Arizona State University
Department of Psychology

Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis Program Handbook
2018 - 2020

A Guide to Policies and Procedures for Students and Faculty
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SECTION I. DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Department of Psychology at ASU

The Department of Psychology on the Tempe campus is one of the largest and most popular departments at ASU. The mission of the department is to create an environment that prepares undergraduate and graduate students to take their place in the world using the skills they have learned to pursue careers that benefit their community. Faculty and students are actively involved with a number of other centers, institutes, and research groups on campus that promote transdisciplinary approaches to issues of local and national significance which afford outstanding research and training experiences that extend beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Psychology is a hub department that makes an important contribution to the advancement of ASU as a leader of knowledge generation and utilization.

Program Areas and Academic Specialties

Behavioral Neuroscience: Learning and memory; mathematical modeling of behavior; aging, neurodegenerative diseases, and hormone modulation; behavioral and neurobiological consequences of drug abuse; feeding behavior; stress and brain plasticity; timing and time perception; ADHD and impulsivity; and canine cognition and behavior

Clinical Psychology: Health psychology and the interface of psychology and medicine; child clinical psychology and the assessment and prevention of mental health problems among children and families; community and prevention science; substance abuse; eating disorders; and health disparities among minority groups.

Cognitive Science: Categorization; cognitive development; dynamics; embodied cognition; language; learning sciences; writing and reading; memory; perception and action.

Developmental: Bio-behavioral markers and genetics; quantitative developmental psychology; translational prevention and intervention; developmental psychopathology, risk and resilience.

Quantitative: Modern approaches to measurement of psychological constructs; research design innovations; and development of new data analytic approaches to complex research questions and designs.

Social Psychology: Close relationships; cultural neuroscience; emotion; culture; decision-making; group dynamics; evolution; intergroup relations; religion; self and social perception.

Applied Behavior Analysis: A master’s program offering 1515 hours of practicum training and over 270 hours of scientifically-based courses in basic behavior-analytic skills, client-centered responsibilities, and foundational knowledge.
Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis Program

Behavior Analysis is a sub-division in the discipline of Psychology distinguished by a unique philosophical, theoretical, and methodological orientation. Historical and contextually-situated behavior-environment relations constitute its subject matter. Its method is experimental with aims of description, prediction, and control of its subject matter.

Program Goals and Objectives

The program goals and objectives are oriented to training students to become well-rounded, fully competent behavior analysts. This entails comprehensive, multimodal training inside the classroom and in the field with respect to each of the areas listed below:

1. **Concepts and Principles of Behavior Analysis**
   a. **Philosophical assumptions of behavior analysis:** Including, but not limited to, the lawfulness of behavior, environmental explanations of behavior, selectionism, determinism, empiricism, parsimony, and pragmatism
   b. **Types and domains of behavior analysis:** Radical vs. methodological behaviorism, the conceptual analysis of behavior, the experimental analysis of behavior, applied behavior analysis, and behavioral technologies
   c. **Behavior principles and paradigms** Including, but not limited to, behavior, response, and response class; stimulus and stimulus class; stimulus control and stimulus equivalence; motivating operations; functional relations; stimulus and response generalization; stimulus and response discrimination; behavioral contrast; behavioral momentum; the matching law; and respondent and operant conditioning.
   d. **Verbal operants:** Echoics, mands, tacts, intraverbals, and autoclitics
   e. **Contingency-shaped vs. rule-governed behavior:** Behavior as a result of the consequences vs. behavior as a result of verbal descriptions of those consequences.

2. **Single-Subject Design Methodology and the Measurement and Interpretation of Research Data**
   a. **Experimental evaluation procedures:** Manipulation of independent variables using withdrawal designs, reversal designs, alternating treatment designs, changing criterion designs, multiple baseline designs, multiple probe designs, and combinations of these; component and parametric analyses.
   b. **Measurement procedures based on the dimensions of behavior:** Repeatability, temporal extent, and temporal locus
   c. **Continuous vs. discontinuous measurement procedures:** ability/aim to collect data on all target items vs. an inability/aim to do so.
   d. **Observation and recording procedures:** the ways in which we collect data influence the usefulness of that data.
   e. **Graphs that effectively communicate quantitative relations:** Including, but not limited to, equal-interval graphs, cumulative records, and standard celeration charts; evaluating temporal relations between variables; and changes in level, trend, and variability of responding.
3. Problem Identification and Behavior Assessment
   a. **Descriptive and indirect assessment**: Including, but not limited to, interviews, rating scales, and checklists.
   b. **Functional analysis**: experimental/intentional manipulation of the variables responsible for behavior’s occurrence; attention; escape, tangible, automatic/sensory.
   c. **Preference and reinforcer assessments**: single-choice, paired-choice, MSWO, MSW; RPAs.

4. Selecting and Conducting Behavior Interventions
   a. **Intervention strategies and target outcomes**: Selected and identified based on behavioral cusps, task analysis, client characteristics and preferences, context, assessment results, social validity, and best available scientific evidence.
   b. **Intervention outcomes stated in observable and measurable terms**: operational definitions;
   c. **Recommendations for behavior change**: Taking into account practical and ethical considerations as well as whether alternative behaviors will need to be established or increased.
   d. **Programming for stimulus and response generalization, maintenance of behavior change, and generative learning**: schedules of reinforcement; stimulus salience, prompting, etc.

5. Behavior Change Considerations, Procedures, and Fundamental Elements
   a. **Reinforcement, punishment, and extinction**: Including, but not limited to, schedules, parameters, and potential undesirable effects.
   b. **Elements of behavior change**: Including, but not limited to, prompting, shaping, and chaining; discrete trials vs. free operant arrangements.
   c. **Specific behavior change procedures**: Including, but not limited to, antecedent interventions, discrimination training, instructions and rules, contingency contracting, individual and group contingencies, stimulus equivalence, high and low probability request sequences, the Premack principle, pairing procedures, errorless learning, and matching to sample.
   d. **Communication training** (Echoic stimulus control and mand, tact, intraverbal, and listening training)
   e. **Behavior change systems**: Including, but not limited to, self-management strategies, token economies, precision teaching, personalized system of instruction, incidental teaching, functional communication training, and augmentative communication systems.

6. Systems Support
   a. **Collaboration with others providing services and/or support**: interdisciplinary efforts to a comprehensive treatment conceptualization
   b. **Establishing support in natural settings**: transferring stimulus control to natural environment
   c. **Competency-based training and effective supervision**: Including identifying the contingencies governing the behavior of the implementers
   d. **Monitoring and documentation of interventions**: Including program effectiveness and procedural integrity.
   e. **Terminating services appropriately**: per Ethical Code of Conduct
7. **Ethical and Professional Conduct in Applied Behavior Analysis**
   a. **Reliance on scientifically and professionally derived knowledge**: In human service provision and scholarly or professional endeavors.
   b. **Use of language that is fully understandable to service recipients**: Including assessment, evaluation, treatment, counseling, supervision, teaching, consultation, research, or other behavior analytic services to individuals, groups, or organizations.
   c. **Working within the boundaries of one’s competence and maintaining competence**: In service provision, teaching, and research.
   d. **Selection and implementation of behavioral assessments and interventions**: least invasive; those which yield the most info
   e. **Informed consent and confidentiality**: Ensure investment in behavioral program; Ethical Code of Conduct

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the MS ABA Program in the Department of Psychology at Arizona State University is to strengthen Behavior Analysis as a scientific discipline and as a professional occupation; to provide meaningful service in community partnerships; and to prepare students to become fully competent professionals in the field of ABA.

**Program Faculty**

Our program’s faculty provide the expertise, specialization, and years of experience across a range of content and research areas to ensure the best academic graduate training that can only be found at a top-tier psychology department in a research-intensive university. Many of our faculty not only teach our courses but are active practitioners in Arizona’s ABA community. ASU Psychology’s MS ABA program is committed to providing the best possible education to ensure that all of our graduate students become tomorrow’s best scientist-practitioners of applied behavior analysis.

**Adam D. Hahs**, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA; Director, MS ABA Program, Department of Psychology; Courses: PSB 501 Basic Principles of ABA; PSB 580 ABA Practicum; PSB 511 Advance Research Methods in ABA; PSB 593 Capstone

**Diana Davis-Wilson**, PhD, BCBA, LBA; Clinical Director, Scottsdale Children’s Institute; Course: PSB 520 Ethical Issues and Professional Standards in ABA

**Donald M. Stenhoff**, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA; Director, Dept. of Behavioral Services, ACCEL; Courses: PSB 510 Basic Principles of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior; PSB 530 Behavioral Observation and Functional Assessment; PSB 563 Basic Principles of Organizational Behavior Management (OBM)

**Ashley Bennett**, PhD, BCBA, LBA; Residential Transition Academy Director, SARRC; Course: PSB 540 Development of Applied Behavioral Intervention; PSB 598 Special Topics

**Federico Sanabria**, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Behavioral Neuroscience; Courses: PSB 573 Advanced Principles of Learning and Analysis of Behavior; PSB 593 Capstone
**MS ABA Program Advisory Committee**

The MS ABA Program Advisory Committee is comprised of professionals, practitioners, and scientists in and around the Phoenix Metro area. Their selection to the committee was based on their breadth of experiences, contributions, and overall knowledge of Behavior Analysis and Psychology. Moreover, their combined knowledge regarding graduate program training enables the Psychology MS ABA Program to be thorough in its coursework and practicum training opportunities. The MS ABA Program Advisory Committee members from the greater Phoenix community are:

- **Michele R. Bishop**, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA; Director of Autism Services: Devereux Arizona
- **Aaron Blocher-Rubin**, PhD, MBA, BCBA/LBA; Chief Executive Officer: Arizona Autism United
- **Jessica Irwin**, MEd, BCBA; CEO and Founder: S.E.E.K. Arizona
- **Amy Kenzer**, PhD, BCBA-D; Clinical Services Director: Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC)
- **Paige Raetz**, PhD, BCBA-D; Director of Clinical Operations: SARRC

The Advisory Committee’s ASU members are faculty and academic personnel whose specializations and research encompass autism, ethics, aging, program development, developmental disabilities, learning, and public policy. These members include:

- **Keith Crnic**, PhD, Foundation Professor
- **Adam D. Hahs**, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, Director, MS ABA Program
- **Peter Killeen**, PhD, Professor Emeritus
- **Don Stenhoff**, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology
- **Federico Sanabria**, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
- **Clive Wynne**, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychology

**Our Students**

Year after year, doctoral students in the Department of Psychology at ASU have had the highest GRE scores in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and the MS ABA program continues that distinctive tradition of attracting the best. We accept students who are committed to a behavioral orientation in psychology and who show potential as leaders in the field of applied behavior analysis. As such, we value ability, motivation, enthusiasm, interpersonal skills, and academic accomplishments in our admissions process. Our students are expected to function independently; to take initiative in their education; and to assume appropriate responsibility for the direction and specific goals of their learning experiences. We also believe students learn a great deal from each other. To that end, we accept a heterogeneous population of younger and older students with racial and cultural diversity across a broad spectrum of life and work experiences.
SECTION II. CURRICULUM, PRACTICUM AND CAPSTONE PROJECT

Department of Psychology MS ABA Program Curriculum

In order to successfully complete the program in two years, you are expected to (1) effectively schedule and manage your time; (2) take required classes when they are offered; and (3) devote yourself full-time to your studies including the summer between Years 1 and 2 in the program.

The MS ABA program requires 42 credit hours across four full-time semesters and both A and B sessions during the summer between the first and second year. A Capstone Project is to be initiated at the beginning of Summer Session A and conducted throughout the summer and the program’s second year. You will be required to complete practicum hours during the summer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Credit Hrs</th>
<th>Sem Hrs</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Instructional Hrs</th>
<th>Practicum Hours</th>
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<td>PSB 501</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSB 510</td>
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<td>PSB 520</td>
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<td>Ethical Issues and Professional Standards in ABA</td>
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<td>ABA Practicum</td>
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<td>PSB 511</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Advanced Research Methods in ABA</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSB 530</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral Observation and Functional Assessment</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSB 540</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of Applied Behavioral Intervention Programs</td>
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<td>ABA Practicum/Fieldwork</td>
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<td>PSB 573</td>
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<td>Advanced Principles of Learning and Analysis of Behavior</td>
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<td>PSB 596</td>
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<td>ABA Practicum</td>
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<th>Sem Hrs</th>
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<td>Capstone Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSB 580</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>ABA Practicum</td>
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**Practicum**

One of the program’s goals is to ensure that you will experience the breadth and depth of applied behavior analysis from an evidence-based, scientific perspective through coursework and from hands-on, clinical experience during practicum training. Our program is purposefully designed to *not* train specialists in a targeted area of study – rather, you will acquire knowledge and skill sets about ABA interventions across disorders, applications, and age groups. The practicum experience will provide you 1500+ hours of training with several clinical populations through a range of settings and treatment modalities. Practicum experience must be completed under the supervision of a licensed, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

In addition, you are required to enroll each semester in PSB 580, the ABA Practicum course, which meets every week. Not only will you receive additional case supervision from a licensed, BCBA-D faculty member, but PSB 580 will also be an opportunity for you to present and discuss your cases using a Grand Rounds model – an important teaching and learning tool within graduate training.
Practicum Placement Curriculum

Year 1, First Semester Rotations: starting the first week of Fall semester, you will rotate through three practicum sites for 1 week each. This will allow you to see different ABA treatment settings, clientele, and organizations in the Phoenix Metro Area. You are also strongly encouraged to arrange appointments to meet with all of the program’s practicum sites; this will allow you greater opportunities to match with other organizations beyond the three sites where you were assigned during the fall rotation. The practicum site rotation is pre-determined and assignments cannot be changed without justification and approval from the program’s director.

September Match Day: For the first 7-month practicum placement, you and practicum sites will be matched based on your rank order list of desired placement and the site’s ranked list of you. You are assured of a practicum placement although your choices cannot be guaranteed.

Year 1, Practicum Placement 1: Extended practicum training begins the first week of Spring semester and ending at the conclusion of the Spring semester. ASU’s academic calendar is in effect for holidays and semester breaks. A small stipend is available based on the practicum hours where direct client services are being provided. Every student receives the same stipend dollar amount at the same hourly rate.

April Match Day: For the second, 12-month practicum placements, you and the sites will again participate in a match; however, you will not be allowed to rank your first practicum site nor can sites rank you. You are assured of a practicum placement although your choices cannot be guaranteed.

Year 2, Practicum Placement 2: Practicum training begins during Summer Session A and continues through the last week of Spring semester at the student’s matched site. ASU’s academic calendar is in effect for holidays and semester breaks. A small stipend may be available based on your practicum hours.

Capstone Project

You are required to complete a Capstone Project to fulfill the degree requirements. Capstone Projects will begin at the beginning of Summer Session A and continue throughout the summer and your second year. Several options may satisfy the Capstone Project requirement including:

1. a comprehensive literature review and synthesis of leading-edge ABA research, techniques and therapies; or
2. a scientifically-based research project including methodology, data collection and analysis; or
3. a comprehensive case study that demonstrates knowledge of ABA’s underlying scientific principles; or
4. an evaluation of a new program or the development of an innovative approach for treating a specific problem behavior in a targeted population.

The Capstone Project will be conducted under faculty supervision and must be approved by the student’s faculty mentor, the program director, and the Department of Psychology Chair.

General Capstone Project Timelines

1. 1-page proposal to mentor – Summer Session A 2017: End of week 1; mentor approval required before progressing;
2. Outline of project – Summer Session A 2017: End of week 2; see Dr. Hahs’ outline template;
3. Draft of Introduction and *Method (End of Summer Session B)
4. *Participant recruitment (Completed by November 1, 2017)
5. *Conduct experiment* (Completed by mid-February, 2018)
6. *Write Results and Discussion* (Completed by mid-March, 2018)
7. *Revisions to mentor* (End of March, 2018)

*as applicable*

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SECTION III. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Grades and Degree Conferral Requirements

In order to be determined eligible for conferral of the Psychology Department MS ABA degree, you must meet the following criteria within four (4) years of first matriculation:

- Satisfactorily complete the required program hours (42 credit hours) and courses specified in the curriculum requirements;
- Earn a 3.0 GPA or higher across all courses including the ABA Practicum and Capstone Project experiences;
- Successfully complete a Capstone Project;
- Successfully complete the required practicum hours and experiences; and
- Demonstrate professional attitude, decorum, and ethics commensurate with the profession.

Note:
- Students with delinquent obligations shall not be allowed to register for classes, receive cash refunds or obtain transcripts, diplomas or certificates of degree without university approval. The university may allow students to register for classes if the delinquent obligation is $200 or less. The university will not allow students to obtain transcripts, diplomas or certificate of degree if the delinquent obligation is $25 or more.
- Unpaid obligations shall remain a matter of record until students and former students satisfy their financial obligations or until satisfactory arrangements for repayment are made with the university.
- The university may write off delinquent financial obligations of students according to accepted accounting principles and after appropriate collection efforts. No such write-off shall operate to relieve the student of liability for the obligation nor shall such write off entitle the student to release of any transcript, diploma or certificate of degree or to register for further university classes, except as permitted in this policy, until such obligation is actually paid.

Academic Mentorship

You will have a faculty mentor/advisor whose responsibilities are to assist the student in completing their degree requirements that will (1) promote their professional development, and (2) facilitate their placement upon graduation. If at any time you need counseling, tutoring, or other assistance, the mentor is the person to help you make the appropriate arrangements. The mentor is also responsible for initiating disciplinary procedures in the case of ethical or academic misconduct. You are responsible for completing a consumer satisfaction survey at the end of each semester as part of the ongoing program evaluation. All academic mentorship that you receive is the responsibility of their advisor/mentor. It is the responsibility of faculty to provide appropriate guidance and oversight with respect to your course and other credit registration completions each semester.
Student Evaluations and Program Milestones

The program’s Director and faculty will review your progress for each of the following milestones:

**Year 1 Student Evaluation**
Conducted at the end of spring semester and includes:
1. Coursework – based on achievement, scholarship, and successful completion of the first year curriculum;
2. Practicum placement for fall and spring semesters – based on practicum supervisors’ assessment of performance and PSB 580 class participation/course grade.

**Summer Evaluation**
Conducted at the end of summer session B and includes:
1. Capstone Project – successful completion of proposal, project outline, draft of required paper sections, and overall progress;
2. Practicum placement – based on practicum supervisor assessment of performance and PSB 583 class participation/course grade

**Year 2 Student Evaluations (two)**
Conducted at the end of fall semester:
1. Capstone Project – successful progress toward completion;
2. Coursework – based on achievement, scholarship, and successful completion of fall curriculum;
3. Year 2 practicum mid-point evaluation – based on practicum supervisor’s assessment of performance and PSB 580 class participation/course grade

**Final student evaluation** to be conducted at the end of spring semester, Year 2:
4. Capstone Project – based on successful completion and final deliverable;
5. Coursework – based on achievement, scholarship, and successful completion of program’s total curriculum;
6. Practicum placement/clinical training – based on all practicum supervisors’ assessments of performance and PSB 580/583 class participation/course grades.

At each milestone evaluation, the Program Director will provide you with written documentation that summarizes your achievements, strengths and any weaknesses that require remediation.

We want you and your advisor(s) to be aware of this timetable and the expectations that are associated with them. You should regularly speak with your advisor(s) in the event of any issues related to your progress.

**Course Completion Time Limits**
All coursework, practicum experiences, and Capstone Project requirements for degree conferral must be completed within four (4) years of first matriculation.

**Practicum Evaluations**
Practicum evaluations are an imperative part of our program goals to afford you the opportunity to contact meaningful and thorough behavior-analytic experiences during your time in the program. To that end, you your practicum supervisors will conduct evaluations:
- Supervisors will evaluate your overall performance; and
- You will have the opportunity to provide feedback and evaluate your supervisor(s) and the organization.
Evaluations will be electronic in nature and will be sent to you and your supervisor near the end of the month (or practicum rotation for the first semester). Year 1 fall semester rotation evaluations will occur at the midway point and at the conclusion of each of the three practicum locations for all students.

**Practicum Timelines**

Students’ progress toward behavior-analytic competency will be assessed each month over the course of your time in the program. This will be done via a check of your relevant experiences against the BACB task list relevant to your graduation date. Students will be responsible for reviewing and identifying which areas of the task list they did experience and did not experience in each month, as well as their task list targets for the following month. These are to be submitted within 48-hrs of each student’s 2nd individual supervisory meeting for each month.

**NOTE:** These evaluations are distinct from the regular BACB-specific supervision forms to be completed.

**SECTION IV. OTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

**Academic Integrity**

You are required to review and fully understand ASU’s Academic Integrity Policy. If you have any questions, please ask your academic advisor or consult [http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity](http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity) PRIOR to engaging in any behavior that may result in a violation of this policy.

**Grievance Procedures and Due Process**

In the event that a problem arises – whether personal, academic, or professional – the recommended procedure is:

1. Talk to your advisor.
2. If your advisor is part of the problem, talk to your Program Director.
3. If that doesn’t create resolution, or if your advisor is the Program Director, talk to the Director of Graduate Studies.
4. If the problem is still unresolved, make an appointment to talk to the Chair of the Department.
5. If necessary, the issue would be directed to the Dean's Office in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

You may enter this procedure at any one of the steps (e.g., #4 first, #2 First). There are two additional sources of help: (1) the Student Life Office and (2) the Division of Graduate Studies. See the Division of Graduate Studies website for detailed instructions on submitting an appeal for an unresolved grievance: [https://graduate.asu.edu/policies-procedures](https://graduate.asu.edu/policies-procedures)

**Due Process**

Due process procedures no longer exist in paper form but can be found at the website below that contains the links to the two manuals that describe due process procedures: (1) Academic Affairs (ACD) and (2) University Student Initiative (USI). Two of the documents shown on the website, the Student Enrollment Services Policies and Procedures Manual (SES) and the Student Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual (STA) were recently merged into the USI.

Graduate Student Resources

There is a wide array of campus resources that are available to you as a graduate student. Links to many of them are provided in the “Support Services” page of the Dean of Students website:

https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/supportservices

Campus Health Service; Career Services; Child and Family Services (e.g., child care); Counseling and Consultation Center; Credit Union; Disability Resource Center; Financial Aid Office; Housing Office; International Student Office; Multicultural Student Center; Preparing Future Faculty; Student Legal Assistance; Writing Center. Online descriptions of these resources can be found by using the search engine on the ASU homepage.

Board Certification and State Licensure Laws

- Information pertinent to becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst: www.BACB.com
- Information regarding state licensure (AZ) for behavior analysts: www.psychboard.az.gov