

Behavior Analysis Graduate Student Handbook

Mission Statement

The doctoral program in Behavior Analysis at Louisiana State University prepares behavior analysts to have expertise in the empirical and philosophical basis of the science of behavior and its application to socially significant goals. The program prepares students to contribute to the development and dissemination of behavior analysis and to apply the science with diverse individuals and groups, across various contexts, and in an ethical and culturally responsive manner.

Objectives

1. Graduates will be able to articulate and operate from a behavior-analytic perspective and effectively apply this perspective to issues of basic and applied significance.
2. Graduates will apply rigorous methodological and analytic approaches to answer important research questions in behavior analysis.
3. Graduates will be ethical and culturally responsive leaders and supervisors.
4. For those pursuing the BCBA/BCBA-D credential, graduates will demonstrate effective behavior analytic practice skills across a range of settings.
5. Graduates will be proficient in written and oral communication.

Program Requirements

Coursework

A minimum grade of B- is required in all required courses.

PSYC 4111	Intermediate Statistics
PSYC 7111	Advanced Statistics
PSYC 7946	Theories & Concepts of Behavior Analysis
PSYC 7948	Research Methods in Behavior Analysis
PSYC 7949	Lifespan Development: Behavioral Perspectives
PSYC 7945	Modern Behaviorism
PSYC 7040	Sociocultural Basis of Behavior
PSYC 7660	School Psychological Consultation
PSYC 7999	Professional Considerations

Basic Behavior Analysis: Students must complete at least 2 of the 3 courses below

PSYC 7947	Behavioral Pharmacology
PSYC 7941	Quantitative Models of Behavior

PSYC 7942 Seminar in the Experimental Analysis of Behavior

Applied Behavior Analysis: Students must complete at least 2 of the 3 courses below

PSYC 7972 Child Behavior Therapy

PSYC 7973 School-Based Psychological Interventions

PSYC 7974 Seminar in Applied Behavior Analysis

Dismissal due to grades. Any student failing more than one departmental core course on the first attempt will be dismissed from the program. Students have two attempts to complete each of these classes. If a student does not complete or waive the courses with satisfactory grades within 4 years, they will be dismissed from the program. Students must be registered for at least three credit hours for fall and spring semesters and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better (cumulative and semester GPA) to remain “in good standing” with the Graduate School. The first semester a student’s GPA drops below 3.0 or a U/F is made will result in academic probation. While on academic probation, students are ineligible for funding. If a student’s cumulative and semester GPAs are not 3.0 or better after one semester of academic probation, the student will be terminated from the university by the Graduate School.

Course waivers. If a student has taken a course that is similar in content to one of the above courses, the student should see the Graduate Coordinator to obtain a Course Waiver Form. Students will need to obtain the approval of their major professor, the instructor of the course, and their area head. The waived course will not show up on the student’s transcript. A student may waive up to 12 credits total.

Professional Development Course

Professional Development in Behavior Analysis is a 1-credit-hour course that all students must take every semester they are in the program. Faculty and students give presentations on a range of topics. This is an important component of the training plan of the Behavior Analysis area and should help students attain a high level of professional oral communication by the culmination of their training. Performance and participation will be tracked as part of the Professional Development course.

PSYC 7940 Professional Development in Behavior Analysis

Supervised Experiential Learning

Students are required to complete a minimum of 6* credit hours of supervised experiential learning courses. Students may choose to take all supervised experiential learning in one course or a combination of the courses listed below.

PSYC 4999 Independent Reading and Research in Psychology

PSYC 7678 Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis

*Students planning to pursue the BCBA or BCBA-D credential will need to take at least 12 hours of PSYC 7678/7679 Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis.

Thesis

Students earn a Master's degree en route to the Ph.D. degree at LSU, or come in with a Master's degree from another university. To obtain this degree, you must fulfill the Graduate School requirements, including writing a thesis.

The thesis must be a behavior analytic (basic, translational, or applied) research study in which the student collects new data to answer a research question. Some exceptions to the new data collection requirement (e.g., meta-analyses) may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the thesis committee.

Terms. The terms "successfully propose," "successfully defend" or "successfully pass" an exam mean that the student has the necessary paperwork (forms differ for each exam) signed as "passed" by your committee.

Deadlines/Timeline. Students are to consult with their major professor regarding forming their committee and report the names of the committee to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, at least 3 weeks prior to the proposal meeting.

Proposal. Students should successfully propose their thesis by the end of their 3rd semester. Students **MUST** propose their thesis by the 10th class day of their 4th semester & they must successfully pass their proposal by April 1 of their 4th semester.

Defense. Students must successfully defend their thesis by the end of their 5th semester (the day prior to commencement).

Failure to comply with these guidelines & deadlines will result in loss of financial support for at least 1 semester. In addition, Students may be terminated from the program at the program area's faculty discretion. Students are not allowed to propose and defend their thesis or dissertation during the same semester. A semester begins on the first day of orientation. The day prior to graduation is the final day of the semester for these major exams.

Paperwork. Students should consult with the Graduate Coordinator for the necessary paperwork for their proposal. Via the Graduate Coordinator, students must apply to the Graduate School for their defense meeting (form: Request For Master's Exam and Degree Audit) at least 3 weeks prior to your meeting. Other deadlines may apply if the student plans on graduating the semester they defend.

Registration for Thesis Credit (PSYC 8000). Students must register for thesis hours any semester they are working on the project. This would include the semester they propose and the semester they defend as well as the semester they submit their document to the Graduate School. Students must have a minimum total of 6 thesis credit hours to defend their thesis.

Committee. Student's committee must have at least 3 members. The committee chair is the student's major professor. At least 2 members of their committee must be

from their specialty area & 1 member must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. The 3rd member should be from the Psychology department or a department pertinent to the project. Any changes to the committee for any reason are to be reported to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, immediately. All committees are subject to approval by the department chair.

Meetings. Students will need to find an agreeable time and date for them and their committee members. Students and their committee members are to schedule proposal and defense meetings for a minimum of 90 minutes. Once this has been done, immediately inform the Graduate Coordinator of the date and time of their meeting. They will help you with booking a room, if needed, and the necessary equipment (computer and projector for PowerPoint presentations, etc.).

Thesis Waiver. If a student has earned a master's degree in Psychology from another university, they may submit their thesis to the department for possible acceptance of the department's master's thesis requirement. For their thesis requirement to be waived requires the approval of, in order of review, their major professor, their area head, and the Director of Graduate Training.

Possible Outcomes. There are three possible outcomes during the master's thesis defense meeting: P (Pass), F (Fail), and R (Retake). The grade must be filed within two weeks of the scheduled exam date, and failure to turn in a grade defaults to an F. If a student passes (P) and revisions are needed and can be completed within two weeks of the scheduled exam date, then a grade of P may be assigned. However, if revisions are needed that take longer than two weeks to complete, a grade of R (Retake) must be assigned. If a grade of R is assigned, a full committee meeting must be scheduled for the Retake attempt to occur. If a grade of F is assigned, the result is that the student will be terminated from the program. The student has the right to petition for reconsideration.

Final thesis Submission. A student cannot submit their final thesis to the Graduate School editor until the semester they graduate.

General Examination

The general examination must be completed prior to the dissertation proposal. The general exam consists of two components: a written literature review and an oral defense.

Written Examination. The written portion of the general examination is an integrative literature review that makes an important theoretical contribution to behavior analytic research and/or provides clear directions for future empirical studies that will make an important contribution to research. The written document must be approved by the student's major professor before it is disseminated to the general examination committee. The final version of the written review paper should be submitted to the examining committee at least **two weeks** prior to the oral examination

Oral Examination. The oral examination will involve the general examination committee (including the Dean's Representative) who will have a vote. The student

must demonstrate independent mastery of the research included in the written document during the oral examination.

The defense of General Exam must be scheduled 3 weeks prior to the meeting using the Graduate Milestones Survey on the department's web site.

Dissertation

All doctoral students must fulfill the Graduate School requirement of completing a written dissertation with an oral defense. The dissertation must be a behavior analytic (basic, translational, or applied) research study in which the student collects new data to answer a research question. Single subject design dissertation studies should include at least 2 experiments.

Deadlines/Timeline. Students cannot defend their dissertation until 3 calendar months have passed following their successful General Exam. They are to consult with their major professor in regard to forming their dissertation committee and report the names to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, at least 3 weeks prior to the exam. Most students propose in their 3rd or 4th year. Most students defend in their 5th year. Students need to contact the Graduate Coordinator for the necessary paperwork for their proposal. They must apply to the Graduate School for their defense meeting (form: Request for Doctoral General or Final Examination) at least 3 weeks prior to their meeting. Other deadlines may apply to graduate the semester you defend.

Registration Rules. Students must register for dissertation hours (PSYC 9000) any semester they are working on the project. This would include the semester they propose and the semester they defend, as well as the semester they submit their document if different than the semester they defend the dissertation. (If a student is registered as "degree only"* they are not eligible to meet with the editor.) Students must have a minimum total of 12 dissertation credit hours to defend their dissertation.

Students who have completed all degree requirements, including final examinations taken in a previous semester, may register for "degree only" and pay only the graduation fee. "Degree only" registration is only allowed for students whose dissertations are submitted to the Graduate School one week prior to the last day to add courses for credit and are approved by the Graduate School no later than the last day to add courses for credit. Eligible students must submit an application for degree and inform the Graduate School of their intent to register for "degree only."

Committee. A student's committee must have at least 4 members. The chair is the student's major professor. The student's previously appointed Dean's Representative, 2 other members should be faculty from the Psychology department or a department pertinent to the project. At least 2 committee members must be from the student's specialty area and at least 2 must be full members of the Graduate Faculty. As a departmental rule and as a courtesy, students are to invite the Dean's Representative to their proposal meeting. They are to accommodate all members of the committee when scheduling the proposal. The Dean's Representative must attend the defense meeting. Any changes to the committee must be approved by the student's

committee chair and reported to the Graduate Coordinator, in writing, immediately. All committees are subject to approval by the department chair.

Scheduling. Student's will need to find an agreeable time and date for them and their committee members. Then, immediately inform the Graduate Coordinator of the date and time of the meeting. The Graduate Coordinator will help with booking a room and finding the necessary equipment (computer and projector for PowerPoint presentations, etc.). It is the responsibility of the student to schedule the final defense with sufficient lead time to meet the Graduate School deadlines for graduation in a given semester.

Final Submission. Students may not submit a final dissertation to the Graduate School editor until the semester they graduate.

Possible Outcomes. Only one dissenting vote is allowed for a student to successfully pass the Dissertation Exam regardless of the number of committee members. The same outcomes that apply to the Master's thesis defense apply here, grades of Pass (P), Fail (F), and Retake (R). The grade must be filed within two weeks of the scheduled exam date, and failure to turn in a grade defaults to an F. If a student passes (P) and revisions are needed and can be completed within two weeks of the scheduled exam date, then a grade of P may be assigned. However, if revisions are needed that take longer than two weeks to complete, a grade of R (Retake) must be assigned. If a grade of F is assigned, the result is that the student will be terminated from the program. The oral defense and the dissertation are considered an integrated requirement. It is not possible to pass one and fail the other. The committee should not sign the dissertation signature page until all requirements, including successful oral defense, are completed, nor should it sign the oral defense report until the dissertation has been successfully defended. The student has the right to petition for reconsideration.

Application for Degree

At the beginning of the semester in which a student defends their thesis or dissertation, the student should obtain the "materials for candidates for master's degree" or the "materials for candidates for doctoral degrees" and schedule a meeting with the Graduate School editor. These materials contain instructions and forms necessary to meet requirements for graduation. The Graduate School calendar changes each semester, which means that the deadlines for submitting the "Application for Degree" forms will vary from semester to semester. Students should obtain this information from the Graduate School the prior semester or at the very beginning of the semester in which the student intends to graduate. If you choose to participate in the commencement ceremonies, please contact the LSU Bookstore (225-578-7412) to order your regalia. To ensure that Behavior Analysis appears on your transcript, complete and submit the Verification of Concentration form by the required deadline.

Graduation Time Limits

Optimally students who have a B.A. or B.S. degree will proceed to the Ph.D. degree in five years. The maximum time allowed from the entrance to the completion of the Ph.D.

is 7 years. A student must have special permission from the Dean of the Graduate School to exceed this time limit (this permission is not routinely given and must involve exceptional circumstances). Students who do not complete the Ph.D. program within the seven-year period will be dismissed from the program. The Graduate School requires students to graduate within one semester of completing their dissertation defense. For example, if a student completes all of their requirements in the spring semester, they must graduate in either the spring or fall semester. If this deadline is missed, the student will be required to re-defend in order to graduate. The Graduate School does not count the summer as a 'semester' for the purpose of this deadline.

Dismissal with a Master's Degree

In the unusual circumstance of students who are dismissed from the doctoral program but are granted permission to attempt to complete the master's degree, they are granted permission to remain for one additional year only. They must leave after this year even if the thesis or degree is not complete.

Program Retention/Termination

It is the general expectation that all students will maintain good standing and complete the Ph.D. once they are admitted to the program. However, there are a number of issues that could arise that would result in a student being dismissed from the program. First, if a student were to exhibit such disruptive behavior, unethical behavior, or resistance to direction/supervision from the faculty that the Behavior Analysis faculty collectively reach the conclusion that it is inappropriate to continue that individual's training, they would be dismissed from the program. Additionally, if any student's performance in a Supervised Experiential Learning course is insufficient and unresponsive to supervisory feedback such that they receive a grade of unsatisfactory, they will be dismissed from the program.

The Graduate School requires that all students take and complete a General Examination in their area of study. Students are allowed two attempts to pass the examination. This occurs in the third or fourth year of study. If the student fails the examination twice, the Graduate School will dismiss the student as a Ph.D. candidate at LSU.

Students must be registered continuously for at least 3 credit hours each regular semester. The Graduate School considers the Spring and Fall semesters as "regular semesters" but not the Summer. Compliance with the items below will aid students with remaining in good standing with the program. In order to remain in good standing students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better. Academic probation is NOT considered "in good standing." If after one semester of academic probation, the student's cumulative and semester GPAs are not 3.0 or better, they will be terminated from the program/university.

1. Maintain semester and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better. The first semester a student's GPA is below 3.0, they will be placed on academic

probation. **While on academic probation, students are not eligible for funding of any kind.**

2. Complete required content courses with a grade of B- (B minus) or better by end of the 4th year in the program (or prior to degree completion, whichever comes first).
3. Successfully propose thesis, preferably in the 3rd semester and no later than the 10th class day of the 4th semester.
4. Successfully defend thesis no later than the day prior to commencement of the 5th semester in the program.
5. Successfully complete the general exam with no more than 2 attempts.
6. Successfully defend dissertation within 7 years of entering the program.

Remedial Plans

In circumstances in which a student exhibits a substantial deficit in progress toward graduation with sufficient professional skills, the Behavior Analysis faculty may choose to implement a remedial plan to address the deficit. A remedial plan requires the review of the data indicating the deficit by at least two faculty and, whenever timely and possible, the entire program faculty. The plan must specifically state the identified deficit, the outcome goal, and the measurable objectives that will demonstrate successful completion of the plan. The plan should also define the activities that will be provided to the student to address the deficit. The plan should serve as a faculty model for practice regarding intervention planning. Once the plan has been developed, the student's major professor will review it with the student. The student and major professor must meet regarding the plan at least twice per semester to review progress and may choose to meet more often. Successful completion of the plan requires a review of the outcome by the faculty who initiated the plan with consensus among the faculty that the objectives have been met. Nothing in the remedial plan process may conflict with the student's due process and appeal rights as outlined by current LSU policy.

Complaints/Grievances

At any time that a student has a concern or grievance with a person (student or faculty), the normal course of action is for the student to first discuss the problem with the person that is the source of the grievance. If this does not resolve the problem, the student should discuss the problem with their faculty advisor. The faculty advisor should typically be able to resolve most problems. If a resolution is not obtained by a discussion with the student's faculty advisor, the student should contact the Behavior Analysis Program Director. Even if the student is able to satisfactorily resolve the concern through discussion with the other person(s) involved, the Program Director should be informed of any serious incidences or infractions that have occurred (e.g., sexual or other forms of harassment). There may be circumstances in which the student feels that they cannot discuss the issue with one of the parties described above; in such instances, the student is encouraged to discuss the matter with the next person in the chain outlined above. In rare instances, it may be necessary to bring unresolved problems to the attention of the chair of the Psychology Department or the dean of the Graduate School. In addition, students are protected by University policies and

procedures that govern students' rights, appeals, and due processes. LSU appeals [Policy Statement 48](#) governs student access to the University-wide appeals process.

Other Resources for Students with Concerns

The faculty are committed to working with students to address their concerns. We are committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and violence/assault. In the event that the student's concern involves diversity, students are advised to follow the above policies and procedures. Students may also choose to consult with the Program Director or Psychology Department's Committee on Diversity & Outreach in Psychology (CDOP) chair(s). Also, in accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, LSU prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct. This policy applies to all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. Information concerning LSU's Sexual Misconduct policies, including information on reporting incidents of sexual misconduct, are located online: [LSU Title IX](#). This includes the requirement that all complaints of sexual harassment of LSU students, faculty, and staff must be reported to the Office of Human Resource Management. LSU also offers an online reporting system ([LSU Cares](#)) to help students, faculty, staff, families, and friends submit reports about:

- potential violations of the LSU Code of Student Conduct
- concerns regarding sexual misconduct and hazing
- concerns surrounding acts of bias or discrimination
- complaints or grievances; and
- concerns about students in crisis or distress.

General Departmental Information and Rules

The following are general departmental information and rules. It is not a substitute for the Graduate Bulletin and students are required to read the "General Graduate School Regulations" as well as the "Requirements for Advanced Degrees" sections of the Graduate Bulletin. Students are responsible for knowing and following Graduate School policies and departmental requirements. If after consulting this document, you still have questions, please contact your advisor (for academic/research matters, etc.) or the Graduate Coordinator (forms, deadlines, etc.).

Please attend to the following:

- 1) Please be sure the Graduate Coordinator has your most up to date contact information at all times. This should include a functioning e-mail account that you check daily, telephone numbers and address. From time to time, matters arise that are time-sensitive and the ability to contact you quickly may facilitate your completion of the program on time. Additionally, from time to time, university policies, procedures, and forms will change, and you will typically be notified by e-mail. The Graduate Coordinator sends out numerous emails throughout the year with notices of new information and/or reminders of deadlines, rules and other important information to students. If you are not able to receive e-mail for any reason, contact the Graduate Coordinator immediately so that other arrangements can be made.
- 2) There are mailboxes for the graduate students in the Psychology Office (Room 236). All students with last names beginning with "A" will find their mail in the box marked "A", etc. Check and empty your mailbox frequently.
- 3) Please bear in mind that successfully completing major program milestones such as proposing or defending a thesis or dissertation requires completing all of the relevant paperwork including obtaining all of the relevant faculty signatures.
- 4) Travel funds are sometimes available to support graduate students' presentation of their research. Please see the Department handbook regarding relevant processes.
- 5) You are not allowed to propose and defend a thesis or dissertation in the same semester. You cannot propose or defend between semesters. A semester begins on the first day of orientation. The day prior to graduation is the final day of the semester for these major exams. Except due to rare extenuating circumstances, thesis and dissertation proposal and defense meetings are to be scheduled during the fall or spring semesters.
- 6) If you have earned a master's degree in psychology from another university, you may submit your thesis to the department for consideration as meeting the department's master's thesis requirement. Please bring a copy of your thesis to your major professor and your area director for review.

- 7) Any graduate student wishing to be appointed as an instructor of record on a graduate assistantship must fulfill the following requirements to apply.
- Applicants must have earned their master's degree prior to the beginning of the appointment.
 - Applicants must have completed PSYC 7990, Teaching of Psychology, or receive written approval for an equivalent course at another university.
 - Once appointed to the position, the instructor must enroll in the Teaching of Psychology Practicum, PSYC 7690.
- 8) The Department of Psychology expects the highest ethical and professional behavior from all graduate students at all times. This includes adhering to the LSU Code of Student Conduct as well as the BACB's Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts. Unethical or improper behavior (on or off campus) may warrant disciplinary action by the department and/or the university.

Graduate School Information

The Department of Psychology is your liaison to the Graduate School. If you have questions or concerns about Graduate School rules or procedures, call or email the Graduate Coordinator. All forms, documents, and paperwork for the graduate school are to be turned into the Graduate Coordinator. Please do not take forms directly to the Graduate School. The department will review and submit all paperwork and retain copies in your departmental file.

You must be registered continuously for at least 3 credit hours each regular semester. The Graduate School considers the Spring and Fall semesters as "regular semesters" but not the Summer.

You must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better (cumulative and semester GPA) to remain "in good standing" with the Graduate School. If your GPA falls below 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation the first semester. While on academic probation, you are not eligible for funding of any kind. If after one semester of academic probation, your cumulative and semester GPA are not 3.0 or better, you will be dismissed from the university.

If you are the recipient of an assistantship, you must secure written permission to work additional hours outside of that assistantship. The additional work must be related to your education in some way to merit approval. If you wish to apply for additional compensation discuss the matter with your major professor. You will need to describe where you will be working, what services you will provide, how many hours per week you will be working, as well as your beginning and ending date for that commitment. If your major professor approves, you will need to submit the relevant application with departmental endorsements to the Graduate School.

Useful Campus Phone Numbers

Organization	Phone Number
Campus Information	225-578-3202
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	225-578-3141
Graduate School	225-578-2311
Psychology Department	225-578-8745
Libraries	225-578-5652
LSU Union	225-578-5124
Student Health Center	225-578-6271
LSU General Information	225-578-5141
Medical Appointments	225-578-6716
Student Aid and Scholarships	225-578-3103
Recreational Sports Complex	225-578-8601