



**TheChicagoSchool**<sup>®</sup>  
of Professional Psychology

**2012-2013 Program Guidebook**

**Ph.D. Applied Behavior Analysis**

**Chicago and Los Angeles**

## Table of Contents

Department Policies and Procedures .....	3
Course Grading and Performance Feedback.....	3
Professional Development Group and Academic Advisor Assignment .....	3
Independent Study .....	3
Auditing Courses .....	3
Academic Development Plans.....	4
Departmental Academic Standards (DAS) Policy (3C/2F).....	4
Student Academic Development.....	5
APA Format.....	5
Conference Attendance.....	5
Conference Presentations.....	5
Practicum.....	6
Thesis .....	6
Comprehensive Examination.....	6
Dissertation .....	6

## **Department Policies and Procedures**

The Chicago School Model of Education focuses on the *Engaged Professional*. In behavior analysis, the engaged professional is one who is strong in the *philosophy, science, and application* of behavior analysis. The Chicago School's Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Department strives to become the School of Choice in ABA by training applied behavior analysts who practice state-of-the-art ABA and who are strong in the science and philosophy of behavior analysis.

The PhD in ABA program is a 5-year program that includes the MA in ABA requirements as prerequisites for the 3-year post-MA requirements. This guidebook applies to the post-MA requirements; see MA in ABA Program Guidebook for information on coursework, practicum, and other requirements at the MA level.

This guidebook is designed to provide additional details not addressed in the TCSPP Student Handbook or in the Academic Catalog for the PhD in ABA. All policies in the Student Handbook, Academic Catalog, and program guidebook should be followed.

NOTE: This guidebook is subject to change. If it does, students will be notified via email and will be provided with the revised version.

### ***Course Grading and Performance Feedback***

Grades are assigned in all courses, and students can review course grades online. The ABA Faculty strives to provide rapid and detailed feedback on assignments that clearly indicates satisfactory or outstanding performance, and performance that needs work.

The Department of ABA strongly recommends that students monitor their grades continuously throughout each semester, and meet with their instructors if they are not progressing satisfactorily in their classes. Students should also meet regularly with their advisors to keep them updated on and seek help for academic or other issues that may impede progress in the program.

### ***Professional Development Group and Academic Advisor Assignment***

ABA students have an academic advisor at all times. Initially, the PA600 Professional Development (PD) instructor is the student's academic advisor. Later, when the student selects a Dissertation Chair, that faculty member becomes the student's advisor; however, the original PD instructor typically maintains a relationship with the student and is happy to continue academic advisement along with the Dissertation Chair.

### ***Independent Study***

Independent study (i.e., special-topics classes with one or a few students) can be arranged with specific faculty members in order to obtain experience and/or knowledge in a particular subject area that is not addressed in other classes during the student's course of study. See your advisor, department chair, or other faculty members for more information.

### ***Auditing Courses***

Students may request to audit a specific course, to learn about a topic or topics in a given class. Students who wish to audit a course must obtain prior approval from the instructor. These students will not be required to do homework or take quizzes or other examinations, or to write papers or perform other projects. The extent to which they do is at the instructor's discretion, and with his or her approval.

The student will receive no academic credit, and cannot register for the class subsequent to auditing it and then receive credit for it. Students who audit classes must adhere to all departmental policies on comportment and academic integrity. Violations of those policies may result in the student's permission to audit the class being revoked, and possibly referral to SAC, depending on the offense.

### ***Academic Development Plans***

An Academic Development Plan (ADP) is a supportive and constructive approach to helping students who are showing less than satisfactory academic performance, or who believe they may be heading in that direction, or who voluntarily opt for more structure to ensure their success. An ADP can be initiated by the student or by a faculty member who believes the student may benefit from an ADP. ADPs are mandatory when students are placed on academic warning or probation, or when a student receives one C or F or NC or NP. The student is responsible for meeting with his/her advisor to create an ADP when one of these grades is received, and he/she should be actively engaged in the creation of the ADP. If a student does not follow through on an ADP, he/she is referred to the Student Affairs Committee for Academic Integrity (SAC-AI). See TCSPP Student Handbook for more information on ADPs.

### ***Departmental Academic Standards (DAS) Policy (3C/2F)***

In addition to meeting the institutional Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements as outlined in the Student Handbook, Chicago School students must meet additional academic standards as set forth by their academic department. These standards are called Departmental Academic Standards (DAS).

Students are evaluated against DAS by their academic department at the end of each grading period. Students are expected to evaluate their own records and contact the department upon receipt of a grade below B- or a grade of No Pass (NP). The academic department will notify students affected by DAS in writing.

### **DAS Outcomes and Actions:**

1. Student earns:
  - a. 1 "C" grade
    - i. Student understands that s/he may be placed on an ADP if standards are not met in the subsequent term.
2. Student earns ANY of the following:
  - a. 1 "F" grade
    - i. Student contacts the academic department and is placed on an ADP.
  - b. 1 "NP" grade
    - i. Student contacts the academic department and is placed on an ADP.
  - c. 2 "C" grades
    - i. Student contacts the academic department and is placed on an ADP.
  - d. A "C" grade plus one "F" grade or one "NP" grade
    - i. Student contacts the academic department and is placed on an ADP.
3. Student earns ANY of the following:
  - a. Any combination of two of these designations - "F" grade/"NP" grade
    - i. Student receives written notification from academic department and is academically dismissed.
  - b. 3 "C" grades
    - i. Student receives written notification from academic department and is academically dismissed.
  - c. A combination of three of these designations - "C" grades/"F" grades/"NP" grades
    - i. Student receives written notification from academic department and is academically dismissed.

## ***Student Academic Development***

Students must take charge of their own academic development. They should meet with their instructor if they are showing any signs of difficulty in progressing through a class. They should meet with their advisor if they are having difficulties in a class or are experiencing any other issues that may impede their progression through the program. The ABA Department has procedures in place to prevent students from falling behind and to help students who have fallen behind catch up. These procedures include Academic Development Plans (ADPs), peer tutoring, help from advanced doctoral students, etc. Students must be proactive regarding their academic success and are responsible for asking for help from their academic advisor if they need it. The academic advisor should be used as a resource for academic and professional issues, as well as personal issues that are relevant to academic and professional success.

## ***APA Format***

Students should begin using APA format for all written assignments as soon as they start the program. The APA Manual (6th Ed.) (American Psychological Association, 2009) is a required textbook for several courses and is the format used for the PhD dissertation; therefore, students should begin practicing APA format by using it for all written assignments in all classes, unless otherwise advised by the course instructor.

## ***Conference Attendance***

Attending conferences in behavior analysis is a crucial component of professional development that should occur from now until retirement, at least. Most behavior analysts, both experimental and applied, attend the yearly convention of our major professional organization, the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). Applied behavior analysts also attend the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA). Experimental and applied behavior analysts also attend regional conferences, such as the Mid-American Association for Behavior Analysis (MABA) or the Southeastern Association for Behavior Analysis (SEABA), and/or state conferences, such as the California Association for Behavior Analysis (CalABA), Maryland Association (MABA), and Illinois Association for Behavior Analysis (IL-ABA). Many behavior analysts attend more specialized conferences, such as ABAI's National Autism Conference and the International Precision Teaching Conference (IPTC).

The PhD in ABA program requires students to attend conferences as part of their education, training, and professional development. Students are required to attend a regional, state/local, or specialized conference during the Fall of Year 1 as part of the requirements of the PA600 Professional Development course. They are also required to attend the annual ABAI convention in May over Memorial Day weekend. Students who cannot attend ABAI can attend the APBA conference in April instead with approval from their advisor. Students who cannot attend these conferences should meet with their advisor to make other arrangements for satisfying these professional development requirements.

## ***Conference Presentations***

Students are encouraged to present their dissertation data or other work at conferences. Students frequently present posters on their dissertation work, but Powerpoint presentations may also be presented. Students must have a faculty advisor review and approve any submissions to conferences for which the student lists a TCSPP affiliation. The Dissertation Chair and Readers must approve any submissions and final presentations of dissertation data; typically, the Dissertation Chair and readers are listed as co-authors. If a student presents on a project that is not the dissertation, an ABA faculty member must approve the submission and final presentation and may be listed as an author, depending on the level of input into the presentation (see APA Manual for authorship guidelines).

## **Practicum**

Not applicable to students in the post-MA doctoral program. Students who come in with a Masters degree from a program outside the field of ABA must meet MA requirements as part of the 5-year PhD in ABA program. See MA in ABA Program Guidebook for information on the MA in ABA practicum.

## **Thesis**

Not applicable to students in the post-MA doctoral program. Students who come in with a Masters degree must submit their thesis for review by the faculty. If the student did not conduct, write up, and successfully defend an empirical, behavior-analytic thesis, that student must fulfill that requirement here. See MA in ABA Program Guidebook for information on the MA in ABA thesis.

**Comprehensive Examination** The PhD in ABA degree requires students to pass a written and oral comprehensive examination. Subject matter and course material from any and all classes in the PhD program (including MA classes) may be included on the comprehensive exam. Four Comprehensive Examination courses are included in the coursework requirements and are designed to help students prepare for the exams.

At the end of the four Comprehensive Examination courses, students take the written exam, and if they pass it, they proceed to an oral defense, in which they defend their answers in front of a committee that includes at least three (Chicago campus) or at least four (LA campus) faculty members. The entire ABA faculty is invited to attend the oral defense and may participate in the grading of the written and oral exams. If the student fails the written exam, he/she must take another exam later in the program and may be required to retake one or more of the Comprehensive Exam courses. Two attempts each are allowed on the written examination and oral defense; students who fail one of these components twice will be dismissed from the program. Once the written exam and oral defense are completed successfully, the student is considered a Doctoral Candidate and is allowed to complete the Dissertation process.

Beginning in Fall 2012 students in Chicago and LA who fail to complete both comprehensive examinations will not be allowed to proceed to the Dissertation.

## **Doctoral Candidates**

After satisfactorily completing both comprehensive examinations, the student makes a formal application to the ABA Dept. to be considered a doctoral candidate. The faculty will meet to discuss the student's request, and decide if the student will be allowed to proceed to the dissertation stage. It is possible, but unlikely, that in some cases, the student could have passed all coursework and comprehensive examinations, but be denied entry into doctoral candidacy, based on comportment issues, ethical violations, grossly inappropriate social skills, or for other professional or comportment issues.

## **Dissertation**

PhD students in ABA complete an empirical, behavior-analytic dissertation that marks an original contribution to the body of knowledge in ABA, including complete and comprehensive literature review, dissertation proposal, Powerpoint presentation of the dissertation proposal, Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, data collection, write-up with figures, Powerpoint presentation of the dissertation at dissertation defense, revision of the dissertation document if necessary, and copy-editing.

The Dissertation Chair serves as the primary reader and must approve all drafts of the dissertation proposal and dissertation document before the other reviewers receive it. In Chicago and LA, at least three readers are required; in LA, the third reader must be a doctoral-level individual who is not a core faculty member of the ABA faculty on the student's campus. The dissertation readers typically suggest revisions and may request to see those revisions before the dissertation or proposal goes to the next step. See ABA Dissertation Manual for more information.

Beginning in Fall 2013, the student may only propose the dissertation after having completed the comprehensive examinations.

Six dissertation classes are included in the PhD in ABA coursework requirements: one 3-credit Proposal Development Seminar followed by five 2-credit Dissertation Development courses. Students must be enrolled in Proposal Development, Dissertation Development, or Dissertation Maintenance while working on their dissertation. The dissertation must be empirical research that makes an original contribution to the scientific knowledge base of Behavior Analysis. The ABA Department recommends that PhD students start thinking about potential topics as soon as they start the program to facilitate timely completion of the dissertation process.