

APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (M.A.)

Program Overview

The Master of Arts in Applied Psychology: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is intended to provide students with theoretical and practical knowledge in applied behavioral psychology while also providing general understanding of how psychology relates to ABA practice.

Applied behavior analysis is the application of the science of motivation and learning to describe, explain, predict, and change individual behavior.

ABA is used in educational settings, organizational settings (e.g., job training, performance assessment, task analysis and training), behavior change related to health outcomes (e.g., compliance with medication, addictions, feeding problems, exercise, etc.) and most often in interventions with individuals with autism spectrum disorders or other developmental disabilities.

Mission Statement

The Master of Arts in Applied Psychology: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) prepares students to excel in professional careers as scientist-practitioners. By challenging students to use a scientific lens when creating and evaluating clinical interventions, and to use an applied lens when designing research, this program will ensure that students are prepared to achieve success in behavior analytic employment, or to pursue further education upon completion of the program.

National Certification in Behavior Analysis

The Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) has verified Rider University's ABA core course sequence as providing the content hours under the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc. (<http://www.bacb.com/>)® (BCBA) 5th Edition Task List and meeting the coursework requirements for eligibility to take the Board Certified Behavior Analyst Examination®. Applicants will have to meet additional requirements to qualify.

Admission Status

Upon completion of the steps in the application procedure, the applicant will be assigned to one of the following classifications once admitted:

Graduate Standing

- The student is qualified to undertake graduate study and must apply for matriculated status when eligible;

Conditional Standing

- The student either has not satisfied all of the admission requirements or has not completed all of the undergraduate preparatory requirements or both and may be permitted to engage in studies during a probationary period;

Special Standing

- The student does not plan to matriculate in a Rider graduate degree.

Transfer of Credits

Upon acceptance to the Master of Arts in Applied Psychology: Applied Behavior Analysis program, students may request transfer of up to nine semester hours of graduate credits completed at an accredited institution. These credits must have been earned within six years of the date of credit transfer approval. All transfer credits must be approved

by the Applied Psychology Steering Committee. Courses accepted for transfer must be similar to required or elective courses that are approved for the respective program, and a grade of at least "B" must have been earned in each of these courses.

Academic Standing

A minimum grade of "B" is required to obtain credit toward graduation. A grade of "B-" or lower will not count toward graduation credits. A GPA of 3.0 must be maintained to remain in good academic standing. Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on Conditional Standing.

Course Repeat Policy

Students may not repeat any graduate course for credit that they have already taken, except a course in which they have received a grade lower than "B" or one from which they withdrew. Any exceptions must be approved by the department chair.

Dismissal

Rider University reserves the right to dismiss any student when, in the judgment of the faculty or the officers of Rider, such action seems advisable. Any of the following situations will result in the automatic dismissal of a student working toward a graduate degree or certification program in Applied Psychology:

- Receiving two grades of "B-" or lower in two graduate courses;
- Not attaining a grade point average of 3.0 after taking 12 or more graduate credits at Rider University;
- Failure to complete the program within the required 6 years.

Graduation Requirements

To graduate, students must have completed all the requirements for the degree within 6 years of enrolling in the program, have a GPA of 3.00 or higher, and have submitted the degree application for graduation form to the Dean's office.

Graduation with Distinction

Students who graduate with an overall grade point average of 3.85 or higher are designated as graduating with distinction. This term appears on the student's official transcript, below the student's name in the commencement program, and on the diploma.

Degree Offered

- M.A. in Applied Psychology

Contact

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Program Website: M.A. in Applied Psychology (<https://www.rider.edu/academics/colleges-schools/college-arts-sciences/humanities-social-sciences/faculty-departmentss/psychology/>)

Associated Department: Department of Psychology (<http://www.rider.edu/academics/colleges-schools/college-liberal-arts-education-science/liberal-arts-programs/psychology/>)

Applied Psychology M.A. Program Requirements

(36 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
Core Curriculum Requirements		
PSY 509	Principles of Behavior	3
PSY 513	Functional Assessment	3
PSY 514	Single Subject Research Design and Analysis	3
PSY 516	Ethics for Behavior Analysts	3
PSY 518	Organizational Behavior Management	3
PSY 519	Models of ABA Instruction	3
PSY 520	Interventions for Challenging Behavior	3
PSY 523	Theory and Philosophy in Behavior Analysis	3
Electives		
Select four of the following courses:		12
PSY 521	Supervision and Management in ABA	
PSY 522	Recent Research in ABA	
PSY 550	Behavior Analytic Approaches to Health and Physical Activity	
PSY 551	Behavioral Appro to Addiction	
PSY 595	Selected Topics in Applied Psychology ¹	
PSY 690	Independent Research and Study	
Thesis (optional - replaces 2 electives) ²		
PSY 700	ABA Thesis I	
PSY 701	ABA Thesis II	

PSY 702 ABA Thesis III

Optional Course (3 additional credits) ³

PSY 720 Practicum in ABA

Total Credits **36**

¹ Topics change each semester. Students may take up to 12 credits in Special Topics courses.

² Students opting to complete a thesis will take a minimum of 37 credits.

³ Students opting to complete a practicum will take an additional 3 to 6 credits.

Accelerated Program for the Masters in Applied Psychology

The Accelerated Program for the Masters in Applied Psychology, Applied Behavior Analysis concentration is designed for students who wish to combine undergraduate study in psychology leading to a Bachelor's of Arts degree with graduate study leading to a Masters of Arts in Applied Psychology.

The admission process for this program ensures that only capable students are enrolled. Freshman students are encouraged to seek advice about the program from their advisor and the program coordinator. The following courses must be completed if the student intends to apply to the program:

- PSY 212 Intro to Applied Behavior Analysis
- PSY 299 Field Placement in Applied Behavior Analysis. This course is intended to assist the student in determining if the program is a good match for them.

During the first semester of the junior year, the student will formally apply to the Applied Psychology program through the Graduate Admissions Office. The process involves the following:

- A completed application form for admission to the Applied Psychology program, accompanied by a \$50 nonrefundable application fee;
- Receipt of official transcripts from every college or university attended (including Rider University);
- Two letters of reference from professors or supervisors of relevant work or internship experience;
- A statement of objectives prepared by the student that presents the student's reasons for wanting to enter the Applied Psychology program;
- An interview with faculty from the Applied Psychology program; and
- Completion of required 200 level courses.

Students accepted into the Applied Psychology program at the end of their junior year may complete two graduate level elective courses during their senior year.

Additional Applied Behavior Analysis courses are offered at the undergraduate level. While not required, it is recommended that students accepted into the Applied Psychology program as an accelerated student take the following:

- PSY 339 Research Methods in Applied Behavior Analysis
- PSY 388 Learning and the Experimental Analysis of Behavior
- PSY 389 Professional Issues in ABA

Students will be awarded the BA degree when they complete the requirements for that degree in psychology. The MA will be awarded upon completion of the Applied Psychology graduate program requirements.

Academic Plan of Study

The following educational plan is provided as a sample only. Students may follow a different plan to ensure a timely graduation. Each student, with guidance from their academic advisor, will develop a personalized educational plan.

Fall Cohort

Course	Title	Credits
Year 1		
Fall Semester		
PSY 509	Principles of Behavior	3
PSY 516	Ethics for Behavior Analysts	3
Semester Credit Hours		6
Spring Semester		
PSY 514	Single Subject Research Design and Analysis	3
PSY 519	Models of ABA Instruction	3
Semester Credit Hours		6
Summer Semester		
PSY 522	Recent Research in ABA	3
PSY 550	Behavior Analytic Approaches to Health and Physical Activity	3
Semester Credit Hours		6
Year 2		
Fall Semester		
PSY 518	Organizational Behavior Management	3
PSY 513	Functional Assessment	3
Semester Credit Hours		6
Spring Semester		
PSY 523	Theory and Philosophy in Behavior Analysis	3
PSY 520	Interventions for Challenging Behavior	3
Semester Credit Hours		6
Summer Semester		
PSY 595	Selected Topics in Applied Psychology	3
PSY 521	Supervision and Management in ABA	3
Semester Credit Hours		6
Total Credit Hours for Graduation		36

Courses and Descriptions

PSY 509 Principles of Behavior 3 Credits

This course will provide an introduction to behavior analysis. Students will learn the history and defining features of the field. Behavior analysis will be presented as a member of the family of biological sciences. The basic concepts and principles of respondent and operant conditioning will be covered.

PSY 513 Functional Assessment 3 Credits

This course is designed to provide knowledge and skills of methodologies to conduct a thorough behavioral assessment, interpret the assessment data, and identify goals for treatment. Topics will include direct observation/data collection methods, data analysis, functional assessment, stimulus preference and reinforcer assessments, and ethical and professional issues. The second half of the course will deal specifically with functional analysis including the history of and variations to the methodology. The relationship between assessment techniques and the development of the least-restrictive but most effective behavioral intervention will also be discussed.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509.

PSY 514 Single Subject Research Design and Analysis 3 Credits

Students will be introduced to the basic evaluative methods used in behavior analysis including various models of single subject design such as multiple baselines, reversal designs, and alternating treatment models. Students will design analyses, collect data, graphically display their data, and provide an analysis of findings. Students will read original behavior analytic research articles and practice analysis of findings.

PSY 516 Ethics for Behavior Analysts 3 Credits

This course will familiarize the student with ethical issues and responsibilities of behavior analysts working in applied settings. Informed consent, due process, protection of confidentiality, and selection of least intrusive, least restrictive behavior change procedures will be presented and discussed within the context of case method. Ethical decision making processes will be emphasized, and the relationship between ethics and law will be explored.

PSY 518 Organizational Behavior Management 3 Credits

This course will provide an overview of research and practice in the field of Organizational Behavior Management (OBM), also referred to as Performance Management in organizational settings. Performance Management is a behaviorally-based area of specialization within the broad field of Industrial-Organizational Psychology. The concepts and techniques used in Performance Management originated from the field of behavior analysis.

PSY 519 Models of ABA Instruction 3 Credits

This course provides students with a general knowledge of the different procedures used to teach new skills and new behaviors in the field of applied behavior analysis. Areas covered will include the assessment of relative strengths and deficits, use of discrete-trial and naturalistic teaching procedures, use of reinforcement procedures to strengthen behaviors, use of motivating operations and discriminative stimuli, use prompting and prompt-fading procedures to transfer stimulus control, use of shaping procedures to teach new behavior, use of task analysis and chaining procedures to teach new behaviors, use of precision teaching and fluency-based instruction, and use of personalized systems of instruction. Additionally, various components of the aforementioned areas will be integrated and culminate in two modules: one designed to teach communicative behavior and the other to perform discrimination training.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509.

PSY 520 Interventions for Challenging Behavior 3 Credits

Students will review principles of behavior in the context of application to functional assessment and treatment of socially significant problem behavior. Topics including extinction, functional communication training, differential reinforcement, choice, environmental manipulations, and punishment will be covered. Students will move through the process of developing function-based interventions and writing behavior plans.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509 and PSY 513 or concurrent enrollment.

PSY 521 Supervision and Management in ABA 3 Credits

This course provides students with skills needed to provide supervision and management in the field of applied behavior analysis. Students will apply the basic principles of behavior analysis to supervision and management of their staff and trainees. Areas covered include establishing performance expectations, selecting supervision goals based on assessment of current skills, how to train personnel to competence, performance monitoring and feedback, functional assessment and function-based strategies of personnel behavior, and how to evaluate the effects of supervision. Additional areas of discussion will include professional behavior, leadership, ethics, and professional development.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509, PSY 513 and PSY 514.

PSY 522 Recent Research in ABA 3 Credits

This course provides an overview of recent behavior analytic research. Topics will vary semester to semester to capture changes in the field as they occur. Students will have the opportunity to practice reviewing, discussing, and interpreting research methodology, results, and potential areas for future research.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509.

PSY 523 Theory and Philosophy in Behavior Analysis 3 Credits

Students will be introduced to the philosophical foundations and theories of behavior analysis including versions of behaviorism. Students will read and interpret writings on the theoretical and conceptual issues surrounding the behaviorist philosophical approach.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509.

PSY 550 Behavior Analytic Approaches to Health and Physical Activity 3 Credits

The application of behavior analytic methods, practices, and principles has been demonstrated through research and clinical applications to be effective at changing health and fitness behavior. This course will provide an overview of research and practice in applying behavior analytic principles to changing health behavior and physical activity. Behavior change across various populations will be covered including both adults and children with and without disabilities. Discussion will focus on both functional assessment as well as interventions effective at changing health and physical activity including self-management, self-monitoring, goal setting, contingency management, etc. Students will spend the semester implementing self-management projects for their own health and/or fitness behavior.

PSY 551 Behavioral Appro to Addiction 3 Credits

Evidence from laboratory and clinical settings suggests that addiction can be conceptualized and effectively treated through the application of principles of conditioning. This course provides an overview of behavior analytic research in understanding and intervening on addictive behavior. Behavioral technologies for change regarding substance-related and behavioral addiction will be covered.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate students in Applied Psychology.

PSY 595 Selected Topics in Applied Psychology 3 Credits

Students will actively engage in an in-depth inquiry into a special topic area concerning applied psychology. Though the topics will change, students will be required to read and discuss current literature as well as considering the application of tools of the discipline to research questions of their own.

PSY 690 Independent Research and Study 1-4 Credits

Provides students with an opportunity to design and carry out original research in an area of their choice. Students designate a faculty supervisor and work closely with him/her during the semester. Permission of Instructor.

PSY 700 ABA Thesis I 1 Credits

The expectation of the thesis experience is for students to generate a scholarly work of professional presentation and/or publication quality. In Thesis I, students will first complete a comprehensive survey of the research literature in a particular area within applied behavior analysis. They will then develop a research question and methodology using the principles of ABA and an appropriate single-case research design.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509 **Co-Requisites(s):** PSY 514.

PSY 701 ABA Thesis II 3 Credits

In Thesis II, the student will finalize their research proposal and present to members of the MAP ABA thesis committee. Following any recommended revisions, the proposal will be submitted to the IRB for approval. Once IRB approval is obtained, the student will recruit participants, obtain informed consent, and begin data collection.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509 and PSY 514.

PSY 702 ABA Thesis III 3 Credits

In Thesis III, the student will complete data collection, analyze their data, and write up their study in American Psychological Association (APA) style. The student will present an oral defense to a committee of faculty members. Following a successful defense, the student will finalize their work as a professional presentation and/or publication submission.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 509 and PSY 514.

PSY 720 Practicum in ABA 3 Credits

The Master in Applied Psychology - Applied Behavior Analysis (MAP-ABA) program's practicum offers students supervision from Rider's MAP-ABA faculty and a variety of high quality in-vivo experiences, under the direct supervision of a Rider-Approved Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), during which students apply the skills acquired in coursework.

Prerequisite(s): PSY 510, PSY 511.