General FAQs

What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

Applied Behavior Analysis is the systematic application of behavioral principles to improve socially significant behavior. We encourage prospective students to visit the BACB website to learn more about becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

What is a BCBA?

Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) are most often hired to work with individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental and intellectual disabilities. Frequently, they work to reduce instances of aggression, self-injury, interfering stereotypy, and non-compliance. BCBAs also teach a wide variety of academic, language, social, vocational, self-care, and leisure skills. BCBAs may work in public or private schools, agencies, corporations, or as independent consultants. They often consult on issues related to sleep problems, feeding disorders, education, organizational behavior management, behavioral health, and other areas.

BCBAs work as part of a team of professionals to improve human behavior. This begins with an initial assessment that takes into account the situational, environmental, and motivational factors that are unique to the individual client. This often involves interviewing the client’s family and caregivers (in addition to the client) as well as conducting direct observations in multiple settings. The BCBA will then use this information to create a program that teaches particular skills and/or reduces undesired behavior. The outcomes of the program are carefully and continuously monitored to ensure they are effective and meaningful to the client. The ultimate goal is to help the client make positive changes in his/her life in order to reduce the need for behavioral services.

Practitioners with masters-level education may work as mental health counselors, behavior analysts, behavior support specialists and organizational psychologists. Those who plan to become clinical, counseling, and research psychologists need a doctoral degree. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall employment of psychologists is projected to grow 19% from 2014 to 2024. The median annual wages for psychologists in May 2014 ranged from $76,950 (industrial-organizational psychologists) to $68,900 (Clinical, counseling, and school psychologists), and $92,110(all other psychologists). Mental Health counselors, a category that includes Behavior Analysts, will also continue to experience a high employment opportunity; BLS data projects 19% growth in employment during the same time period, with 2014 Median wage of $40,850. (https://www.gradschools.com/masters/psychology/applied-behavior-analysis?in=pennsylvania)

What are the employment prospects for BCBA's?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before BCBA</th>
<th>After BCBA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Specialist Consultant</td>
<td>Board Certified Behavior Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teaching, Teaching assistants</td>
<td>Consultancy, Supervisory opportunities within districts or specialized programs, Special Education Teacher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*pending state certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct care work,</td>
<td>Program Supervision, Program Development, Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Therapists, Supervised Service Delivery</td>
<td>Independent Consultation, Independent Practice (third party, insurance eligibility)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How will this program help me with my career?

The need for well-qualified people in this field is growing dramatically, and we believe that our courses will provide significant career enhancement for those already in the field, especially for those able to go on to become certified as Behavior Analysts.
or Assistant Behavior Analysts. However, entry-level requirements vary enormously from one state to another and from one employer to another, and these courses alone, in the absence of any other degree or license or experience, might not be enough to qualify you to begin working in this field.

**Will I be able to sit for the BCBA exam after I graduate?**

We offer a BACB verified course sequence and practicum experience, which meet the education and fieldwork requirements to sit for the BCBA exam. This includes 270 hours of graduate classroom instruction in specific areas of the BACB Fourth Edition Task List and 1,000 hours of supervised fieldwork in applied behavior analysis at the practicum level. The SRU Course Content Verification is available upon request. Applicants must also possess a master's degree in behavior analysis, psychology, or education.

Because the BACB periodically changes requirements to sit for the BCBA exam, applicants are encouraged to apply to take the exam soon after graduation. SRU cannot guarantee that students who delay to apply to take the exam will be approved. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to ensure all the requirements to be approved to take the exam have been met. SRU cannot guarantee that students who are approved to take the exam will pass and become certified.

**Will I be a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) when I complete the program?**

No. It is important to understand that this program does not provide you with BCBA certification. You must sit for and pass the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) exam in order to obtain BCBA certification. This program provides the necessary BACB Verified Course Sequence (VCS) and practicum supervision necessary to apply to sit for the exam. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.® has approved the Slippery Rock University of Pa ABA course sequence as meeting the coursework requirements for eligibility to take the Board Certified Behavior Analyst Examination.

Navigating the four-part (BACB-approved) process for becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Coursework:</th>
<th>Experience:</th>
<th>Exam:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicants must possess a minimum of a graduate degree (e.g., master's or doctoral) in an acceptable field of study from a qualifying institution. Acceptable fields of study are behavior analysis, education, or psychology. Degrees may also be accepted from degree programs in which the candidate completed a BACB verified course sequence. Applicants who are unsure of whether the field of study of their degree is acceptable may request a preliminary review.</td>
<td>Coursework must come from a qualifying institution and cover the required content outlined in the BACB’s Fourth Edition Task List and Course Content Allocation documents. Only graduate (i.e., master's or doctoral) courses where the applicant was formally enrolled and earned a passing grade (“C” or better for graded courses) are acceptable.</td>
<td>Applicants must complete experience that fully complies with all of the current Experience Standards. Applicants must carefully review the experience standards with their supervisor(s) before beginning their experience. Please note that these standards stipulate training requirements for trainees and supervisors which must be completed before experience begins.</td>
<td>Applicants must take and pass the BCBA examination. Authorization to take the examination is only provided to applicants who have submitted a complete application to the BACB, including all documentation necessary to demonstrate that they have met criteria. More Information Apply for the BCBA Examination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About the credential itself: [https://www.bacb.com/bcba/](https://www.bacb.com/bcba/)
More about the process itself (thr. the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB)): https://www.bacb.com/bcba/bcba-option-1/

* If you complete your coursework through the SRU concentration/Masters in SPED/ABA you fall under “option 1” on the above link

What about licensure and third-party reimbursement?

That is a complicated question, because each state sets its own rules regarding licensure, and each third-party payer (government, insurance companies, etc.) has its own rules. The SRU certificate by itself does not provide for any form of licensure or reimbursement, but if you use it to help you gain certification as BCBA, you might qualify for licensure in many states and for reimbursement by many third-party payers. You will need to explore those possibilities on your own based on where you intend to practice.

Degree Specific FAQs

When are classes offered? Do I need to be there at a certain time?

The ABA Distance Education Program uses asynchronous online learning through an interactive web-based platform. Students will participate in captured lectures, discussion, small and large group activities—just as with traditional face-to-face learning.

How long will it take to complete the required coursework and practicum?

Students can choose to take the ABA coursework over one year or over two years. To complete the course work in one year, students will take two classes per semester plus the intensive practicum. Each class is asynchronous and available in an online format. Students wishing to complete the coursework in a less intensive manner can choose to do so over two years or more. In either case, students needing a Master's Degree will continue for an additional year of coursework or longer is desired.

What is the difference between the concentration/certificate and certification?

The certificate is issued by SRU in recognition of a student successfully completing the required courses, and it is like a diploma. Certification as a behavior analyst is granted by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board to those who have completed all its educational and training requirements. The SRU certificate helps you to meet some of those educational requirements, but for certification you still need an appropriate degree and a certain number of hours of supervised experience, and you must pass a certification exam.

Why are the experiential portions of this course important to consider?

This program offers the required coursework to sit for the BACB exam, however the BACB also requires an experiential component (ranging from 750-1500 hours) as well to be eligible for examination. To address this requirement, students are provided the option to complete the experiential requirements specifically through SPED 666 and 667. The SRU concentration in ABA is one of three programs state wide and one of two public universities to offer Verified Course Sequence (VCS) with Experience. Meaning that students interested in acquiring their experiential requirements for the BCBA exam can do this while completing coursework at SRU.

I've already taken some of the approved courses. Can I get credit for them?

While we can accept some substitutions to meet the requirements of the Master’s degree in Special Education, we are not allowed to approve substitutions to the VCS required to sit for the BACB exam. Slippery Rock University of Pa has been
approved by the BACB to offer a specific set of courses and applicants wishing to substitute different courses should petition
the BACB directly if they want to pursue alternate courses to fulfill the requirements.

I have a Master's Degree, but not in Education, Psychology, or Behavior Analysis. Do I need a new Master's
Degree?

The BACB has pre-approved Master’s Degrees in the following areas: Psychology, Education, and Behavior Analysis. You
must have a Master's Degree in one of these fields in order to apply to sit for the BCBA Certification Exam. If you do have
Master's in one of these fields, you should enroll in the Certificate of Completion program in ABA.

Application Process FAQs

What do I need to do to apply for the Master's Degree in Special Education with a concentration in ABA or
Certificate of Completion in ABA?

Application information can be retrieved on the Graduate Admissions webpage.

How much does the Program cost?

Fees for graduate tuition are located on the Admission webpage on the “fees tab”. Fees are subject to change.

What technology do I need to have to participate in coursework?

Students must have access to reliable Internet connection, a computer or laptop with a preferably a video camera for web
conferencing, a high-quality headset, and a quiet location.

Is financial aid available?

Federal financial aid is available for students enrolled as Master’s Degree candidates who need assistance with tuition and fees.
Graduate Assistantship Information is available at: http://www.sru.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-
assistantships

Can I begin coursework in any semester?

Yes, students can complete foundation and core coursework throughout the spring, summer, fall and winter sessions as
courses are available. Conversely, students can only begin ABA specific coursework in the Fall semester. These classes are
sequential and are offered once per program sequence, so students must begin coursework Fall quarter. Additionally, our
program is designed to foster supportive cohorts of students and we have found that this is best achieved by students starting
and ending the program together.

Does my Bachelor's degree need to be in a specific field?

No, we do not have any requirements for undergraduate study. We do, however, value and expect some work experience in
Applied Behavior Analysis or Behavioral Supports.