

TO: GRADUATE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
FROM: DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
SUBJECT: NEW MASTER'S DEGREE OPTION IN PSYCHOLOGY: APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS
DATE FEBRUARY 14, 2014

The Department of Psychology is submitting the following additional option within our graduate program. This addition is based on current state and national trends in behavior analysis graduate education.

A. Summary of Proposed Changes:

1. **State the rationale for the program. Include the programmatic goals and objectives, and how the program fits into the departmental mission statement.**

The mission of the Department of Psychology is to promote the discovery, transmission and application of the scientific principles of psychology within the University and the community. As a field of study, Applied Behavior Analysis fits well with the department's mission since Applied Behavior Analysis is a science-based helping profession and well-developed discipline focusing on behavior change utilizing the application of established standards for evidence-based practice. Applied behavior analysts work in various settings effecting behavior change in a variety of populations and are in high demand. For instance, many applied behavior analysts work in the development and application of behavioral treatment programs for individuals with autism, improve the behavior of children in school, increase reading and math skills, help individuals develop healthy lifestyles, improve work performance, and many others. What makes applied behavior analysis stand out is the field's adherence to identifying environmental variables that affect behavior, identifying clinically relevant target behaviors for change and demonstrating measureable outcomes. To this end, providing students with the opportunity for advanced training in applied behavior analysis will allow graduates of this program to meet the demand for trained behavior analysts at state and national levels. Furthermore, students who receive approved Master's level training in applied behavior analysis and pass the Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification exam become eligible for certification as Board Certified Behavior Analysts, a requirement of employment in an increasing number of settings.

2. **State the job opportunities for graduates of the proposed program. Include evidence documenting those opportunities.**

Individuals trained in applied behavior analysis at the master's level are in demand nationwide. As of 10/8/13, 637 jobs were currently listed on the Association of Behavior Analysis International Career Center website (http://jobs.abainternational.org/c/search_results.cfm?site_id=8858). Of these, 110 required at least a Master's degree in psychology, behavior analysis or a related field. A cursory check of the first 10 positions listed all required or preferred Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification.

In Michigan, the demand is also high. Michigan's Autism Insurance Reform legislation (PA 99 and PA 100 of 2012) went into effect on October 15, 2012. The new law requires health carriers to provide coverage for diagnoses and treatments related to autism spectrum disorders. However, Michigan lacks enough providers to immediately serve the needs of all of the children in the state with autism. According to the Autism Alliance of Michigan (<http://autismallianceofmichigan.org/>) there are over 15,000 kids in Michigan with an autism spectrum disorder and there are currently about 115 Board Certified Behavior Analysts in Michigan, and only about 30 analysts provide services to families with autism.

To address the concerns of the Autism Spectrum Disorder community in Michigan, a state plan development committee (the Michigan Autism Spectrum Disorder State Plan Development Committee and Advisory Committee) was assembled to study the national trends in Autism Spectrum Disorder, review what is currently in place for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Michigan, and make recommendations in the areas of system and service coordination, family involvement, early identification and intervention, educational services, adult services, healthcare, and training and professional development. In December 2012, this committee submitted the Michigan Autism Spectrum Disorder State Plan to the Department of Community Health, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, and the Michigan Department of Education. As one of its recommendations for immediate action, the committee encouraged universities to train more students in shortage areas, such as applied behavior analysis, to increase the number of these providers in schools, mental health settings, and adult service agencies.

There is clearly a need nationally for individuals trained in applied behavior analysis, however, the need is acute in Michigan, and especially so in the Upper Peninsula which currently has only four Board Certified Behavior Analysts within 100 miles of Marquette (population 21,355 (2010 US census) compared to Mt. Pleasant with a 2010 population of 26,016 which has seventy seven.

3. Indicate if there are related programs in any departments at NMU.

There are currently no other programs like this at NMU. The department of Education, Leadership and Public Service offers an MA with a concentration in learning disabilities, but this pertains to work conducted in educational settings by a certified teacher who must meet state educational requirements. These endorsements are not the same as those needed to gain Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification, nor do they allow an individual to engage in therapies that are conducted by those with Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification. Behavior Analysts conduct assessments, develop treatments plans, execute treatment plans and evaluate outcomes of many types of behaviors that include but are not restricted to educational or school settings (e.g. institutional settings, home, business, etc.).

4. Indicate how the proposed program compares to other professional programs that exist at other regional/national universities

Currently there are approximately 150 universities nationwide providing the eligible Board Certified Behavior Analyst coursework and experience requirements. Michigan universities include Central Michigan University (Board Certified Associate Behavior Analyst and Board Certified Behavior Analyst), Eastern Michigan University (Board Certified Behavior Analyst), Western Michigan University (Board Certified Associate Behavior Analyst, Board Certified Behavior Analyst), Michigan State University (online Board Certified Behavior Analyst), and Oakland University (Board Certified Behavior Analyst). **NMU's program would be the only one of its kind in the Upper Peninsula.**

5. Describe if the proposed program will affect the department's accreditation, if appropriate.

The psychology department does not have accredited programs. The proposed program would be recognized by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board as having "approved university training," and would be listed on Behavior Analyst Certification Board website for approved programs.

6. Provide the listing of the proposed program as it will appear in the Graduate Bulletin.

The Psychology Department offers a master of science degree that provides students with a thorough grounding in **applied behavior analysis**, preparing the student for doctoral programs and/or employment in applied settings. The MS degree in applied behavior analysis at NMU provides (a) coursework required for Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, (b) support in obtaining the experience required for Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification, and (c) opportunities for independent research. Graduates of this program will be prepared to work in applied settings such as schools, hospitals, and other organizations as Applied Behavior Analysts.

7. State the admission requirements for the program.

Applications for admission to the MS program in Applied Behavior Analysis at NMU, on either a full- or part-time basis, will be accepted from students holding a BA or BS degree in psychology. These students must also meet the Graduate Education and Research Office admission requirements consisting of a minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA. Candidates must submit an authorized transcript of their BA- or BS-level work which must include a course in Introductory Psychology, and a course in Statistics, a formal letter of application outlining goals and expectations, and at least three letters of reference from individuals who know the candidate personally. GRE exam scores, from both the general and the psychology sections, are recommended but optional.

The graduate admissions committee of the Psychology Department will review all applications. Dossiers are evaluated in their entirety. The committee will offer full or conditional admission to the MS degree program, depending upon the candidate's comparative strengths and weaknesses, to a limited number of acceptable applicants each year.

8. State the graduation requirements for the program.

Students will be required to complete 40 hours of designated course and practicum work including 12 hours of an intensive practicum experience and an Applied Behavior Research Capstone project (2 credits) or thesis (4 credits). (see Addendum A)

9. Include course outlines of any new or substantially revised courses, including Graduate Bulletin descriptions.

PY 462: Professional Ethics (NEW) 4 credits*

Prerequisites: PY100S, L, G, or H and senior-level standing or permission of instructor.

This course is a comprehensive introduction to ethical standards and decision making for psychologists including the unique guidelines for behavior analysts. The course will cover the role of professional organizations, the ethical duties of professionals to society, and the principles on which ethical standards are based. The students will learn to apply ethical principles and standards to all domains of their professional work including design, conduct and report of research, the boundaries of clinical practice, behavioral treatment plans with uniquely vulnerable clients, collegial relationships, supervision of ABA paraprofessionals and students, and professional publications.

*Because this is a new undergraduate course, it will be submitted to the Committee on Undergraduate Programming (CUP) for approval; until CUP approval, this course would be offered as a PY495/PY496 Special Topics in Psychology

PY592: Psychology Practicum 4 credits

(This course is an existing course listed in the university bulletin from 1982. There is no electronic description of the course available.)

We will be resurrecting the course and making a few small changes (including a course description for the Graduate Bulletin) as follows:

PY592: Psychology Practicum (4 cr Pra)

Prerequisites: PY403, PY 503 and PY511, permission of instructor and a valid clear/cleared criminal background report on file with the university.

Focus will be on providing students with experience in conducting assessments, designing, implementing, and supervising behavior change programs as well as instruction on the use of behavior change systems, effective management and supervision of persons responsible for carrying out behavior change programs. Experience in multiple settings with multiple populations is encouraged. May be repeated for a total of 12 credits.

State the projected enrollment for the program in years one, two and five.

There is a demand in this region for certified Applied Behavior Analysts. Therefore, the limits to enrollment pertain to the number of students who can be placed in available practicum positions. At present, this program can place up to 10 students in practicum positions in the Marquette area, through agreements that this department has with Pathways and Teaching Family Homes. A job requirement for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (see staffing plan below) will be to find or create additional practicum positions for these students.

Year 1: 10 students

Year 3: 20 students

Year 5: 30 students

10. State the anticipated costs of the program for each of five years, including separate descriptions for:

a. Staff

Secretarial staff sufficient.

b. Equipment – N/A

c. Supplies – N/A

d. Library – Journals we currently subscribe to are sufficient

e. Space - OK

11. Indicate staffing plans for the new program, including if the current faculty are sufficient and competent to deliver the proposed curriculum, or if new faculty will be needed to do so.

The Psychology Department will need to retain current faculty with expertise in behavior analysis, but in addition, the department must hire a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in order for the program to meet the certification requirements of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

Current faculty expertise

The Psychology Department has the following faculty who have the necessary education and training to teach coursework in this program. However, these faculty are not certified nor do we anticipate that these faculty will engage in farther training in order to meet the certification requirements of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board. Thus, these faculty will not be able to supervise the practicum experiences.

Paul Andronis, Ph.D. (teaches courses in Behavior Analysis, as well as general psychology content course)

Adam Prus, Ph.D. (is qualified to teach courses in Behavior Analysis and he teaches the graduate-level statistics course, but he is also assigned to teach courses in Biological Psychology and Neuroscience)

Sue Kapla, Ph.D. (teaches courses in Behavior Analysis, but is currently on a term contract)

Staffing requests

The department will need to maintain current staffing and will also need to hire a full-time Board Certified Behavior Analyst to meet the certification requirements and additional teaching load brought on by the addition of three practicum courses, an ethics course, and the applied field research course. The person would be hired in as 12-month tenure-track Assistant Professor who meets the academic requirements described in the AAUP/NMU Master Agreement and the Psychology Department bylaws. As described in the program requirements provided by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, this person will serve as the Approved Course Sequence Coordinator and will have both teaching, supervision, and coordination responsibilities. Coordination and supervision of practicum experiences will occur in the Summer, Fall, and Winter. This new faculty member will be required to supervise 10% of all practicum hours, per the requirements of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

- 12. Describe the equipment that is currently available for the proposed program and equipment that will be needed for the proposed program.**

No additional equipment will be needed.

- 13. State anticipated library usage by students in the proposed program. Include in this statement a review of current library resources and verification that the department has consulted with library staff about the adequacy of current library holdings.**

The library currently holds all of the necessary Psychology journals needed to support the courses for this program. PY505 currently receives support from library staff to teach students about NMU's library resources and this program will continue to draw on support from the library in this manner. If course enrollment increases substantially, then we may need additional hours from library staff to support this course.

- 14. Indicate if current space is adequate to house the proposed program and, if it is not, state new space requirements.**

The department will need to accommodate office and laboratory space for the BCBA instructor that will be hired to support this program.

- 15. Indicate when the program will be delivered (fall/winter/summer semesters; day or evening offerings).**

Courses will be offered in the Summer, Fall and Winter semesters. We will recommend that students engage in some of their practicum experiences during the Summer semester between years one and two.

16. Indicate if the program will be delivered face-to-face, hybrid, or online.

Most courses will be delivered face-to-face, but a course may be offered online or in a hybrid format, pending approval of the department's graduate programs committee.

17. State the planned implementation date for the proposed program.

The Psychology Department will implement the program in Fall 2014

Addendum A (BCBA Content and hours requirements and NMU courses that meet these requirements)

BCBA Content Requirement	BCBA Hour Requirement	NMU Course	Credits
Ethical & Professional conduct	45 hours	PY462 (NEW): Professional Ethics	4 credits
Implementation, Management & Supervision	5 hours		
Concepts & Principles of Behavior Analysis	45 hours	PY503: Analysis of Behavior: Advanced Theory & Methods	4 credits
Measurement (including data analysis) & Experimental Design	25 hours 20 hours	PY505: Advanced Research Methods & Experimental Design I	4 credits
Fundamental Elements of Behavior Change & Specific Behavior Change Procedures & Behavior Change Systems	45 hours 5 hours	PY511: Behavior Modification	4 credits
Identification of the Problem & Assessment Intervention &	30 hours	PY403: Behavior Assessment & Evaluation	4 credits

Behavior Change Considerations	10 hours		
Behavior Change Systems	5 hours	PY593: Practicum (NEW)	4 credits (repeated for three semesters for a total of 12 credits)
Implementation, Management & Supervision	5 hours		
Discretionary	30 hours		
TOTAL	270 hours (required)		
		PY506: Advanced Research Methods & Design II	4 credits
		PY590: Applied Research (2 cr) or PY599: Thesis (4 cr)	2-4 credits
		TOTAL	38-40 credits

Proposed Course Sequence

	Fall	Winter
Year 1	PY503 (4) PY462 (4) (new)	PY511(4) PY403 (4)
Summer	PY593 I (4)	
Year 2	PY505 (4) PY 593 II (4)	PY506 (4) PY593 III (4) PY590 (2) or PY599 (4)