

# APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS, M.S.

Saint Louis University's Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis involves the application of behavioral principles to produce socially significant changes in behavior.

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the science of how and why behavior occurs. The science is used to work with individuals and organizations looking to make socially significant changes in behavior, focused on increasing well-being. Those who use applied behavior analysis work in a variety of fields, including working with individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities, those with mental health concerns including depression; anxiety and other mood disorders; working in organizations to improve culture and performance; sports, health and fitness; criminal justice; diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA); schools and education; and medical health institutions. Practitioners use direct assessments, research and foundational principles and concepts of behavior to design and evaluate interventions. SLU's ABA programs focus on providing students with a diverse set of experiences in the many applications of ABA while ensuring a focus on providing a safe space for students to develop their cultural humility so they can effectively work with a diverse client population.

Three things set SLU's master's ABA program apart from others. First, we are dedicated to creating a culturally humble environment where students must explore their own biases and develop the skills necessary to provide culturally humble services to clients across all settings. Second, students are provided a flat fee for their education, ensuring there are no unforeseen expenses or unplanned cost increases in tuition. Third, students complete fieldwork as part of the program, providing additional guidance and oversight as they practice their skills and ensuring they do not have to seek fieldwork experiences themselves.

SLU's ABA program provides state-of-the-art in-person and online learning that prepares students for successful careers. The program has a strong diversity, equity and inclusion focus to ensure students are prepared to provide the best services possible to a variety of clients across settings. SLU's ABA program graduates are well-positioned to apply to Ph.D. programs around the country in behavior analysis and other fields. Students who complete a thesis often gain opportunities to present their research at local and national conferences and gain publication in peer-reviewed journals.

## Curriculum Overview

SLU's applied behavior analysis program includes three tracks: our research track, completed in-person; our clinical track, completed via distance learning; and our dual degree (M.S. ABA / M.S.W. clinical), which offers both in-person and distance learning tracks. Both M.S. ABA tracks (in-person and distance learning) include eight 3-credit-hour courses, five practica, one seminar, and either six hours of thesis (research track) or three hours of capstone research (clinical track). The M.S. ABA / M.S.W. clinical program consists of eight 3-credit-hour ABA courses, either 3-credit-hour M.S.W. courses, five practica (either ABA, M.S.W. or both), two seminars (one ABA and one M.S.W.), and one 3-hour capstone research course. Students, no matter the track or program, will complete 1,500 hours of intensive supervised fieldwork as part of their coursework, ensuring they are able to sit for the BCBA® exam upon graduation. Those in the M.S. ABA / M.S.W. clinical program will also have completed all necessary practica hours to sit for their licensure exam. The program

operates on a cohort model, so all students (with the exception of M.S. ABA / M.S.W. Clinical dual degree) will begin their coursework in the fall of each year. All programs offer both full-time and part-time formats. M.S. ABA/M.S.W. clinical students can start in different semesters.

The M.S. ABA program requires 36 (clinical) or 39 (research) credits, as follows:

- Principles and Concepts in Behavior Analysis
- Measurement and Experimental Design
- Behavioral Assessment
- Behavior Change and Process
- Basic Behavior Analysis
- Supervision and Organizational Behavior Management
- Philosophy of Behavioral Science
- Behavior Change and Ethics
- Five practica
- Introduction to ABA practicum seminar
- Capstone (clinical track) / Thesis (research track)

More detailed program information can be found in the ABA Program Student Handbook (<https://www.slu.edu/social-work/student-resources/pdf/2024-2025-aba-program-student-handbook.pdf>).

## Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)

The SLU M.S. ABA program meets all required elements for persons seeking a BCBA® certification, including degree, coursework and field experience.

## Fieldwork and Research Opportunities

SLU's applied behavior analysis program offers students a practice-integrated education. Students are transformed into knowledgeable and ethical scientist-practitioners prepared for a range of clinical and management careers across the health, education, and social services sectors. Those seeking BCBA® certification through SLU's practicum must complete a total of 1,500 hours of ABA field practicum across five semesters under the supervision of a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst® (BCBA®). SLU's practicum experience ensures students master all areas of the BCBA® content list in their first three semesters, expand their research skills in their fourth semester and address a social justice topic in their final semester. The diversity within our practica ensures students are well-equipped to practice as independent professionals.

Field Education Policy and Procedures Manual (<https://sites.google.com/slu.edu/slu-school-of-social-work/forms/handbooks/?authuser=0>)

## Careers

After graduation, applied behavior analysis students can sit for the BCBA® examination. Alumni from this program have worked in a wide range of fields including serving those diagnosed with autism and their families, adults with challenging behavior and developmental disabilities, job training sites, schools, healthcare agencies and more. They have also led state education initiatives and advocacy projects.

Those in ABA also practice in a variety of other fields including:

- Sports, health and fitness
- Organizational behavior management
- Diversity, equity, inclusion and access
- Gerontology

- Criminal justice
- Mental health

## Admission Requirements

Successful applicants should possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00.

It is recommended that students have taken prior coursework in applied behavior analysis or have independently studied ABA texts.

### Application Requirements

- Application form
- Official transcript(s)
- Two letters of recommendation (one academic, one professional)
  - One academic letter of recommendation from a professor who has evaluated your academic performance in the classroom
  - One professional letter of recommendation from a supervisor who has evaluated your work in the field or related volunteer experience
- If you have been out of school for five or more years, you may submit two professional letters
- If you are entering the program directly from an undergraduate program, you may submit two academic letters
- If you have been out of school and the workforce for five or more years, please contact us to determine the best individuals to provide your letters of recommendation
- Resume or academic vitae
- Professional Statement
- Interviews may be requested

### Requirements for International Students

All admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students. International students must also meet the following additional requirements:

- Demonstrate English Language Proficiency (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency/>). ABA requires a TOEFL score of 92 or higher.
- Academic records, in English translation, of students who have undertaken postsecondary studies outside the United States must include:
  - Courses taken and/or lectures attended
  - Practical laboratory work
  - The maximum and minimum grades attainable
  - The grades earned or the results of all end-of-term examinations
  - Any honors or degrees received.
- Credential Evaluation Reports (such as the WES, ECE, Spantran, or Scholaro) are required.

If admitted to the School of Social Work, the International Office will require additional documentation to issue an I-20. Questions about these requirements can be directed to [internationalservices@slu.edu](mailto:internationalservices@slu.edu).

### Application Deadlines

There are two deadlines for applicants.

- March 1: Any student wishing to be considered for merit-based scholarships, graduate assistantship positions, and financial aid must apply by this deadline

- August 1: Any student wishing to begin their coursework in the fall of that year

### Review Process

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. The admissions committee considers several factors to determine a candidate's eligibility:

- Strength of the undergraduate program
- Application information
- Professional statement
- Work experience
- Any graduate degrees earned
- Motivation, leadership and service
- Undergraduate GPA
- Clinical experience in behavior analysis

## Tuition

Tuition	Total Program Cost
MS Applied Behavior Analysis	\$39,000

Additional charges may apply. Other resources are listed below:

Net Price Calculator (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/tuition-and-costs/calculator.php>)

Information on Tuition and Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition/>)

Miscellaneous Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/fees/>)

Information on Summer Tuition (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition-summer/>)

## Financial Aid

We recognize that cost can be a concern when continuing your education and have identified the following financial aid resources to assist you.

### FAFSA and Other Resources

All incoming students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (<https://studentaid.gov/>) application. A step-by-step guide to submitting your FAFSA is available online (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/apply-accept/>). Saint Louis University Student Financial Services provides a Graduate Financial Aid Handbook (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/-pdf/24y-grad-financing-guide.pdf>) that outlines the process of financing your graduate education.

The following links to resources in Saint Louis University Student Financial Services may also be helpful:

- Graduate loan options (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/types-of-aid/student-loan-information/>)
- Confirming your award (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/apply-accept/accept.php>)
- Paying your bill and payment plans (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/paying-your-bill/>)

### Scholarships

All new incoming students will receive a partial scholarship upon admittance thanks to our generous alumni and benefactors. Students

may also qualify for federal graduate student loans and apply for assistantship and fellowship opportunities.

## Fellowships

The Doerr Fellowship for Equity and Inclusion (<https://forms.office.com/r/P7MePdBGB7/>) is a full-tuition fellowship funded by the School of Social Work for new and continuing students. A separate application is required with a deadline of **March 1**. This fellowship requires that recipients actively participate in the diversity, equity and inclusion activities sponsored by the Emmett J. and Mary Martha Doerr Center for Social Justice Education and Research (Doerr Center) throughout the year. Recipients will also serve as student members of the School of Social Work standing committees that require Doerr Center representation.

Newly accepted master's or doctoral students and students in the first year of a program are eligible to apply for a University-wide diversity, dissertation or presidential fellowship. Find more details on fellowship applications here (<https://www.slu.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-scholarships-fellowships-assistantships-awards.php>).

## Graduate Assistantships and Internships

By filling out a graduate assistantship/internship application (<https://forms.office.com/r/P7MePdBGB7/>), you will automatically be considered for a graduate assistantship or a graduate internship with the School of Social Work. Assistantships are appointed for one year. Students must reapply to be considered for a second year, and recipients are not guaranteed to receive subsequent or continuing internships.

Graduate assistantships are University-funded assistantships awarded by the School of Social Work. They are assigned and funded for two semesters (a duration of nine months, 20 hours per week), working with designated faculty. Benefits include 12 months of health care coverage, a stipend and two semesters (fall and spring) of tuition remission.

Depending on faculty needs, the graduate assistant works with one or two faculty members. Time is divided between both faculty mentors if the student is assigned to two. Students are only eligible to receive one University-funded assistantship through the School of Social Work during their pursuit of degree. However, they remain eligible for graduate internships while pursuing a graduate degree in the School of Social Work.

Graduate internships are funded and awarded by the School of Social Work. They are assigned and funded for two semesters (a duration of nine months, 8 to 16 hours per week), working with assigned faculty. Graduate interns may assist with administrative work, research or faculty teaching. Depending on the hours assigned, tuition benefits will differ; health insurance and stipends are not awarded for graduate internships.

## Other Funding for Current Students

Current students may be eligible for conference/training funding, graduate assistantships and scholarships.

## Accreditation

Saint Louis University's ABA program is currently a Verified Course Sequence (VCS). Students who graduate from the program will have completed all requirements necessary to sit for the BCBA® exam.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Graduates will be able to assess relevant behavior analysis literature/scholarly contributions.
2. Graduates will be able to apply behavioral theories, practices, policies or research methodologies.
3. Graduates will be able to apply knowledge from applied behavior analysis to address problems in broader contexts.
4. Graduates will be able to articulate applied behavior analysis explanations/arguments to a disciplinary/professional audience in both written and oral formats.
5. Graduates will be able to evidence scholarly/professional integrity (ethics) in behavior analysis.

## Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
ABA 5001	Supervision and Organizational Behavior Management	3
ABA 5002	Philosophy of Behavioral Science	3
ABA 5116	Practicum IV	1
ABA 5118	Practicum V	1
ABA 5775	Basic Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 5746	Principles & Concepts in Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 5747	Behavioral Assessment	3
ABA 5748	Behavior Change and Process	3
ABA 5749	Ethics in Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 5774	Measurement & Experimental Design	3
ABA 5820	ABA Introduction to Practicum Seminar	1
ABA 5826	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum I	2
ABA 5827	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum II	2
ABA 5828	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum III	2
<b>Clinical Track or Research Track</b>		<b>3-6</b>
<i>Choose 3 hours of Clinical Capstone or 6 hours of Thesis Research</i>		
ABA 5115	Advanced Clinical Research Capstone	
ABA 5990	Thesis Research	
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36-39</b>

## Continuation Standards

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in all graduate/professional courses. Any course with a letter grade B- or below will have to be retaken.

## Roadmap

Roadmaps are recommended semester-by-semester plans of study for programs and assume full-time enrollment unless otherwise noted.

Courses and milestones designated as critical (marked with !) must be completed in the semester listed to ensure a timely graduation. Transfer credit may change the roadmap.

This roadmap should not be used in the place of regular academic advising appointments. All students are encouraged to meet with their advisor/mentor each semester. Requirements, course availability and sequencing are subject to change.

## Research Track (On Campus, Full-time)

Course	Title	Credits
<b>Year One</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ABA 5746	Principles & Concepts in Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 5774	Measurement & Experimental Design	3
ABA 5826	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum I	2
ABA 5820	ABA Introduction to Practicum Seminar	1
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
ABA 5747	Behavioral Assessment	3
ABA 5748	Behavior Change and Process	3
ABA 5827	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum II	2
<b>Credits</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>Summer</b>		
ABA 5001	Supervision and Organizational Behavior Management	3
ABA 5828	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum III	2
ABA 5775	Basic Behavior Analysis	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>Year Two</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ABA 5002	Philosophy of Behavioral Science	3
ABA 5116	Practicum IV	1
ABA 5990	Thesis Research	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
ABA 5749	Ethics in Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 5118	Practicum V	1
ABA 5990	Thesis Research	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>39</b>

## Clinical Track (Distance Learning, Full-time)

Course	Title	Credits
<b>Year One</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ABA 5746	Principles & Concepts in Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 5774	Measurement & Experimental Design	3
ABA 5826	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum I	2
ABA 5820	ABA Introduction to Practicum Seminar	1
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
ABA 5747	Behavioral Assessment	3
ABA 5748	Behavior Change and Process	3
ABA 5827	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum II	2
<b>Credits</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>Summer</b>		
ABA 5001	Supervision and Organizational Behavior Management	3

ABA 5828	Applied Behavior Analysis Practicum III	2
ABA 5775	Basic Behavior Analysis	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>Year Two</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ABA 5002	Philosophy of Behavioral Science	3
ABA 5115	Advanced Clinical Research Capstone	3
ABA 5116	Practicum IV	1
<b>Credits</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
ABA 5749	Ethics in Behavior Analysis	3
ABA 5118	Practicum V	1
<b>Credits</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36</b>

## Contact Us

Apply for Admission (<https://www.slu.edu/admission/>)

For admission questions contact:

Social Work School Graduate Admissions Office  
 SSWadmissions@slu.edu (SSWadmissions@slu.edu)  
 314-977-2752

For program questions contact:

Michael J. Passage (michael.passage@slu.edu), Ph.D., BCBA  
 Director of the applied behavior analysis program  
 Assistant clinical professor  
 michael.passage@slu.edu  
 314-977-2733