



University of Memphis
Applied Behavior Analysis Program (ABA)

Graduate Student Practicum Handbook

2025-2026

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University of Memphis ABA Program

Graduate Student Practicum Handbook

Welcome to practicum at UofM!

This handbook describes all you need to know to plan a successful practicum experience that culminates in the completion of your verified fieldwork experience. All aspects of the practicum experience at UofM align with the BACB standards and are designed to provide high-quality training to trainees seeking to become board-certified behavior analysts.

Starting your Practicum Experience

Students are encouraged to start accruing fieldwork hours by the beginning of their first Spring in the ABA Program. Doing so will ensure that fieldwork requirements are met by the end of the course sequence. While it is not mandatory that students finish their fieldwork hours and take the BCBA exam by the time they finish the verified course sequence (VCS), it is strongly encouraged that they do so. The VCS and the supervised fieldwork experience are designed to provide students with the resources and training required to take the BCBA exam and become successful behavior analysts.

Students can start accruing fieldwork hours if:

- They have started their coursework in the ABA Verified Course Sequence (VCS)
- They have notified the practicum coordinator
- They have a qualified supervisor on-site (eligible to supervise trainees)
- They have signed a supervision contract with their supervisor
- They have created a gateway account on the BACB's website
- They have completed a background check on file at UofM

Students who are employed as RBTs and have a BCBA supervisor who is willing to supervise their fieldwork hours may start accruing hours upon starting their first class. The practicum coordinator will verify that initial requirements are met in accordance with the BACB standards, and contact the on-site supervisor to agree on expectations, roles, and procedures related to the practicum experience.

Students who are not employed as RBTs and require assistance with their fieldwork placement will be given options of practicum sites affiliated with UofM. Students may contact the

practicum coordinator for information about the availability of practicum positions each semester.

Typically, practicum sites offer one of the following options:

- Full time or part-time RBT employment
- Internships or GAs are sponsored by the site. Depending on the site these positions may cover: a 20 hour per week monthly stipend and the cost of 1 class per semester
- Opportunities to volunteer (unpaid time).

Note: Students should not pay for supervision. Supervision is provided by the on-site supervisor (per agreement with affiliated institutions) and by the practicum instructors.

Credit Hours vs Paid Hours: Whether students have a GA or are employed as RBTs at their sites, they will have two distinct roles and two different contracts:

- a) **As an employee**, the student will commit to the organization's contract and regulations, and they will be required to do the work as an employee of that organization.
- b) **As a trainee**, the student will commit to engaging in activities that will help them to become a BCBA. These activities are usually additional to what they are required to do as an employee. While students will be able to count *some* of their paid RBT hours as supervised fieldwork hours (restricted hours), they will need to do *additional work* (unrestricted hours) that is not covered by their employment contract, and therefore, not compensated (unless otherwise agreed with the on-site supervisor).

Once students start taking practicum courses they can count practicum assignments as unrestricted hours. These will be part of the student's credit hours (not their paid hours). Students should log around 32 **credit hours** per month at their site. This time can be allocated to either practicum assignments or other unrestricted activities assigned by the on-site supervisor.

If appropriate, and/or when relevant to the needs of the practicum site, supervisors may arrange opportunities for students to complete unrestricted activities (practicum assignments or others assigned by the on-site supervisor) during the student's paid time. However, supervisors are under no obligation to accommodate unrestricted activities during the student's paid time. Students and supervisors should agree on appropriate times to complete practicum class assignments outside of scheduled work hours.

UofM Clinic and Other Affiliated Sites: The following are UofM affiliated sites where students can apply to work while accruing their supervised fieldwork hours. Students are encouraged to visit these sites and check their availability for GA or employment opportunities with the site's director and with the practicum coordinator.

University of Memphis Sites

- UofM Autism Treatment, Training and Research Clinic
<https://www.memphis.edu/autismclinic/>
- Project Memphis
<https://www.memphis.edu/projectmemphis/about/index.php>

Other Affiliated Sites

- Harwood Center
- Autism Centers of Tennessee
- Irby Psychological Services
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Thomas-Hill Behavior Training Innovations

Qualified supervisors: Qualified supervisors are BCBAs that have at least one year of experience, have completed an 8-hour supervision training, and are active and in good standing with the BACB. Per BACB requirements, BCBAs with less than one year of experience will need to receive at least one hour of guidance per month from a consulting supervisor. The consulting should have at least 5 years of experience and should be in good standing with the BACB.

Qualifier supervisors are required to:

- Be knowledgeable of BACB requirements, and stay current with any changes or announcements made by the BACB
- Make sure trainees are up to date with all documentation requirements.
- Hold regular supervision meetings with the student/trainee
- Set clear objectives and expectations for trainees,
- Assess and monitor the trainees' competencies regularly.

Description of Fieldwork Requirements

To sit for the exam after coursework completion, students will need to accrue 2000 hours of Supervised Fieldwork or 1500 of Concentrated Supervised Fieldwork. Concentrated Supervised Fieldwork differs from Supervised Fieldwork in the amount of supervision provided each month. Students can discuss with their on-site supervisors which of these fieldwork types better suits the needs of supervisors and students. Students who are employed full-time as RBTs, and have several supervision meetings built-in their work schedule, might consider the Concentrated Fieldwork type.

The table below shows the requirements that need to be met per supervisory period (monthly). If these requirements *are not met*, all or some of the hours accumulated for that month will not count towards the student's fieldwork experience hours. If requirements are partially met, students will obtain only partial credit for the hours logged during that supervisory period. For example, if by the end of the month a trainee has met with their supervisor half of the required number of hours, only half of the hours logged for that month will count as supervised fieldwork experience.

Students and supervisors are required to monitor the completion and accurate documentation of these monthly requirements. While documentation of fieldwork experience is mainly a responsibility of the student, supervisors are responsible for monitoring, providing guidance, and reviewing the documentation with the student on a monthly basis and as needed.

	Supervised Fieldwork	Concentrated Fieldwork
Total hours required	2000	1500
Supervisory Period	1 Calendar month	
Fieldwork hours per supervisory period Min-max hours per month ¹	Minimum of 20 hrs. -Max of 130 hrs.	
Supervision meetings per month ²	4 contacts	6 contacts
Percentage of supervised hours ³	5% of the hours accrued in a month	10% of the hours accrued in a month
Observation with a client	1 observation per month	1 observation per month
Unrestricted hours ⁴	60% of the total hours (not per month)	60% of the total hours (not per month)

¹Minimum and a maximum number of hours that can be accrued each month. To complete the hour requirement by the time of graduation, students should start their fieldwork hours in their first Spring and accrue around 120 hours per month.

²Group supervision may occur with less than 10 trainees. At least 50% of supervision meetings per month need to be individual meetings. Practicum classes can be counted as group supervision. This needs to be arranged and approved by the practicum faculty and on-site supervisor.

³The total amount of fieldwork hours that students accrue per month includes independent and supervised hours. Each month trainees need to be supervised for at least 5% of their monthly hours (or

10% for Concentrated Fieldwork). For example, if a student plans to accrue 100 hours per month, they need to have at least 5 hours of supervision meetings in that month.

⁴The BACB restricts the amount of time a trainee dedicates to the direct implementation of programs. Restricted hours refer to the time spent in activities that an RBT would do. A trainee needs to spend the majority of their 2000 hours (at least 60%) receiving training in activities that a BCBA would do. These are identified as Unrestricted activities because there is no limit on the number of time trainees can spend in these activities.

Examples of unrestricted include but are not limited to:

- a. Observation and data collection
- b. Behavioral assessments
- c. Writing reports
- d. Parent or staff training
- e. Reviewing or developing behavior plans
- f. Graphing and analyzing data
- g. Meeting with clients about behavior analytic services
- h. Researching literature directly related to the provision of services.

Documentation of Supervised Fieldwork Experience

Students will need to log their monthly hours using three documentation systems:

1. **Fieldwork Verification Forms (FVF):** These forms can be found on the BACB website or following the links below (<https://www.bacb.com/bcba/>). If the student is supervised by multiple supervisors, they will need to use the FVF for *Multiple Supervisors in one Organization*. All FVF need to be signed within one month of the end of the supervisory period.

Individual Supervisor: https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BACB-Monthly-Fieldwork-Verification-Form-Individual_2022_02_24.pdf

Multiple Supervisors: https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BACB-Monthly-Fieldwork-Verification-Form-Organization_2022_02_24.pdf

2. **Unique Documentation System (UDS)-** This system of documentation is to be developed by the supervisor to document the trainee's hours. Per BACB requirements, the UDS needs to include: date, start and end time, fieldwork type, site and supervisor, number of restricted and unrestricted hours, if supervision occurred, date and time of supervision meeting, the format of the meeting, and summary of activities. Also include

the total number of hours of supervision per month (group and individual), the number of observations with the client, and the number of contacts (meetings) per month.

3. **Final Fieldwork Verification Form:** To be signed by the supervisor(s) at the end of a supervised experience.

Individual Supervisor: https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BACB-Final-Fieldwork-Verification-Form-Individual_2022_02_21.pdf

Multiple Supervisors: https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BACB-Final-Fieldwork-Verification-Form-Organization_2022_02_24.pdf

Practicum Courses

Registration

Practicum courses are Linked to the student's fieldwork experience. Although students should start accruing their fieldwork hours by their first Spring semester in the program, practicum courses will not start until the Fall term.

Since these courses are designed to supplement and support the student's fieldwork experience at their practicum sites, ***students who have not secured a practicum class will not be allowed to register for these courses.***

Before registering for each practicum course, students confirm that they will be accruing fieldwork hours at their site at least for the following academic term.

Shared Supervision (Practicum + On-Site Supervision)

Once students start taking practicum courses, supervised time can be shared between the on-site supervisor and the practicum instructor.

Practicum course meetings take place every other week in groups of less than 10 students. Students have the option to count these meetings as group supervision, and related class assignments and activities as unrestricted fieldwork hours.

On-site supervisors may choose to:

- ***Sign-off on these hours:*** In a Practicum UDS, students will log the hours they will be counting towards their supervised experience. The practicum instructor will sign this

form at the end of each month. Students will bring the signed UDS to their on-site supervisor if they require verification of their practicum hours before signing the monthly FVF. Only the on-site supervisor will sign the M-FVF.

- **Use an FVF for multiple supervisors.** The on-site supervisor will be the official supervisor. All other BCBAs with supervisory roles, including other BCBAs that are part of the site and the practicum instructor, will need to be added to the supervision contract. Only the on-site supervisor will sign the M-FVF.

Class Assignments

During practicum classes, students will be able to share their progress and experiences at their sites and learn from the experiences of other students in the group. Students will also be required to apply at their sites the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom.

Assignments to be conducted at the practicum sites may include but are not limited to: direct observations, data recording, data analysis, implementation and design of behavioral assessments, design, and implementation of behavior plans, monitoring procedural integrity, and staff training. These assignments should be conducted under the supervision and guidance of the on-site supervisor and may count as unrestricted hours.

- At the beginning of each practicum course, the practicum instructor will share the syllabus with the on-site supervisor to keep them informed about upcoming assignments/activities.
- On-site supervisors will provide opportunities to conduct these assignments and provide supervision.
- Students will be asked to submit a confirmation slip, signed and dated by the on-site supervisor, to verify that the assignment was conducted at the site and under proper supervision.
- Although they may elect to do so, on-site supervisors *are NOT required* to provide feedback on written assignments/reports before submission. The confirmation slip is required only to ensure that a supervisor is present to guide the student during implementation and to protect the best interest of the client.
- These assignments are part of the student's credit hours. *Students should not expect to be paid for this time.* On-site supervisors may or may not allow the student to conduct these assignments during their paid time. This will depend on the needs of the site/clients and will be entirely at the discretion of the on-site supervisor.
- Assignments do not need to be implemented in the order specified on the syllabus. For example, students may be required to do a preference assessment for their first assignment and to collect ABC data for their second assignment. If it is convenient given the needs of the site (scheduling, client availability, etc) they may implement both in the first few weeks. Students will turn in their data when the assignment is due, but it can be implemented at

any time. Before implementing, students will want to consider the instructions for each assignment.

Overview of practicum courses

- *Practicum 1:* This course discusses requirements for fieldwork experience, measurement and observation, preference and reinforcer assessments, data reliability, treatment fidelity, and standards of supervision. Students will be required to conduct brief practical assignments at the practicum site. review a variety of ABA applications in different areas and with different populations
- *Practicum 2:* This practicum course focuses specifically on behavioral assessments. Students will be required to conduct a variety behavioral assessments at their practicum sites under the guidance of their on-site supervisor. Assessment results will be shared with the group and discussed, during each practicum meeting.
- *Practicum 3:* In this course, students will review material and resources in preparation for the BCBA exam, discuss challenges at their sites and work on a skill acquisition project. Students will identify target skills based on assessment results and write and implement skill acquisition programs for one of their clients.
- *Advanced Practicum:* In this course, students discuss topics related to their future work as BCBAs and they continue to prepare for the exam. Mock exams and other resources will be made available to evaluate and strengthen areas that require improvement.

Expectations of On-Site Supervisors per the BACB and UofM Standards

The following are the roles and expectations of supervisors. On-site supervisors agree to:

- Provide opportunities to model and shape the skills required to practice as a BCBA
- Adhere to the Ethics Code and encourage discussion of ethical issues that trainees may encounter.
- Monitor accurate documentation of experience hours
- Sign M-FVF no later than a month after each supervisory period
- Provide training on soft skills and professionalism.
- Provide constructive feedback and frequent positive reinforcement.
- Obtain feedback about their performance as supervisors
- Schedule meetings and observations in advance
- Review progress towards specific goals during supervision meetings
- Build and maintain a positive relationship with the trainee

- Communicate with the practicum instructor and/or with the practicum coordinator if there are any concerns about the trainee's performance.
- Provide opportunities for students to conduct their practicum assignments
- Communicate with the practicum instructor and/or with the practicum coordinator if there are any concerns or questions about the practicum assignments. These assignments are to be conducted in a manner that fits the needs of the clients and sites.
- Sign and date a confirmation form for practicum assignments.
- Complete a performance feedback form and send it directly to the practicum instructor. This is typically done two times per semester. The student is responsible for asking the supervisor to fill out this form in a timely manner.

Expectations of Practicum Students per the BACB and UofM Standards

The following are the roles and expectations of supervisors. Students agree to:

- Adhere to the Ethics Code and ask questions about how to navigate ethical situations that might arise during their fieldwork experience.
- Document their fieldwork hours accurately and timely.
- Send the student performance feedback form to supervisors and make sure supervisors send it to the practicum instructor by the due date indicated on the syllabus (see Appendixes)
- Once per semester, complete a form to provide feedback on the supervisor's performance (see Appendixes)
- Meet with the supervisor on the days and times agreed
- Prepare for supervision meetings: have questions, concerns, topics to discuss, or data, ready to review.
- With every assignment submission, submit also a signed confirmation slip (see Appendixes).
 - Students should give this form to their supervisor on the day they conduct the procedure required in the assignment.
 - Assignments without a signed confirmation slip will not be graded.
- Receive constructive feedback and use it to improve performance
- Provide feedback to their supervisor. Students are encouraged to have honest and open conversations with their supervisors about their needs and any disagreements or concerns. If these cannot be resolved, students should inform the practicum coordinator.
- Interact respectfully and professionally with instructors and supervisors
- Interact respectfully and professionally with clients, families, and staff.

Professional Behavior

Students working at practicum sites in the community to obtain their fieldwork hours are representing the ABA program and the University of Memphis.

Students are required to behave professionally and ethically, and to adhere to the RBT ethics code and the requirements of the organization. Professional behavior includes:

- Arriving on time
- Using proper attire
- Attending supervision meetings on time
- Following through with responsibilities and agreements outlined in the supervisory contract
- Communicating respectfully with clients, families, and staff.
- Giving proper and sufficient notice before transitioning to another job/position
- Responding positively to feedback and applying the feedback given
- Requesting and providing feedback from supervisors
- Being humble and teachable, i.e., acknowledging and respecting the experience and knowledge of supervisors, and being open and receptive to learning new skills.

Contact: Please don't hesitate to contact your practicum instructor or the practicum coordinator at dmdlgado@memphis.edu, if there are any questions or concerns about your practicum experience.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read the information provided in this document

Student Name:

Supervisor's Name

Student's Signature & Date:

Supervisor's Signature & Date:

Practicum Site:

Practicum Checklist

To start your practicum experience, make sure to complete the following steps:

- ☐ Start taking classes in the ABA program
- ☐ Make sure your supervisor is a BCBA eligible to supervise
- ☐ Inform the practicum coordinator
- ☐ Review the BACB Handbook with your supervisor
- ☐ Review the UofM Practicum Handbook with your supervisor
- ☐ Discuss the terms of your supervision contract with your supervisor: roles, responsibilities, expectations, schedules, supervision time, documentation of experience, etc.
- ☐ Sign the supervision contract
- ☐ Create a gateway account on the BACB website:
<https://gateway.bacb.com/Account/Login.aspx>
- ☐ Contact your practicum coordinator about getting a background check on file at UofM

To start your practicum courses, make sure to complete the following steps:

- ☐ Ask your supervisor to send you an email confirming that you will be accruing fieldwork hours for the following academic term. Forward this email to the practicum coordinator.
- ☐ Ask the practicum coordinator to issue a permit to register for practicum courses. Without a confirmed site and supervisor, you will not be able to register for practicum courses. This may prevent you from graduating in a timely manner.
- ☐ Read the ABA Program Practicum Handbook and share it with your on-site supervisor.
- ☐ Sign and send the last page of the Practicum Handbook to the practicum instructor on the first day of your first practicum class.

Appendices

Student Performance Feedback Form

Trainee:

Practicum Site:

Supervisor:

Date:

Please rate the student's performance on the following questions on a scale from 1 to 5 and answer the questions below (6-9).

1: Does not meet expectations

2: Does not meet expectations but minor improvements are observed

3: Emerging/Meets expectations sometimes

4: Meets expectations most of the time

5: Always meets expectations

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Is the student professional (proper attire, arrives on time, limited use of personal electronic devices, etc.)					
2. Does the student collaborate with others?					
3. Does the student communicate effectively with clients and staff?					
4. Is the student punctual with supervisory meetings and assignments?					
5. Does the student receive corrective feedback and applies it appropriately?					

6. What would you consider to be the strongest skills of the student?

7. What are **knowledge**-based skills that require improvement?

8. What are **performance**-based skills that require improvement?

9. Any other observations or comments?

10.

Supervisor Practicum Site Feedback

This form is confidential. Your answers won't be shared with your site supervisor, other faculty, or other students. They will only remain among the practicum instructors. Your input will assess us in identifying practicum sites for UofM ABA practicum students, that provide adequate supervision according to the standards of the BACB and UofM.

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback about your site and supervisor.

Supervisor's name:

Site:

Duration at this site _____ **Start date:**

Is this a new supervisor? Yes ☐ No. ☐

How long have you been supervised by this supervisor? _____

	Questions	Yes – No	comments
1	Is your supervisor knowledgeable about BACB requirements and makes sure you are documenting your hours appropriately?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Do you feel comfortable asking your supervisor for help and guidance? <i>If not what are the barriers to do so?</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Do you feel confident that your supervised fieldwork experience is contributing to help you become a strong BA? <i>Please explain you answer</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Have you and your supervisor set specific goals for your supervised fieldwork experience? <i>Please explain you answer</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Does your supervisor follow up on your progress on these goals? In what format does this occur?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

6	Does your supervisor ask you for feedback about their performance?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Do you have a clear and consistent schedule of supervision meetings?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Do supervision meetings take place regularly and as planned? <i>If not why not? Please explain</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Does your supervisor model and train you on new skills? <i>If not? Please explain</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Does your supervisor give you constructive feedback based on objective measurement in areas that need improvement? <i>Please explain in the comment section.</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
11	In reference to the previous question, does your supervisor give you opportunities to practice these skills? Does your supervisor check to make sure you have incorporated the feedback accurately? <i>Please explain in the comment section.</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
12	How does your supervisor evaluate your performance? Do they review the evaluation form with you pre-post evaluation? <i>Please explain the evaluation process in the comment section.</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
13	Do you consider your current supervisor to be a Mentor? <i>Please explain your response in the comment section.</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

14	Would you recommend the current supervisor to other students? Why or why not?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
15	Do you feel your supervisor is committed to your training, by having clear goals, providing constructive feedback and offering training tailored for your skill set and needs? Please explain	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
16	What do you like the least about your supervised fieldwork experience?		
17	What do you like the most about your supervised fieldwork experience?		

Other comments and feedback about your practicum site/supervisor?

Assignment Verification

I confirm that the student completed the practicum assignment on the dates indicated below and that he/she received guidance and supervision during implementation.

Student Name:

Supervisor's name:

Practicum Site:

Dates of implementation:

Signature of supervisor

Date signed: