

# Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism

The mission of the Esteves School of Education is to prepare highly effective educators, school counselors, and school leaders who believe in full inclusion, who value diversity, who are reflective, and who are knowledgeable about best practices. Therefore, we ask Sage educators, counselors, and leaders to consider two essential questions throughout their studies and field experiences: Who am I in the lives of those with whom I work? Who am I in the life of my educational community? **We expect all Sage candidates to demonstrate leadership and create optimal educational outcomes for all learners.**

The motto of Russell Sage College, *"To Be, To Know, To Do,"* informs the educational purpose where the common effort is to translate learning into action and application, within a framework that recognizes the obligation of educated persons to lead and serve their communities. In the Esteves School of Education, this motto is extended to form the basis for our programs.

## Conceptual Framework

An underlying structure in a professional education unit that gives conceptual meanings through an articulated rationale to the unit's operation, and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, faculty scholarship and service, and unit accountability. T-BIRDS - the key concepts of the conceptual framework:

- Technology: a vehicle for learners to acquire information, practice skills, use higher order thinking skills, and participate in collaborative projects.
- Best Practices: the pedagogical knowledge, skills and practices that have been shown through research and evaluation to be effective and/or efficient and that candidates use to teach all learners.
- Inclusion and Diversity: the ability to collaborate and team with other professionals in developing and implementing strategies to accommodate diverse learners; the ability to develop solutions that will enhance the learning experiences of all children; and, the ability of candidates to be aware of and sensitive to diversity issues and to use culturally and socially responsive pedagogy.
- Reflection: the ability to reflect and assess one's own effectiveness, and to systematically make adjustments to improve and strengthen areas needing attention.
- Dispositions: the demonstration of respect for learner differences, commitment to own personal growth, and engagement in short and long-term planning.
- Service Learning: the strategies that integrate meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich children's learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

These elements are interrelated and integrated to prepare teacher candidates to assume roles as reflective facilitators of learning, combining knowledge and skills to exemplify those qualities and dispositions that characterize effective teachers.

## Center for Applied Behavior Analysis (CABA) and the M.S. Degree in Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism

Are you interested in working with people diagnosed with autism? Do you want to learn effective strategies that will make a difference to children and adults with this disorder? Then the Sage Graduate Schools' Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism is for you.

The program follows a *"scientist-practitioner"* model of training. This means that all instruction is grounded in

the scientific approach towards studying behavior, as espoused by B. F. Skinner. You will learn about research design, the importance of empirical evidence, and the focus on experimentation to discern causes of behavior. This knowledge will be coupled with a thorough training in the only therapeutic approach to the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders that has empirical research to support its effectiveness with this population.

This program is delivered completely via distance learning, utilizing online delivery of classes, as well as optional clinical supervision delivered by geographically close BCBA supervisors or through distance supervision (e.g., webcam observation).

The goals of the MS program are: (1) to prepare students to work with persons with autism, (2) to provide each student with the educational and skill competence necessary to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and (3) to increase the number of professionals who have behavioral skills.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is rapidly becoming the most frequently diagnosed childhood disorder. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), a branch of psychology rooted in the application of science to the study of human behavior, is a special therapy that has been shown to be effective in reducing the impact of autism spectrum disorders.

Your studies will combine two tracks. You will thoroughly study Applied Behavior Analysis, both the conceptual underpinnings as well as the skills necessary to effect behavioral change. You will learn strategies for defining and assessing behaviors, development of instructional goals that are measurable, antecedent strategies to promote learning, use of consequences to effect positive change, and rules for determining success and mastery. You will learn the procedures and strategies for dealing with language development, abnormal behavioral patterns, and socialization issues. If you choose to complete the practicum coursework, your application of these skills will be evaluated in clinical settings where you will be working with persons with autism and other disorders.

The second major focus of the program involves a deeper understanding of autism. You will learn about the etiology of the disorder and assessment strategies. You will understand how persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are affected in all areas of development, including language, learning, socialization, and personal behaviors. Different theoretical explanations of ASD will be covered, as well as different therapeutic approaches towards solving language, learning, and behavioral issues.

The on-line format of our coursework allows for a multi-media presentation of material. In each course, students are given varied access to proven learning tools for their own growth and improved comprehension: audio-visual presentations by professors, written tools, and active learning experiences such as fluency drills and practice in data collection. In one course, students may read and discuss articles on the treatment of autism from many different perspectives; in another course, students may watch video clips of children with autism engaged in different learning activities and apply different data analysis procedures. There is also an emphasis on research and evidence-based practice. Consistent with Sage's approach that experience is the best teacher, students also practice designing and applying research principles. Applied behavior analysis is not only a treatment for autism, but an effective framework for teaching in general. Our professors and adjuncts are all behavior analysts who enjoy using our technology to teach students at every level. Our programs are broadly focused on training professionals in the best, evidence-based practices in the treatment of autism, while individualizing each students' educational experience to maximize his/her experience of the program.

## **Faculty**

Your faculty for the ABA courses are all Board Certified Behavior Analysts who have experience working with children and adults who are affected by autism spectrum disorders and will bring to your education the reality of working with this population. Clinical practicum supervisors are also Board Certified Behavior Analysts with

broad experience in dealing with myriad challenges that afflict persons with autism.

## Admission

Applicants for admission to the Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism program must meet the Sage Graduate School admission requirements:

- Official transcripts of ALL previous undergraduate and/or graduate study
- Two letters of reference (academic or professional)
- Undergraduate courses in statistics, history and systems of psychology (not required of psychology majors), and at least three other behavioral sciences courses
- Satisfactory "Personal Prospectus" statement regarding rationale for interest in the program
- Current resume
- International students must submit a WES report if previous degrees were obtained outside the United States. This requirement is in addition to official transcripts.

Those who do not fully meet the requirements may be admitted on a provisional basis if they show promise for success in the program.

## Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism Degrees and Certificates

### Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism (M.S.)

#### Degree Type

M.S.

#### Degree Requirements

1. Completion of all required courses.
2. Students who choose to complete the clinical practicum sequence will meet all requirements for application for the BACB certification exam.

### BACB Coursework

Item #	Title	Credits
ABA 501	Introduction to Behavior Analysis	
ABA 503	Concepts and Principles of Behavior Analysis	
ABA 505	Behavioral Assessment	
ABA 621	Management and Supervision for Behavior Analysts	
ABA 605	Research in ABA	
ABA 607	Ethical and Professional Conduct for Behavior Analysts	
ABA 617	Radical Behaviorism and ABA	

## Optional Practicum Sequence

Item #	Title	Credits
ABA 510	Clinical Practicum in ABA I	
ABA 511	Clinical Practicum in ABA II	
ABA 512	Clinical Practicum in ABA III	
ABA 513	Clinical Practicum in ABA IV	

## Other Coursework

Item #	Title	Credits
ABA 515	Introduction to Autism	
ABA 525	Core Skills in Autism I	
ABA 616	Assessment and Measurement	
ABA 695	Capstone in Autism and ABA	

## Optional Thesis Sequence

Item #	Title	Credits
ABA 690	Thesis I in ABA	
ABA 691	Thesis II in ABA	
ABA 692	Thesis III in ABA	

## Eligibility for Board Certification

Those who complete the master's program in Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism with practica are eligible to take the national examination to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Those who complete the master's program without taking the practicum courses will meet the coursework requirement for the examination, but will need to arrange to complete Independent Fieldwork as per the BACB's standards to meet the experience requirement.

## Notice to Applicants & Candidates

Services restricted to New York State licensed professionals, including licensed psychologists, cannot be rendered by program students or graduates unless: (a) they are licensed in New York State to provide such services, or (b) they provide those services in an exempt setting as salaried employees.

## Esteves School of Education Attendance Policy

While individual instructors may approach attendance and participation in varied ways in their grading policies, students in the Esteves School of Education should be aware that missing 1/4 or more of class sessions MAY result in AUTOMATIC class failure. Class content and participation are vital to meeting the objectives of Esteves School of Education courses.

# Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism Classes

## ABA 501 : Introduction to Behavior Analysis

This course is an introduction to applied behavior analysis. As such it focuses on basic tasks that underpin design and implementation of educational and therapeutic interventions based on principles of behavior. This course provides credit hours both towards educational qualifications required to sit for the behavior analysis certification examination and the Masters degree in Applied Behavior Analysis.

**Prerequisites**

ABA 515

## ABA 503 : Concepts and Principles of Behavior Analysis

This course builds on work completed in ABA-501. It is a continuation of the study of key concepts in the science of behavior and applied behavior analysis (ABA). It focuses on synthesizing content from previous coursework and understanding how to apply previously learned concepts to implement discrete trial instruction, direct instruction, precision teaching, and personalized system of instruction. It also addresses application of antecedents and consequence in order to bring about behavior change. You learn a variety of procedures to improve learning. You also learn the ethical implications of and potential uses of punishment procedures. This course provides credit hours toward educational qualifications required to sit for the behavior analysis certification exam.

**Prerequisites**

ABA 501

## ABA 505 : Behavioral Assessment

This course will concentrate on behavior change strategies based on principles discovered in the experimental analysis of behavior and replicated in the field of applied behavior analysis. Specific strategies for accelerating and decelerating various behaviors will be discussed, along with the theoretical underpinnings of each procedure. Issues of generalization of behavior change will be explored, as they relate to the ethical use of treatment methodologies.

**Prerequisites**

ABA 501; ABA 503 as either prerequisite or corequisite

## ABA 510 : Clinical Practicum in ABA I

Certification as a Behavior Analyst requires supervision in a clinical setting. This Clinical Supervision course provides a mechanism for students to obtain the required number of supervisory hours to eventually meet this particular requirement to sit for the Behavior Analysis certification examination.

**Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 501

ABA 517

ABA 530

ABA 607

**Prerequisites**

ABA 607 can be a corequisite

## ABA 511 : Clinical Practicum in ABA II

Certification as a Behavior Analyst requires supervision in a clinical setting. This Clinical Supervision course provides a mechanism for students to obtain the required number of supervisory hours to eventually meet this particular requirement to sit for the Behavior Analysis certification examination.

### **Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 501  
ABA 517  
ABA 530  
ABA 607

### **Prerequisites**

ABA 607 can be a corequisite

## ABA 512 : Clinical Practicum in ABA III

Certification as a Behavior Analyst requires supervision in a clinical setting. This Clinical Supervision course provides a mechanism for students to obtain the required number of supervisory hours to eventually meet this particular requirement to sit for the Behavior Analysis certification examination.

### **Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 510  
ABA 511

## ABA 513 : Clinical Practicum in ABA IV

Certification as a Behavior Analyst requires supervision in a clinical setting. This Clinical Supervision course provides a mechanism for students to obtain the required number of supervisory hours to eventually meet this particular requirement to sit for the Behavior Analysis certification examination.

### **Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 510  
ABA 511

## ABA 515 : Introduction to Autism

An overview of the history of educational and clinical practice for children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), which has been characterized by disparate and sometimes contradictory approaches will be presented. The significant differences in educational philosophy and approaches, the differences in practice that have been their basis in different philosophies about how children learn (e.g., behavioral versus development approaches), and the different beliefs about the most significant challenges faced by children with autistic spectrum disorders and their families will be explored.

## ABA 517 : Maintenance of Client Records

This course describes the important elements in maintaining client records and complying with the legal requirements of documents. This includes records maintenance and confidentiality, legal maintenance of medical, clinical, and educational records, APA record keeping guidelines for psychologists, APA code of conduct, guidelines for record keeping guidelines, HIPAA, FERPA, NYS laws, rules, and regulations, as well as other topics applicable to confidentiality and maintaining records.

### **Advising Note**

NYS requires all students to complete this course.

## ABA 520 : Interventions in Autism

This is typically the second course in the sequence of studying children with autism. In this course, general approaches from psychiatric, medical and educational models are examined as related to the treatment of autism.

## ABA 525 : Core Skills in Autism I

This course describes important procedures in behavior analysis for assessment, language development, teaching basic life skills, structured teaching, functional communication training, school participation, and social skills improvement. Emphasis is on implementation of procedure for students with autism.

## ABA 526 : Core Skills in Autism II

This course describes important procedures in behavior analysis for development of skills in individuals with autism, including: appropriate leisure activities, personal care, community skills, personal safety, academics, work skills, self-advocacy, and relationship with others. Emphasis is on implementation of procedure for students with autism.

## ABA 530 : ABA New York State Internship

In this course, students demonstrate competence on tasks required by a behavior analyst. In order to meet the requirements for New York State licensure, students are supervised in a clinical setting providing clinical services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder. This course provides a mechanism to obtain the required components of practicum/internship required to apply for state licensure as a behavior analyst while completing an approved Master's degree.

### **Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 501

ABA 517

### **Prerequisites**

ABA 501 and ABA 517 can be corequisite

### **Advising Note**

Students must provide verification of at least 150 hours of work with 2 hours of supervision per week.

## ABA 601 : Professional Practice in ABA

This course focuses on clinical practice of applied behavior analysis in a variety of settings. Many behavior analysts work as consultants in human service settings, and many others work in settings serving individuals who exhibit difficulties other than developmental disabilities. In addition to the basic principles of applied behavior analysis studied in previous courses, other issues important for behavior analysts to know about to be able to successfully consult and work in settings unrelated to developmental disabilities are examined.

### **Prerequisites**

ABA 501 , ABA 502

## ABA 605 : Research in ABA

This course focuses on research design specific to the ethical study of human behavior, including a study of the characteristics of science and the rationale for having behavior as the focus of research. Topics include measurement, specific research designs, and the development of a research proposal. Research data from a variety of experiments are examined and interpreted.

**Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 501

ABA 505

## ABA 607 : Ethical and Professional Conduct for Behavior Analysts

This course is devoted to the study of ethical and professional conduct as applied to Board Certified Behavior Analysts. Course content is based on the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Professional Disciplinary and Ethical Standards, and the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct for Behavior Analysts.

**Prerequisites**

ABA 501, ABA 503, ABA 605, ABA 607

## ABA 609 : Diversity in Education

This course is devoted to the study of diversity, specifically with how it relates to education. The course will cover information related to diversity issues for the student population and the educator population. Course content will include strategies for communicating with and supporting diverse populations.

**Prerequisites**

ABA 501 , ABA 502

## ABA 610 : Advanced Topics in Applied Behavior Analysis

This course extends the study of applied behavior analysis from the first three courses in the sequence. This course will concentrate on contemporary developments and issues in the field of applied behavioral analysis. Applications of behavior change strategies in a variety of situational contexts and organizational settings, as well as recent developments in a variety of areas addressed in this course. Issues of generalization of behavior change will be explored, as they relate to the ethical use of treatment methodologies.

**Prerequisites**

ABA-501, ABA-502 , ABA-505

## ABA 615 : Research Seminar in ABA

Single-subject research design is explored in more depth, including potential outcomes of experiments, type 1 and type 2 errors, evaluation of single-subject designs, and visual analysis of outcome data. Each of the major single-subject designs are examined in detail, including reversal designs, multiple-baseline designs, changing criterion designs, and multi-element designs. These concepts are applied through independent work.

**Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 605

## ABA 616 : Assessment and Measurement

This course is designed to introduce students to various assessment and measurement tools that can be used to study the academic, social and adaptive functioning of students with autism and developmental disabilities. The course will offer students several opportunities to develop behavior-change components and plans based on student assessment results, conduct several common assessments, and critically evaluate the research related to assessments and measuring tools.

**Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 501

ABA 503



## ABA 617 : Radical Behaviorism and ABA

This advanced course will introduce students of applied behavior analysis to radical behaviorism, defined as the philosophy of the science of behavior. Students will study the basic assumptions and presuppositions (e.g., the philosophical debate between free will and determinism) about what counts as behavior and its causes. Students will examine the role of verbal behavior in environment-based (i.e., variations of behavior analysis) and organism-based (i.e., mentalism and cognitivism) interpretations and explanations of behavior. This will bring us to the root of many complex abstract and theoretical issues, such as interpreting the behavior of self and others, mentation, society, culture and behavioral responsibility, ethics, rights and values. Students will address these issues in terms of their implications for ABA practitioners in their everyday work. The course will give historical perspective to the evolution and substance of radical behaviorism, and how it compares to other conceptual systems.

### **Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 501

ABA 503

ABA 605

ABA 607

## ABA 620 : Test Strategies

This course provides students with specific strategies and content for preparing for and taking the certification exam by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board. Students will be guided to develop a personalized study plan that focuses on the task list content for which they will be responsible on the exam.

## ABA 621 : Management and Supervision for Behavior Analysts

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of organizational behavior management (OBM) principles and essential professional practices within the context of applied behavior analysis (ABA). Through rigorous academic inquiry, students will delve into the intricacies of optimizing organizational behavior and fostering professional competence. Topics encompass performance management, antecedent-based and consequence-based interventions, staff and parent training, clinical supervision, performance feedback, consulting skills, cultural humility, and strategies for promoting equity in supervision. Emphasis is placed on maintaining professional relationships, collaboration, and honing interpersonal skills essential for effective ABA practice.

### **Prerequisite Courses**

ABA 501

ABA 503

ABA 505

## ABA 690 : Thesis I in ABA

This optional course introduces students to the line of research conducted by faculty and provides an opportunity to develop an original research question within that area of research. Faculty approval is required to register for this course.

## ABA 691 : Thesis II in ABA

This optional course provides an opportunity to develop a thesis proposal and an IRB proposal on the research question developed in Thesis I. Faculty approval is required to register for this course.

## ABA 692 : Thesis III in ABA

This optional course provides students with faculty and peer support in completing the project proposal in Thesis I and Thesis II. Faculty approval is required to register for this course. This course may be taken more than one time if necessary to complete data collection.

## ABA 695 : Capstone in Autism and ABA

This course describes important procedures in behavior analysis for development of skills in individuals with autism, including appropriate leisure activities, personal care, community skills, personal safety, academics, work skills, self-advocacy, and relationships with others. Each set of procedures is introduced through current literature and training materials, and will use critical thinking activities to explore the implementation of these procedures for individuals with autism. During this class you complete your final degree project. This project consists of developing original materials that build into a portfolio related to a specific area in autism.

### **Prerequisites**

ABA-515, ABA-605