



University of Georgia  
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## University Council

April 16, 2021

### UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2020-2021

John Maerz, Chair

Agricultural and Environmental Sciences – Nicholas Fuhrman

Arts and Sciences – Jonathan Evans (Arts)

Rodney Mauricio (Sciences)

Business – Jim Carson

Ecology – Amanda Rugenski

Education – David Jackson

Engineering – E.W. Tollner

Environment and Design – Ashley Steffens

Family and Consumer Sciences – Sheri Worthy

Forestry and Natural Resources – Joseph Dahlen

Journalism and Mass Communication – Dodie Cantrell-Bickley

Law – Randy Beck

Pharmacy – Michelle McElhannon

Public and International Affairs – Jeffrey Berejikian

Public Health – Brittani Harmon

Social Work – Harold Briggs

Veterinary Medicine – Susan Sanchez

Graduate School – Wendy Ruona

Ex-Officio – Provost S. Jack Hu

Undergraduate Student Representative – Jeremiah de Sesto

Graduate Student Representative – Gerena Walker

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Mary Frances Early College of Education to create a non-thesis option for the major in Applied Behavior Analysis (M.S.) and to increase the total credit hours for the major from 36 hours to 39 hours will be an agenda item for the April 23, 2021, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

John Maerz, Chair

University Curriculum Committee

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu  
Dr. Rahul Shrivastav



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

Aderhold Hall  
110 Carlton Street  
Athens, Georgia 30602  
706-542-1414  
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## Mary Frances Early College of Education

*Office of the Dean*

February 17, 2021

Office of Curriculum Systems  
Hunter/Holmes Academic Building  
CAMPUS

Dear Office of Curriculum Systems—

The Mary Frances Early College of Education is endorsing this supplemental information requested from your office. This information should accompany the proposal to add a non-thesis option to the Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis and to augment the number of credits by three credits for both this proposed non-thesis option and the existing thesis program.

**Degree requested for an extension of credit hours:** Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis

**Rationale for credit hour increase:** The current thesis-based option is 36 credit hours. One course is being added to both the thesis and non-thesis options to address the recent requirement by the national certification authority (BACB) of additional content. The national certification agency has mandated an increase in the number of instructional hours from 270 to 315 hours (<https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/January2017-newsletter-200828.pdf>). Therefore, to comply with the Association for Behavior Analysis International, we have increased the program by three hours to meet the augmented requirements for minimum number of instructional hours. This revised program of study must be submitted to and approved by that body in order for our program completers to be eligible to sit for the national certification examination. In addition, that body (5<sup>th</sup> edition of approval requirements) requires that three skill areas are taught in freestanding courses. The approval body does not allow integration of information across courses.

**External accrediting body that has mandated a change to curricula nationwide:** Association for Behavior Analysis International

**Documentation of external accrediting body requirements:** <https://www.abainternational.org/vcs.aspx>

**Curriculum program of study before and after the increase:** Below are two graphics of the proposed program of study with both thesis and non-thesis options. The course that would be added to both programs is EDSE 7810, Philosophical Underpinnings and Concepts in Behavior Analysis.

**Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis (Thesis Required):  
SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

Year	Course #	Course Title	Units	Semester Unit Total
<b>FALL 1</b>	EDSE 7610	Seminar in Autism Spectrum Disorders	3	
	EDSE 7230	Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis	3	
	EPSY 7330	Individual Academic Interventions	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SPRING 1</b>	EDSE 6050	Managing Severe Aggressive Behavior in the Classroom and Community	3	
	EDSE 7210	Behavioral Methods of Instruction	3	
	EDSE 8370	Single-Subject Research Methodology in Special Education	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SUMMER</b>	EDSE 8230	Professional Ethics for Behavior Analysts	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>FALL 2</b>	ERSH 6300	Methods Research in Education	3	
	EDSE 7810	Philosophical Underpinnings and Concepts in Behavior Analysis	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>SPRING 2</b>	EDSE 7300	Master's Thesis	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	

<b>Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis (Non-Thesis Option): SAMPLE SCHEDULE</b>				
Year	Course #	Course Title	Units	Semester Unit Total
<b>FALL 1</b>	EDSE 7610	Seminar in Autism Spectrum Disorders	3	
	EDSE 7230	Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis	3	
	EPSY 7330	Individual Academic Interventions	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SPRING 1</b>	EDSE 6050	Managing Severe Aggressive Behavior in the Classroom and Community	3	
	EDSE 7210	Behavioral Methods of Instruction	3	
	EDSE 8370	Single-Subject Research Methodology in Special Education	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SUMMER</b>	EDSE 8230	Professional Ethics for Behavior Analysts	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>FALL 2</b>	ERSH 6300	Methods Research in Education	3	
	EDSE 7810	Philosophical Underpinnings and Concepts in Behavior Analysis	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>SPRING 2</b>	EDSE 7650	Applied Project in Special Education	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	

**Statement of impact on students and student matriculation:** Students who enter the program in Fall 2021 will be advised with the respective program of study (thesis or non-thesis, 39 credits). Students who entered the program prior to Fall 2021 will also be held to this credit minimum as the national mandate has already gone into effect. Students would not be eligible to sit for the credentialing examine without the requisite 39 hours.

**Statement of impact on faculty and faculty workload:** Impact on faculty workload will include one faculty member teaching the additional required course (EDSE 7810). Impact also will be reduced on faculty members based on the number of students who choose the non-thesis option. Although the number of supervision hours is the same, a reduction in research supervision will be witnessed given that the proposed applied projects are less intensive than supervision of a master's thesis project.

Thank you for consideration of this information as you consider both the non-thesis option and the additional three credits for both programs.

Sincerely,



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Denise A. Spangler  
Dean



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Cynthia Vail  
Department Head



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College of Education  
*Office of Academic Programs*

TO: Dr. Ron Walcott, Dean of the Graduate School  
Fiona Liken, Associate Vice President for Instruction and Registrar

DATE: January 21, 2021

RE: Applied Behavior Analysis Non-Thesis Option

Attached please find a proposal from the Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education to create a Non-Thesis Option in for the MS in Applied Behavior Analysis.

The College of Education's Curriculum Committee approved this proposal on January 21, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration,

Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett, Associate Dean for Academic Programs



UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA

Mary Frances Early  
College of Education  
*Department of Communication Sciences and  
Special Education*

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Dear Curriculum Committee,

Please find attached the proposal for an MS – Non-Thesis Option in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). This request is being made following discussion and agreement amongst the ABA faculty that a thesis is not necessary for individuals to gain employment and practice successfully in the field. We believe this option will be of benefit to the associated students and faculty.

We are also requesting that the current MS-ABA program be increased from 36 to 39 credit hours. The reason for this request is due to new and additional content requirements by the national certification board associated with this degree (Behavior Analyst Certification Board [BACB]).

Sincerely,

Cynthia O. Vail, Ph.D.  
Professor & Department Head

## **Proposal to Add a Non-Thesis Option to the M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis**

**Submitted to:** Dean Ron Walcott

Vice President for Graduate Education & Dean of the Graduate School

**Submitted by:** Scott Ardoin, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Head, Department of Educational Psychology

Co-Director Center for Autism and Behavioral Education Research

Kevin Ayres, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Professor, Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education

Co-Director Center for Autism and Behavioral Education Research

### **Basic Information:**

**Name of Proposed Program:** Applied Behavior Analysis (M.S.) - Non-Thesis Option

**College:** Mary Frances Early College of Education

**Department:** Communication Sciences and Special Education

**Anticipated Implementation Date:** Fall 2021

**Delivery Mode (Check all that apply):** On-campus, face-to-face only

### **Program Description:**

The goal for the overwhelming majority of Applied Behavior Analysis (M.S.), or M.S.-ABA, program completers is to become Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), a credential that requires the completion of a course sequence approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). To sit for the examination, individuals must also complete either 1,500 hours of concentrated supervised fieldwork (10% of which must be supervised by a credentialed BCBA) or 2,000 hours of supervised fieldwork (5% of which must be supervised by a BCBA). The courses which make up the UGA M.S.-ABA course sequence, along with the concentrated supervision provided, are approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). The coursework within the existing M.S.-ABA program provides students with the knowledge and experience to skillfully perform the following tasks using evidenced-based practices:

- Assess antecedents and consequences that maintain appropriate and inappropriate behavior.
- Select socially significant behaviors to target for modification and/or skill development.
- Select and implement functionally relevant instructional and behavioral interventions designed to develop individuals' verbal, academic, and life skills and increase levels of appropriate behavior for the safety and life satisfaction of clients and families.
- Select appropriate means by which to measure and monitor behavior.
- Employ single-case design methodology to evaluate the effects of interventions on client behavior.
- Conduct the above practices while strictly adhering to BACB ethical guidelines.



In 2019, graduates of the UGA M.S.-ABA program had an 88% pass rate on the BCBA exam in comparison to a national pass rate of 63%. Due to the high demand for BCBA's and the strong reputation of the UGA M.S.-ABA program, UGA M.S.-ABA students often have job offers prior to graduating and prior to passing the national credentialing examination.

To understand the instructional objectives of the M.S.-ABA program, it is important to understand the type of work in which the ABA faculty are involved, and the types of jobs M.S.-ABA students seek post-graduation. All ABA faculty are active members of the UGA Center for Autism and Behavioral Education Research (CABER). CABER provides services to local school districts and families in the provision of academic and behavioral assessment, and intervention services for individuals with and without developmental disabilities. Additionally, CABER faculty and their students conduct research related to improving the academic and behavioral skills of individuals with developmental disabilities and research related to improving the care provided to individuals with disabilities by their care-providers (teachers, parents, nurses). Individuals and families in need of many of the services provided by CABER must often wait two years before receiving services because of the high needs of the community and shortage of individuals with the expertise to address their needs.

CABER also addresses the needs of local schools through (a) provision of teacher training, (b) serving as the teacher of record in self-contained classrooms (i.e., organized by disability) within a local school district, and (c) CABER Academy, which provides day treatment services to school-aged students with development disabilities who exhibit severe disruptive behavior. In absence of CABER Academy, the students served would likely not receive educational services in a school, but instead be restricted by the school to homebound services until they were able to receive services from a similar facility in Atlanta. To summarize, through CABER, the ABA faculty provide critical services to the local community and in so doing provide quality training to UGA M.S.-ABA students, who post-graduation gain employment providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. By increasing the individuals within the State of Georgia who have the necessary skills to provide evidence-based services to individuals with developmental disabilities, the M.S.-ABA program meets the UGA Strategic Mission of addressing critical, locally identified needs.

CABER and the students involved in the UGA M.S.-ABA program also strengthen community-focused research and training in Georgia (Strategic Goal 3.1). ABA faculty and students work collaboratively on research projects with Marcus Autism Center. CABER faculty and students also frequently discuss challenging clinic cases with Marcus Autism Center employees. Some employees of Marcus Autism Center also enroll in the UGA M.S.-ABA program with their tuition paid for by Marcus Autism Center. Faculty and students also conduct research within local schools, resulting in improved teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

**Demand:**

Evidence for the need for the program is provided by (a) a 500% increase in demand for BCBA's between 2010 to 2018; (b) over 19,500 job postings for BCBA's across the country between the months of April 2018 and March 2019; and (c) over 300 of the 19,500 job postings were in Georgia. Graduates of the M.S.-ABA program are starting their new

employment with salaries that exceed \$60,000. Further evidence of the need for BCBA's is evidenced by the inclusion of the program as one that is consistent with the Provost's initiative to grow graduate enrollments at UGA, as the program is one of UGA's top high-growth areas for professional master's and graduate certificate programs. Thus, the UGA M.S.-ABA program meets the institutional mission of developing a workforce that meets the developing needs of the State to provide effective services to its citizens.

Three years ago, administrators at Marcus Autism Center sought assistance of the ABA faculty to provide some of their staff with UGA's BACB approved coursework due to the administrators' dissatisfaction with the quality of training their staff was receiving from another institution. UGA is now providing instruction to a second cohort of 5 individuals who are employees of Marcus Autism Center. Although there are numerous programs across the country who offer an approved BACB course sequence, few provide their students with the quality training and experiential learning opportunities provided by the UGA M.S.-ABA program.

### **Rationale for Request of a Non-Thesis Option:**

A non-thesis option for the existing M.S.-ABA degree is needed. Specifically, although the non-thesis students would engage in an applied research project, many completers of the program do not wish to continue post-graduation with research. Rather, these program completers are practitioner-focused, and would like to assume roles as behavior analysts with direct service or therapy tasks as the primary function of their work. Students whose goals are beyond research and academic fields, and who want specialized, high-level training in behavior analysis and therapies, will benefit from a non-thesis option as this provides students with more freedom to pursue new career paths. The majority of employers care about the applied skills, training experience, and practical skill sets these graduates would bring to their employment setting. Many employment sites are not engaged in individualized research in the discipline. Recognizing this, many institutions (e.g., Georgia State University), including peer and aspirational ones, do offer non-thesis options of this program.

Should the non-thesis option be approved, students still would be required to conduct research through an applied project in replacement of a thesis. The applied project would require graduate students to assess the instructional or behavioral needs of clients, select an appropriate intervention, and using single-case design methodology, evaluate the effects of intervention on client behavior. Students would therefore still be provided with the learning opportunities to refine the research, assessment, and intervention skills developed through coursework. A thesis is not required for those graduates who wish to transition immediately to practice.

Offering an applied project option will provide students with the necessary experience to be effective in the field. The applied project will exceed the experiences and requirements of the other ABA master's degree programs across the country that also enable students to sit for the BCBA exam. Faculty are confident that graduates of the UGA non-thesis M.S.-ABA program will continue to be prepared to succeed in their field and be highly sought after by employees within and outside of Georgia.

Note: The department will retain the M.S.-ABA with a thesis requirement for students whose career goals would be better suited with continuing education into doctoral programs.

### **Admissions Requirements:**

Prospective students must have completed a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and met the minimum admissions requirements of the Graduate School for domestic and international applicants. Admission will be based on a portfolio of information, including the graduate application, official transcripts, a personal statement, letters of recommendation and resume.

Students who meet all of the following requirements will be eligible to apply for the Applied Behavior Analysis Master's Degree Program:

- *Professional preparation:* Earned, or will have earned, a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution before the date of enrollment at the University of Georgia.
- *GRE or Miller Analogies Test scores:* Minimum GRE results of 146 verbal and 146 quantitative; alternatively, applicants may choose to take the Miller Analogies Test. A minimum score of 402 for the Miller Analogies Test is required.
- *GPA:* Minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 for all courses taken.
- *TOEFL:* International applicants will also need to score a minimum of 20 points each on the Speaking and Writing sections of the TOEFL with an overall minimum score of 80. Test scores must be within 5 years from the date of application.

### **Program of Study:**

The current thesis-based option is 36 credit hours. One course is being added to both the thesis and non-thesis options to address the recent requirement by the national certification authority (BACB) of additional content. The national certification agency has mandated an increase in the number of instructional hours from 270 to 315 hours (<https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/January2017-newsletter-200828.pdf>). Therefore, to comply with the Association for Behavior Analysis International, the program has been increased by three hours to meet the augmented requirements for minimum number of instructional hours. This revised program of study must be submitted to and approved by that body in order for program completers to be eligible to sit for the national certification examination. In addition, that body (5<sup>th</sup> edition of approval requirements) requires that three skill areas are taught in freestanding courses. The approval body does not allow integration of information across courses. Provided below are two tables listing the 39 hours of course credit required for the thesis and non-thesis M.S.-ABA programs. The two programs of study differ in that during the final semester, students completing the thesis option will take EDSE 7300 (Master's Thesis) and students completing the non-thesis option will take EDSE 7650 (Applied Project in Special Education).

**Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis (Thesis Required):  
SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

Year	Course #	Course Title	Units	Semester Unit Total
<b>FALL 1</b>	EDSE 7610	Seminar in Autism Spectrum Disorders	3	
	EDSE 7230	Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis	3	
	EPSY 7330	Individual Academic Interventions	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SPRING 1</b>	EDSE 6050	Managing Severe Aggressive Behavior in the Classroom and Community	3	
	EDSE 7210	Behavioral Methods of Instruction	3	
	EDSE 8370	Single-Subject Research Methodology in Special Education	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SUMMER</b>	EDSE 8230	Professional Ethics for Behavior Analysts	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>FALL 2</b>	ERSH 6300	Methods Research in Education	3	
	EDSE 7810	Philosophical Underpinnings and Concepts in Behavior Analysis	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>SPRING 2</b>	EDSE 7300	Master's Thesis	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	

**Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis (non-thesis degree option):  
SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

Year	Course #	Course Title	Units	Semester Unit Total
<b>FALL 1</b>	EDSE 7610	Seminar in Autism Spectrum Disorders	3	
	EDSE 7230	Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis	3	
	EPSY 7330	Individual Academic Interventions	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SPRING 1</b>	EDSE 6050	Managing Severe Aggressive Behavior in the Classroom and Community	3	
	EDSE 7210	Behavioral Methods of Instruction	3	
	EDSE 8370	Single-Subject Research Methodology in Special Education	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	3	
<b>SUMMER</b>	EDSE 8230	Professional Ethics for Behavior Analysts	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>FALL 2</b>	ERSH 6300	Methods Research in Education	3	
	EDSE 7810	Philosophical Underpinnings and Concepts in Behavior Analysis	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	
<b>SPRING 2</b>	EDSE 7650	Applied Project in Special Education	3	
	EDSE 7440	Practicum in ABA	1	

## Documentation of Approval and Notification

**Proposal:** Offer the Existing Major in Applied Behavior Analysis (M.S.) with a Non-Thesis Option  
Increase the Credit Hours for the Major in Applied Behavior Analysis (M.S., M.S. Non-Thesis)  
from 36 Hours to 39 Hours

**College:** Mary Frances Early College of Education

**Department:** Communication Sciences and Special Education

**Proposed Effective Term:** Fall 2021

### Department:

- Communication Sciences and Special Education Department Head, Dr. Cynthia Vail

### School/College:

- Mary Frances Early College of Education Associate Dean, Dr. Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett, 1/21/21

### Graduate School:

- Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Ron Walcott, 4/14/21

### Proposal Notification:

- College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Dean, Dr. Nick Place, 2/23/21
- College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Associate Dean, Dr. Josef Broder, 2/23/21
- College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Assistant Dean, Dr. Douglas Bailey, 2/23/21
- Franklin College of Arts and Sciences Dean, Dr. Alan Dorsey, 2/23/21
- Franklin College of Arts and Sciences Associate Dean, Dr. Jean Martin-Williams, 2/23/21
- Terry College of Business Dean, Dr. Benjamin Ayers, 2/23/21
- Terry College of Business Associate Dean, Dr. Henry Munneke, 2/23/21
- Terry College of Business Associate Dean, Dr. Mike Pfarrer, 2/23/21
- Odum School of Ecology Dean, Dr. John Gittleman, 2/23/21
- Odum School of Ecology Associate Dean, Dr. John Drake, 2/23/21
- College of Engineering Dean, Dr. Donald Leo, 2/23/21
- College of Engineering Associate Dean, Dr. Ramaraja Ramasamy, 2/23/21
- College of Environment and Design Dean, Dr. Sonia Hirt, 2/23/21
- College of Environment and Design Associate Dean, Ms. Ashley Steffens, 2/23/21
  - *No concerns with proposal*
- College of Family and Consumer Sciences Dean, Dr. Linda Kirk Fox, 2/23/21
- College of Family and Consumer Sciences Associate Dean, Dr. Sheri Worthy, 2/23/21
- Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources Dean, Dr. Dale Greene, 2/23/21
- Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources Associate Dean, Dr. Robert Bringolf, 2/23/21

- Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication Dean, Dr. Charles Davis, 2/24/21
- Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication Associate Dean, Dr. Maria Len-Rios, 2/24/21
- School of Law Dean, Mr. Peter “Bo” Rutledge, 2/23/21
- School of Law Associate Dean, Mr. Randy Beck, 2/23/21
- College of Pharmacy Dean, Dr. Kelly Smith, 22/23/21
  - *No concerns with proposal*
- College of Pharmacy Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Dr. Duc Do, 2/23/21
- College of Public Health Dean, Dr. Marsha Davis, 2/23/21
- College of Public Health Associate Dean, Dr. Erin Lipp, 2/23/21
- School of Public and International Affairs Dean, Dr. Matthew Auer, 2/23/21
- School of Public and International Affairs Associate Dean, Dr. John Maltese, 2/23/21
- School of Social Work Dean, Dr. Anna Scheyett, 2/23/21
- School of Social Work Associate Dean, Dr. Shari Miller, 2/23/21
- College of Veterinary Medicine Dean, Dr. Lisa Nolan, 2/23/21
- College of Veterinary Medicine Associate Dean, Dr. Andrew Parks, 2/23/21