasm and collegiality. Hence, a third overarching goal of the program is:

Goal 3: To engage all program participants in a genuine partnership, dedicated to the achievement of the program's mission.

Some of the means by which this goal may be accomplished include involving all program members in program governance, operating in accordance with open-book financial management practices, and working toward TPS awards for the achievement of program outcomes.

Program Objectives

The aim of the program is to provide comprehensive training in behavior analysis, out of which more specialized basic, applied and theoretical interests in behavior analysis may be developed on the parts of students. A balance of empirical, conceptual, and applied training is sought. More specifically, the objectives of the Behavior Analysis Program are:

- 1. To preserve the accumulated knowledge of behavior science by imparting it to others.***
- 2. To develop the science of behavior through the production of new knowledge.***
- 3. To contribute to the betterment of society by the application of this knowledge.***
- 4. To assure the viability of the profession through participation in its governance.***

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Program Director

The Behavior Analysis Program is administered by a Program Director, who reports to the Chair of the Psychology Department and serves as a member of the Department's Executive Committee. The Program Director provides leadership to the Program in the accomplishment of its mission.

Behavior Analysis Training Committee

The Behavior Analysis Training Committee (BATC) is the policy and decision-making body for the Behavior Analysis Program. The BATC is chaired by the Program Director, and is composed of all behavior analysis faculty plus two elected student representatives, one from each degree program. The

Financial Officer is an ex-officio member of the BATC. The operations of the Behavior Analysis Program are managed by way of a number of standing and ad hoc committees, including Admissions, Marketing, and Visiting Scholars Committee, among others, as needed.

Financial Officer

The financial operations of the Program are managed by the Accountant Technician, who reports to the Program Director. The Accountant Technician also manages the BA Office and staff, and acts in an advisory capacity to the BATC.

FACULTY

The Behavior Analysis faculty consists of six core members, including Mark Alavosius, Pat Ghezzi, Linda Hayes, Steve Hayes, Ramona Houmanfar, and Larry Williams (Program Director). Several others participate as adjunct and affiliated faculty.

To serve as appropriate models for students, the faculty must engage in scholarly and research activities on an ongoing basis, which attract and involve students. The faculty members have mentorship relations with particular students, serving to guide those students in their scholarly and professional activities. Behavior Analysis faculty have agreed to limit their mentorship responsibilities to no more than eight students at any one time.

STUDENTS

We seek students who are committed to a behavioral orientation in psychology, who show research and scholarly potential, as teachers, scientists and practitioners. We value both ability and accomplishment in our selection process and in our continuing support for our students. We work closely together, and it is thereby important to us that students fit in well with the group, both intellectually and personally.

Students are expected to function independently, to take the initiative in developing research plans, and assuming appropriate responsibility for the direction and specific goals of their learning experiences. Students are expected to be able to schedule and manage their time effectively. The first two years of the program are much more structured than the later ones, as students are expected to complete most of the required courses during these years. It is important that classes and exams be completed on schedule, making it necessary for students to take required classes when they are offered. Students are expected to devote themselves to their studies full time, including summers throughout their years in the program.

We also believe students learn a great deal from each other. Consequently, we seek a heterogeneous student population, of younger and older students, both male and female, with racial and cultural diversity.

MASTER'S CURRICULUM

Preparation for Graduate Study

It is expected that graduate students enrolling in the program will have solid backgrounds in psychology. If a deficiency is noted, however, students are required to meet the deficiency, either by taking courses or through other suitable means. The entrance requirements include at least *18 hours* of undergraduate psychology, including the following courses (or their equivalents): Learning or Behavior Analysis, Statistics, and Experimental Design.

In order to overcome a deficiency, students should indicate in a written proposal to the BATC how they plan to meet that particular deficiency. The program consists of course work, research, and practical training. These activities are described in detail below.

Didactic Courses

Course work in the program consists of 19 required credits in behavior analysis, as shown below. In addition, there are 12 credits of practical experience and six credits of thesis, for a grand total of 37 credits.

Ethics in Psychology
Principles of Behavior
Radical Behaviorism
Behavioral & Systems Assessment or
Behavioral Systems Analysis
Behavioral Interventions
Behavior Management & Consultation
Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis

Transfer of Credits

Students may wish to substitute graduate courses taken at another institution for courses required by the program. (This *includes* courses taken as a Graduate Special at UNR.) The BATC approves transfers on a course-by-course basis, wherein transfer approval depends on the substitutability of the course to be transferred for a specific course required in the doctoral curriculum. A transfer of credits proposal must include the UNR course to be substituted, the transfer course syllabus including reading lists/textbooks, and a description of the level of the course and its prerequisites (copies of relevant pages from the catalog of the school involved are helpful on this point). *Practical training credits are not approved for transfer, regardless of where they were accumulated.* The student must have earned a grade of “B” or better to transfer the course (a grade of “B-“does not satisfy this requirement.)

Students wishing to propose credit transfers must submit a proposal with relevant documentation to the BATC by October 14th of the first year of study. The maximum number of transfer credits allowed by the Graduate School is 9 semester credit hours. Once approved by the

BATC, a transfer of credit form must be filed by the student with the Graduate School at UNR.

Practical Training

Aim and Purpose

The purpose of the Practica is to provide supervised applied training to graduate students. These experiences are of different sorts and are arranged in part to support students' career interests, and in part to broaden their interests.

Placements and Procedures

Practicum experiences may involve clinical, educational, or organizational and program development work. Placements are arranged and assigned by the BATC in consultation with the faculty and are supervised and monitored by the Behavior Analysis faculty. Students may not apply for nor accept an offer from a practicum site without the approval of the BATC.

One semester of practicum is equivalent to 150 hours, or 10 hour per week for 15 weeks. Students are required to log their time and activities and to make these data available to their practicum supervisors on a weekly basis. Practicum supervisors are responsible for specifying student's responsibilities, signing their logs, and for guiding, monitoring and evaluating students' performance. Students are responsible for evaluating faculty members' supervision of their practica. If the student does not log 150 hours by the end of the practicum semester, they will receive a grade of "Incomplete" for the semester and will be required to finish the hours during the subsequent semester.

Research

Lab Participation

Research experience is accomplished through participation in faculty research labs. All faculty members hold weekly lab meetings and students are expected to participate in laboratory experiences in connection with these labs throughout their entire training.

Upon attending the program, students become situated in their accepting faculty advisor/mentor's lab. As a rule, Master's students do not participate in a secondary lab. Participation in a lab occurs by mutual agreement between the student and faculty member. Regular attendance at lab meetings is mandatory.

Master's Thesis

The Master's thesis is supervised by a committee of three graduate faculty members, including one outside of the Department of Psychology. Thesis research must be approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nevada, Reno, prior to data collection. That approval is contingent

upon a committee-approved thesis prospectus.

Theses are usually proposed during the second year of the student's program and completed by the end of the third year. While desirable, a Master's thesis need not make an original contribution to the science of behavior or its applications. It is the responsibility of the student and the thesis advisor to conduct the study as approved by the thesis committee at the time of the proposal meeting. Thesis proposal meetings and defenses may not be scheduled in the anticipated absence of a member of the committee.

Students are encouraged to present their theses at a professional meeting or conference, and to submit their work for publication.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Each student has an advisor whose primary responsibilities are to assist the student in completing their degree requirements, including their research, to promote their professional development, and to facilitate their placement upon graduation. The advisor also serves as the liaison between the student and the BATC. If at any time a student needs counseling, tutoring, or other assistance, the advisor is the person to help him/her make the appropriate arrangements. The advisor is also responsible for initiating disciplinary procedures in the case of a student's ethical or academic misconduct. Students are responsible for completing a consumer satisfaction survey at the end of each semester (see TPS Handbook).

Students accepted into the Behavior analysis Program to either the Masters or Doctoral programs, are accepted as students under the mentorship of the faculty they are accepted under. As such, all academic advising that any student receives is the responsibility of their advisor / mentor. It is the responsibility of all Behavior Analysis Faculty to provide appropriate guidance and oversight with respect to each of their students course and other credit registration completions each semester, including approval of grant-in-aide or other program tuition payment agreements. Such payment arrangements must be completed within the time-lines specified by the graduate school each semester.

Research Advising

Advisory responsibilities are assumed by the student's research supervisor as of the students' first semester in the program. Advisement occurs by way of a mutual decision of the faculty member and the student. Students may elect to change advisers by gaining permission from their current advisor and their prospective advisor.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Board Certification for Behavior Analysts (BCBA and BCABA)

The Program's curriculum is approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board as meeting the training requirements necessary to sit for the examinations for certification at the Behavior analyst

or Associate Behavior Analyst levels. Students for whom this professional credential has immediate or longer-term professional significance are expected to have completed the course and training requirements necessary to sit for the BCBA or BCABA exams within three years of their admission to the program. These requirements include completion of all necessary courses, a thesis, and those hours of supervised practice that are possible to arrange during the student's tenure in the program. Bear in mind that it is the student's responsibility to make the necessary forms available to the faculty member(s) supervising their applied experience(s). Students are referred to the Behavior Analysis Certification Board web site for all necessary information regarding Board Certification. Behavior Analyst Certification Board [Behavior_Analyst_Certification_B@mail.vresp.com]

Intellectual Development

Students are expected to take advantage of opportunities for intellectual development available to them. Opportunities of this sort include departmental colloquia, conferences, and receptions for visiting scholars. Students are also expected to present their research and scholarly work at professional meetings or conferences, and to take advantage of these opportunities to become acquainted with the professional community. Travel funds are available through the Graduate Student Association.

Professional Service

Professional development also occurs by way of participation in service activities for relevant professional societies, such as volunteering to serve on committees, task forces, conference organizing committees, newsletter staff, and the like. Numerous opportunities of these sorts are available to students by way of faculty involvement in professional societies, special interest groups and committees. Service to the Psychology Department and the Behavior Analysis Program, especially in roles as student representatives, is also especially valuable.

Financial Literacy

Students are expected to develop financial literacy with respect to the Behavior Analysis Program and its various projects, and to demonstrate this competence in their professional placement activities and in Behavior Analysis Program meetings.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Students

Students' academic and professional performances are evaluated at the end of each semester by way of the Total Performance System. Students are evaluated in the following five areas: (1) academic performance, (2) scholarly-research productivity, (3) practical knowledge, skills, and ethical conduct, (4) professional development, and (5) program participation. Evaluations are done face-to-face with students, producing a permanent product that is signed by both the student and the student's advisor.

Master's students are also reviewed annually by their faculty advisor to ensure that they are making satisfactory progress toward their degree. Students must bring to that meeting their current vita, a current academic transcript, and a current Plan of Study.

Satisfactory Progress

Maintaining a full course of study, achieving at least a "B" grade in all required behavior analysis courses, satisfactory performance in program-sponsored employment, and a sterling record of ethical conduct constitute satisfactory progress. Continuation in the program in cases where these requirements are not met is at the discretion of the BATC.

If a student has demonstrated misconduct of an academic or ethical sort, continuation in the program may be denied, or graduation delayed, until the BATC is satisfied that the student will be able to function in the future in a responsible and ethical manner.

The Master's degree is ordinarily achieved in three years, although particular types of research and unforeseen difficulties may result in a longer time to completion. Master's students will be notified, at the end of three years that they have one additional year to complete their degree requirements. Failure to complete the degree requirements by the end of the fourth year may result in termination from the program at the discretion of BATC.

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

Program Funding

Self-Capitalization

The Behavior Analysis Program operates on a self-capitalization plan. This means that the program is funded through the entrepreneurial efforts of the Behavior Analysis faculty and graduate students. Most of the resources for the program, including faculty salaries, student support, staff support, equipment, and operations expenses are generated through these efforts. Hence, the well-being of the program depends on the effectiveness of these efforts.

Open Book Management

To enable faculty and graduate students to participate fully in these efforts, the Behavior Analysis Program operates on an open book financial management plan. This means that all faculty and students are fully informed as to the financial status of the program on a regular basis. Graduate students have responsibilities with respect to accounting for program and project finances, and are encouraged to participate in financial analysis, planning and intervention. These are important skills to develop as a graduate student, as financial literacy is becoming increasingly important for professionals in our field.

Total Performance System

In order for the Behavior Analysis Program to show continuous improvement in the accomplishment of its mission, we need to know how well we are doing on critical outcome measures.

For this purpose, we have brought total performance logic to bear on our operations. All students and faculty in the Behavior Analysis Program participate in this system, which is described in greater detail in another document.

Student Funding

Students admitted to the Master's Program are not given guarantees of support or tuition and fee waivers unless those are part of the agreement established by the faculty who accepted them. When this is the case, it is available to students employed by the Behavior Analysis Program or to those assigned by the BATC to positions managed by the Program, according to conditions specified by the BATC in consultation with the relevant program faculty. These conditions, or Terms of Employment, must be signed by the student in order to secure this funding. Funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance in the Program.

Domestic students are expected to have established residency in Nevada by the beginning of their second year in the program. Failure to establish Nevada residency will result in the University requiring tuition to be paid at the out-of-state rate. Such rates are not covered by any funding offered by the Behavior Analysis Program. It is the responsibility of the student to pay the difference between the in-state and out-of-state rates. International students are exempt from the Nevada State residency requirement.

Students may be paid graduate stipends or student wages. In both cases, students *must complete time/activity logs* and will be paid on the basis of the hours submitted and approved by their supervisors.

Students must first give written notice to the BATC, and then receive permission from the BATC before taking a paid position in the community, as this circumstance may have implications for further funding from the Program. If a student performs work in the mental health field, for instance, they need to be aware that there are restrictions on their activities and the manner in which they represent themselves to the community. Bear in mind that one cannot be recognized or presented as a Psychologist or as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst without the proper credentials. Also, students may not compete with actual or potential revenue-generating activities of the Behavior Analysis Program.

BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS MASTER'S CURRICULUM

<u>Credits</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Title</u>
3	Psy 609	Principles of Behavior
1	Psy 695	Ethics in Psychology
3	Psy 673	Radical Behaviorism
3	Psy 783	Behavioral Interventions
3	Psy 713	Behavioral Observation & Assessment <u>or</u>
	Psy 769	Behavioral Systems Analysis
3	Psy 767	Behavioral Management & Consultation
3	Psy 699	Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis
6	Psy 766	Behavior Analysis Practicum I
6	Psy 768	Behavior Analysis Practicum II
<u>6</u>	Psy 797	Thesis

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