

# Doctor of Philosophy in Behavioral Psychology

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The Department of Applied Behavioral Science offers a curriculum through which students learn how to examine and address problems of social importance across the lifespan. Students receive training in the application of behavioral science to improve the human condition through prevention and intervention. The department's doctoral program in behavioral psychology satisfies coursework requirements for Board Certification in Behavior Analysis and, in most states, licensure as a behavior analyst. It does not satisfy requirements for licensure in psychology.

## Admission to Graduate Studies

### Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

### Admission to the Ph.D. Program

For admission in the fall semester, please view the application deadline and all required application materials on the Graduate Admission (<https://absc.ku.edu/graduate-admission/>) page of our departmental website (<https://absc.ku.edu/>). Students may be admitted for the spring semester, but there is no filing deadline.

Eligibility criteria for admission to the Ph.D. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>). To be considered for admission to graduate status in the program, a student must hold a bachelor's degree. Non-native speakers of English must meet English proficiency requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>).

For admission with full graduate standing, the department recommends that applicants complete 12 credit hours of undergraduate or graduate course work in behavior analysis, behavioral science, psychology, education, or related fields, and 6 hours in experimental methods, research design, or statistics.

Among the department's application materials is a list of departmental faculty members. Students should review faculty members (<http://absc.ku.edu/faculty/>) on the department's website and descriptions of their research, scholarly, and professional interests. Applicants should select any faculty members whose research interests match their own. These faculty members review the applicants' materials. An applicant is accepted when one of the faculty members consent to admit the student. This faculty member becomes the advisor of record.

### How to Apply

Applicants will submit an application online through the SLATE system. Begin by visiting graduate admissions (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>) and select "Apply." Applicants should select the start term and create an account (if they are a first-time user) or log in (if they are returning to continue an application).

1. On the application's "Program Information page," select "Social and Behavioral Sciences" from the Academic Area of Interest.
2. Under "Academic Program," search for "Behavioral Psychology (PhD)" if applying to the doctoral program or "Applied Behavioral Science (MA)" if applying to the MA program.

Fill out the online application and attach the required documents. Required documents to attach with the online application minimally include the following:

- Personal statement
- Vita
- 3 letters of Recommendation
- GRE (optional, but recommended)
- Copies of official transcripts. Student advising reports or documents titled "unofficial document/transcript" cannot be accepted for admission review. (Official transcripts with degree conferral will need to be obtained if accepted into the program). Note that former/current KU students are not required to provide copies of KU transcripts for application. A copy of the official transcript must be provided if a degree was earned outside of KU.
- List of faculty members with whom the prospective student is interested in working

GRE scores are optional and can be sent directly to the Graduate School.

### Ph.D. in Behavioral Psychology Degree Requirements

The doctoral program trains highly competent researchers in applied behavioral science (e.g., applied behavior analysis, applied psychology). Students are taught to discover and produce, translate and apply, and communicate knowledge in the behavioral sciences for understanding and solving problems of individual and societal importance, both local and global. The curriculum requires a sequence of instruction that integrates courses in the basic principles of behavior, experimental methods and research design, and conceptual foundations, but emphasizes course work and training in applied and intervention research (e.g., assessment, analysis, intervention, evaluation). Its objective is to discover and advance empirically based solutions to problems of individual and societal importance, both local and global.

The doctoral program follows a junior-colleague model. Students work closely with their advisors and join them in every aspect of professional development. This includes designing and conducting research, preparing manuscripts for presentation and publication, presenting and publishing those manuscripts, preparing editorial reviews of manuscripts, and engaging in all facets of the responsible conduct of research. Students typically work with 1 advisor, but may work with other faculty members or have co-advisors. If a student's or advisor's interests change, students are free to change advisors.

## Course Requirements

The doctoral degree program requires students to take 1 course in 10 areas, along with 2 practicum courses. The areas and the practicum courses are:

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core Courses</b>		
ABSC 735	Within Subjects Research Methodology and Direct Observation	3
ABSC 746	Introduction to Behavioral Science	3
ABSC 799	Experimental Analysis of Behavior	3
ABSC 800	Conceptual Foundations of Applied Behavioral Science	3
ABSC 841	Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Applied Behavioral Science	3
ABSC 861	Principles of Behavior Analysis	3
<b>Course satisfying MA ABA II Requirement</b>		<b>3</b>
Select one of the following:		
ABSC 788	Designing Early Education Environments	
ABSC 802	Behavior Analysis in Developmental Disabilities	
ABSC 805	Functional Behavioral Assessment	
ABSC 961	Advanced Seminar in Applied Behavior Analysis: _____	
<b>Conceptual Foundations II</b>		<b>3</b>
Select one of the following:		
ABSC 901	Analysis of Everyday Human Behavior	
ABSC 862	Behavioral Community Approaches to Addressing Social Issues	
ABSC 931	The Analysis of Verbal Behavior	
ABSC 981	History of Behavior Analysis	
<b>Research Methods II *</b>		<b>3</b>
Select one of the following:		
ABSC 710	Community Health and Development	
ABSC 964	Intervention Science and Implementation Research	
ABSC 890	Seminar in: _____	
ABSC 893	Special Topics in: _____	
<b>Experimental Analysis of Behavior II</b>		<b>3</b>
Select one of the following:		
ABSC 936	Quantitative Analysis of Behavior	
PRVM 800	Principles of Epidemiology	
BIOS 704	Principles of Statistics in Public Health	
BIOS 714	Fundamentals of Biostatistics I	
<b>Teaching Requirement</b>		
ABSC 941	Teaching and Conference	6
or LA&S 792	Topics in: _____	
<b>Research of Intervention Practicum I</b>		<b>3</b>
ABSC 870	Practicum I in Behavioral Psychology	
ABSC 871	Practicum I in Behavior Analysis: _____	
ABSC 872	Practicum I in: _____	
ABSC 875	Practicum in Community Health Promotion	
ABSC 876	Practicum in Community Development	
<b>Research or Intervention Practicum II</b>		<b>3</b>

ABSC 972 Practicum II in: \_\_\_\_\_

### Total Hours

42

\**Research Methods II* must be an approved graduate seminar or special topics course in research methods. Students can check with their faculty advisor for approval.

Students may take any course that provides them the opportunity to develop competence in specialized areas of behavioral investigation. Students must consult their advisor for approvals.

## Master's Thesis

Students complete an empirically based master's thesis and pass an oral examination on it. With their advisor's approval, empirically based theses from other programs may meet this requirement.

## Research Skill and Responsible Scholarship

The Office of Graduate Studies requires students to have training in responsible scholarship and research skills pertinent to the field of research. This will be met by:

- Satisfactory completion of either ABSC 735 OR ABSC 770
- Satisfactory completion of either ABSC 841 OR ABSC 851

And one of the following:

- At least one submission of a first-author manuscript for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, OR
- At least two scholarly presentations at regional, state, or national professional meetings.
  - The work for these must have been entirely completed at KU
  - No more than one may be a poster
  - At least one must have been presented by the time of the comprehensive examination; if the other has not yet been presented by the time of the comprehensive examination, it must be accepted for presentation at an upcoming meeting
  - At least one must list the student as either first or presenting author

## Teaching Requirement

Graduate students receive training in the teaching and supervision of undergraduates. The requirement may be met in 1 of 2 ways. In the first, students serve as a paid half-time teaching assistant for 1 semester or as a quarter-time assistant for 2 semesters, assuming proportionate responsibility for class organization, lecturing, grading, and office hours under a faculty member's supervision. In the second, students take LA&S 792 or ABSC 941, attend 3 brown bag lectures at the Center for Teaching Excellence, and present a guest lecture to the department. In both cases, students must also write a statement of teaching philosophy and obtain numeric evaluations of their teaching in their guest lectures.

## Professional Seminar Requirement

Graduate students are expected to attend pro-seminar sessions when they are scheduled throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. Pro-seminars are typically presentations given by graduate students (see next paragraph), faculty members, and visiting scholars.

Doctoral students are required to present the results of their research at a department professional seminar meeting. The presentation is

comparable to what would be presented at a professional conference. Students answer questions from their peers and the faculty in attendance.

## Editorial Critiques

Students write 3 editorial reviews of published or unpublished journal articles, all of them empirical. The articles cover a range of topics and experimental designs. All 3 are graded pass-fail by the student's advisor. Students may use editorial reviews from course assignments so long as the instructor and advisor approve doing so.

## Comprehensive Examination

Students must complete the comprehensive examination by the end of the third year if entering the PhD program with a completed Master's obtained at another university, or within a year of defending their Master's in the Applied Behavioral Science MA program at KU. The examination has 2 components:

1. *Program of Study Written Document.* Students will generate a program of study document, developed in concert with their mentor, that includes:
  - A list of all graduate lecture/discussion courses completed in behavioral science and how the coursework fulfills ABAI accreditation standards
  - Up to 10 representative readings from each completed graduate lecture/discussion course
  - Research interest statement (2-3 pages)
  - Career plans statement (2-3 pages)
  - Up-to-date CV

2. *Oral Examination.* The program of study will be used by the comprehensive examination committee to generate relevant and individualized questions to ask during the oral examinations. Questions will span all coursework and student-indicated research domains (those of personal interest to the student and relevant to their career trajectory). These questions will be posed during the oral examination. The oral examination will last two hours and is not open to the public. The defense is successful if a majority of the committee members vote to pass it.

## Post-Comprehensive Exam Enrollment

Starting the semester following successful completion of the oral comprehensive exam, students must enroll in accordance with the Office of Graduate Studies' Doctoral Candidacy Policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-candidacy/>). This enrollment includes, but is not limited to, at least 1 dissertation hour every semester until graduation. See the Doctoral Candidacy policy for more information about this University level requirement.

## Dissertation Proposal

In preparation for the dissertation, students will complete a departmental required written dissertation proposal and an oral discussion of the proposal. The proposal will include a) a thorough literature review and b) a research proposal. Students should follow specific instructions for these components as dictated in the student handbook. The dissertation proposal discussion will entail a one hour meeting with the dissertation committee.

## Dissertation

In consultation with their advisors, students conduct an empirically based dissertation, typically based on the comprehensive examination proposal,

and pass an oral examination on it. The defense is successful if a majority of the committee members vote to pass it. If students do not pass the dissertation defense, they may not defend it again for a period of at least 90 days. If the oral defense is failed twice, students have 30 days to petition the department for a third attempt. Failure to petition, or a rejected petition, will result in students' dismissal from the program. The dissertation defense will be open to the public.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- apply legal and ethical guidelines and professional standards as pertinent to behavior research and practice.
- interpret behavior in terms of the core concepts and principles of behavior analysis.
- understand the importance of social validity and broader cultural significance of behavior science.
- demonstrate independent scholarship in the context of basic, applied, or conceptual analysis of behavior.
- communicate behavior science through written and/or oral presentations within the field of behavior analysis.
- develop skills in critical analysis of research methodology, clinical practices, presentation of evidence, and discussion of behavior analytic concepts.