BACB Newsletter

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Content:

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Special Edition: RBT Certification Changes and Process Improvements

The initial Registered Behavior Technician™ (RBT®) certification requirements were established in 2013 and the RBT certification program was accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) in 2016. As NCCA requires the periodic review of certification requirements, the RBT certification requirements were reviewed by subject matter experts (SMEs) beginning in November 2017.

An RBT requirements committee ("the committee"), comprised of 12 SMEs, convened at an in-person meeting at the BACB's offices in Littleton, CO in November 2017 and again via videoconference in September 2018 to review RBT certification requirements and make recommendations for revision. The SMEs were selected to represent a variety of practice and training histories, a broad range of geographic locations, and different certification levels (RBT, BCaBA, BCBA, BCBA-D). Each of the BCaBAs, BCBAs, and BCBA-Ds who participated on committees were selected, in part, because they served as Responsible Certificants or clinical supervisors of RBTs. A second, 6-member panel comprised primarily of RBTs met in 2018 via videoconference to independently review and endorse the recommendations of the committee. Two of the panel's SMEs also served on the requirements committee; thus, a total of 16 SMEs participated in the overall process.

The committee reviewed and confirmed the purpose of RBT certification and the applicant pool to be certified. When appropriate, comparable requirements from other professions and certifying agencies were provided to the committee for reference purposes. The committee was provided with the guidance that each requirement under consideration could either be revised or left intact, depending on the current skills that should be required of an entry-level RBT. The committee reviewed all current RBT eligibility and maintenance requirements. Ultimately, each requirement under consideration was carefully discussed and was either revised or left intact. A consensus approach was used to identify revisions to the requirements.

The committee's recommendations, which favored modest increases in rigor, were based on consideration of (a) the requirements that an entry-level RBT should reasonably be expected to meet for effective practice as a behavior technician and (b) the maintenance requirements necessary for an RBT to keep their skills current over time. The recommended changes were made in the context of the rapid growth of the behavior analyst workforce, which has resulted in more training opportunities and greater availability of supervisors who are qualified to train and supervise RBTs.

In December 2018, the BACB Board of Directors reviewed and unanimously approved the committee's recommendations. The remainder of this newsletter describes upcoming changes to RBT certification requirements and improvements to processes related to RBT certification.

RBT Certification Requirements

Changes to the RBT certification program are summarized in the table below, followed by more detailed descriptions of the requirements that have changed.

Eligibility Requirements	Changes	Implementation Date	Relevant Documents
Applicant Age (18 years)	No change		
Applicant Education (high school or equivalent)			
Background Check			
RBT Task List	3 additions, 3 deletions, 6 revisions	November 2019	RBT Task List (2nd ed.)

40-hour Training	• 40 hours, including
	   - 3 hours on ethics
	   - 1 hour on RBT supervision requirements
	 • Training may not be conducted in fewer than 5 days
		November 2019	Available in early 2019

	Use of assistant trainers	*Immediately*	RBT 40-Hour Training Packet
Initial Competency Assessment	2 deletions, 7 additions, 3 skills required to be demonstrated with clients	November 2019	RBT Initial Competency Assessment Packet
	Use of assistant assessors	*Immediately*	
RBT Examination	Based on the RBT Task List (2nd ed.)	November 2019	RBT Task List (2nd ed.)

Practice & Maintenance Requirements	Changes	Implementation Date	Relevant Documents
Supervision Amount and Structure	No change		
Relationship between the Supervisor and the RBT	The supervisor and RBT must be employed by the same organization OR the supervisor must have a contractual relationship with the client.	November 2019	
8-hour Supervision Training	Revised, enhanced, and reorganized to emphasize content relevant to the ongoing supervision of RBTs and BCaBAs, and the supervision of trainees	November 2019	Supervisor Training Curriculum Outline (2.0)

Supervisor Qualifications	"Responsible Certificant" term replaced with the following:
	
	• RBT Requirements Coordinator
	  - BCBA, BCBA-D
	• RBT Supervisors
	  - BCaBA, BCBA, BCBA-D
	  - Other Licensed Professionals
		Immediately	Noncertified RBT Supervisor Form

Renewal Competency Assessment	2 deletions, 7 additions, 5 skills required to be demonstrated with clients	November 2019	RBT Renewal Competency Assessment Packet
	Use of assistant assessors	*Immediately*	
Ethics	The new RBT Ethics Code (31 elements)	*Immediately*	RBT Ethics Code

RBT Task List

A number of minor revisions are being made to the RBT Task List. Of the 37 tasks, 29 are being retained as originally written, 6 have been reworded, 3 new tasks have been added, and 3 have been deleted.

The following tasks have been added:

- Implement shaping procedures
- Implement token economy procedures
- Actively seek clinical direction from the supervisor in a timely manner

The following tasks have been removed:

- Implement stimulus fading procedures
  (removed due to concern of being too advanced for most entry-level RBTs)
- Assist with training of stakeholders
  (removed due to concern about RBTs being permitted, or incorrectly perceived as permitted, to train others)
- Comply with applicable legal, regulatory, and workplace reporting requirements
  (removed due to redundancy with new ethics requirements [see page 5])

Task list content validation. The revised task list, as described above, was used to develop two online job task analysis surveys that were distributed to RBTs and their Responsible Certificants in September 2018. Invitations were sent to all active RBTs in August 2018, totaling 45,149 email addresses. Of these, 745 (1.7%) were undeliverable, yielding an effective sample size of 44,404. A total of 9,423 (21.2%) RBTs responded to the survey. Invitations were sent to all active Responsible Certificants in August 2018, totaling 7,494 email addresses. Of these, 66 (0.8%) were undeliverable, yielding an effective sample size of 7,428. A total of 2,127 (28.6%) Responsible Certificants responded to the survey.

Respondents were asked to rate the 37 tasks on the revised task list based on their importance, frequency of occurrence, and the level of supervision required for an RBT to perform the task. All three rating scales ranged from 0 to 4, with 0 indicating that tasks were not important, were never performed, or that an RBT should not perform the task, while ratings of 4 indicated that the task was critically important, were performed with most clients, or could be performed independently by an RBT. For both surveys, the frequency and importance ratings were combined to create an index of criticality. The formula used was frequency plus two times importance divided by three, which resulted in a scale ranging from 0 to 4: $C = [F + 2I]/3$.

For RBTs, the criticality indices ranged from 2.67 to 3.91 and for Responsible Certificants, the criticality indices ranged from 2.34 to 3.95. The criticality indices for RBTs and Responsible Certificants were very similar, with a correlation of 0.91. Given that all of the tasks had criticality index values above "Moderately Important" (a rating of 2.0), all of the 37 tasks were retained for the RBT Task List (2nd ed.).

Examination Blueprint

The criticality data were used to determine the number of items needed per task to create a 75-item examination. This method resulted in a uniform distribution with most subtasks being represented by 2 examination items. The table shows the resulting RBT examination blueprint for each section of the RBT Task List (2nd ed.).

Content Areas	# of Questions
A. Measurement	12
B. Assessment	6
C. Skill Acquisition	24
D. Behavior Reduction	12
E. Documentation and Reporting	10
F. Professional Conduct and Scope of Practice	11
Total Items	**75**

40-hour Training

The amount of training will remain at 40 hours offered across no more than 180 days. However, a change will be made such that the training's duration must be at least 5 days due to concerns that too short of a training period could negatively impact the outcomes. The requirement that 3 of the 40 hours be devoted to ethics will remain, but 1 additional hour (of the 40) will be devoted to the BACB's supervision requirements for RBTs to ensure that they have been adequately informed of the requirements prior to obtaining certification.

Trainer requirements. The trainer requirements have been retained. The individual who oversees the 40-hour training must hold BCaBA, BCBA, or BCBA-D certification. However, the trainer may now delegate some or all of the training experience to an assistant trainer who has demonstrated, through direct observation, proficiency in the material being delivered. This individual does not need to be certified by the BACB, but the trainer will be professionally and ethically accountable for all of the assistant trainer's activities. New resources have been developed around the use of assistant trainers: the RBT 40-Hour Training Packet and the Sample RBT Trainer Evaluation and Log.

Alternative pathway. The alternative training pathway for behavior technicians trained prior to 2015 will expire when the new requirements are implemented in November 2019.

Competency Assessment

The RBT Competency Assessment is being retained for eligibility and maintenance purposes, with the following revisions.

The following tasks have been added:

- Collect ABC data
- Implement shaping procedures
- Implement token economy procedures
- Maintain client dignity *(Interview format)*
- Maintain professional boundaries *(Interview format)*
- Be familiar with the BACB's RBT supervision requirements *(Interview format)*
- Seek clinical direction from a supervisor *(Interview format)*

The following tasks have been removed:

- Implement stimulus fading procedures
  (removed due to concern of being too advanced for entry-level RBTs)
- Assist with functional assessment
  (removed due to concerns that the task was too vague for reliable interpretation and to constitute a meaningful experience for new behavior technicians)

Administration. In consideration of the importance of applicants demonstrating multiple skills with a client before obtaining certification, a modification to the observation requirements in the competency assessment has been made. In addition, two different versions of the competency assessment have been created: one for the initial application and one for the renewal application. The RBT Initial Competency Assessment and the RBT Renewal Competency Assessment each include the same number of skills, but the former will require 3 to be demonstrated with a client (from Skill Acquisition and Behavior Reduction) and the latter will require 5 to be demonstrated with a client (from Skill Acquisition and Behavior Reduction; Measurement; and Professionalism and Requirements).

Assessor requirements. The implementation of the competency assessment must be overseen by a BCaBA, BCBA, or BCBA-D; this requirement will not change. However, the assessor may delegate some or all of the assessment experience to an assistant assessor who has demonstrated, through direct observation, proficiency in the skills being assessed. This individual does not need to be certified by the BACB, but the assessor will be professionally and ethically accountable for all of the assistant assessor's activities. New resources have been developed for the use of assistant trainers: the RBT Competency Assessment Packet and the Sample RBT Assessor Evaluation and Log.

Ethics Requirements

A stand-alone code of ethics has been developed specifically for RBTs. The purpose of this new code is to better highlight an RBT's ethical obligations and present them in a more understandable manner. The new RBT Ethics Code contains 31 elements that are organized into three sections: Responsible Conduct, Responsibility to Clients, and Competence and Service Delivery. The RBT Ethics Code does not contain any elements beyond those previously indicated as being relevant to RBTs in the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts.

Supervisor Requirements

Four primary changes have been made to the requirements for RBT supervisors.

Relationship to the RBT. The relationship between a Responsible Certificant and an RBT has been better articulated such that the former has sufficient client-specific knowledge to inform his or her clinical direction of the RBT. Specifically, the two parties should be employed by the same organization or the Responsible Certificant should have a contractual relationship with the RBT's client.

8-hour supervision training. Responsible Certificants are required to complete an 8-hour supervision training prior supervising RBTs. The current training curriculum includes content that is relevant to both the supervision of trainees and the ongoing supervision of RBTs and BCaBAs, but these different content emphases are not currently well delineated. Thus, the 8-hour supervision training curriculum has been revised, enhanced, and reorganized accordingly. In addition, a reference list of recent articles on supervision has been included with the new curriculum outline. Beginning in November 2019, all 8-hour supervision trainings must be based on the new curriculum outline. Individuals who previously received such training will not need to be retrained under the new curriculum.

Supervisor qualifications. A change to supervisor qualifications has been made based on feedback from stakeholders that additional flexibility was needed in some geographic locations to permit RBT supervision by qualified individuals who (a) are licensed in other behavioral health professions that have behavior analysis in their legislative scopes of practice and (b) are competent in applied behavior analysis. Thus, a mechanism has been established for other licensed professionals to provide supervision to RBTs, under the oversight of a BCBA or BCBA-D *(see RBT Requirements Coordinator below)*. A defined process for including these individuals in RBT supervision includes the completion of the Noncertified RBT Supervisor Form before RBT supervision occurs. Information required on this form includes the following:

- Verification of a license in a behavioral health profession, including date issued, any existing disciplinary sanctions, and license expiration date
- Verification that the individual is qualified to practice applied behavior analysis
- The individual's BACB Gateway account ID
- The date the individual completed the 8-hour supervision training
- Review of any relevant supervision and disciplinary reporting requirements of the individual's licensure board

Supervisor terminology. Thus far in this newsletter we have used the term Responsible Certificant to describe the individual who is publicly accountable for the work of an RBT (via the RBT Registry). For several years, we have used this single term to refer to two distinct roles. A Responsible Certificant can be either (a) the RBT's supervisor or (b) an organization's compliance officer in charge of ensuring that RBT supervision requirements are met across all RBTs in the organization. Currently, individuals who are certified as a BCBA-D, BCBA, or BCaBA, may meet the requirements to serve as a Responsible Certificant. To minimize confusion, the term "Responsible Certificant" is being eliminated and replaced with two new terms that clearly differentiate its two distinct roles. The new terms are *RBT Requirements Coordinator* and *RBT Supervisor* and their roles and requirements are described below.

RBT Requirements Coordinator

- Ensures that RBT supervision requirements are met across all RBTs in an organization
- May also provide direct supervision of RBTs
- Must hold BCBA or BCBA-D certification
- Name appears in the RBT's entry in the RBT Registry

RBT Supervisor

- Provides direct supervision of RBTs and is accountable for their activities
    - Must be certified as a BCaBA, BCBA, or BCBA-D
    - Name appears in the RBT's entry in the RBT Registry
        OR
    - Licensed in another behavioral health profession that has applied behavior analysis in its legislative scope of practice and is competent in applied behavior analysis

        Note: these professionals may only supervise RBTs under the oversight of an RBT Requirements Coordinator

BCaBAs who currently serve in the compliance-officer role in their organizations and are listed as Responsible Certificants in the RBT Registry may continue to fulfill this function (now as an RBT Requirements Coordinator) through October 31, 2019. However, during this time, BCaBAs may not oversee RBT Supervisors who are noncertified licensed professionals (described earlier). After November 1, 2019, BCaBAs will no longer be permitted to serve as RBT Requirements Coordinators.

Implementation of RBT Changes

The implementation dates for the changes described earlier are available in the tables on pages 2 and 3. Please note that the following changes are effective immediately:

- New supervisor terminology (RBT Supervisor, RBT Requirements Coordinator)
- The use of assistant trainers in the 40-hour training
- The use of assistant assessors in the competency assessment
- The RBT Ethics Code

Process Improvements

Supervisee Changes

The BACB now has an automated process for RBT Requirements Coordinators and RBT Supervisors to remove and add RBTs to their BACB records. Thus, emails no longer need to be sent to the BACB to request such changes. In addition, the RBT Registry now reflects the new RBT Requirements Coordinator and RBT Supervisor roles. All "Responsible Certificants" have defaulted to the RBT Supervisor role in the registry. Those who serve as an RBT Requirements Coordinator must log into their Gateway account to designate their appropriate roles for each RBT. Instructions for adding and removing RBTs and for designating supervisory roles are now available at www.bacb.com.

Application Processing

The current RBT online application includes three sections. The first and third sections are completed by the applicant and the second section is completed by a supervisor during which the background check and age information is provided. Based on feedback about the admittedly cumbersome nature of this process, we have revised the RBT application so that the applicant will now be able to enter all information in one session. The applicant will upload a document signed by a certificant (BCaBA, BCBA, BCBA-D) who will provide the necessary information for the background check and age requirements. Additional details about this change will be communicated immediately preceding the implementation of the new application (later in 2019).

A Summary of Upcoming Changes to BACB Requirements

In an effort to assist certificants in remaining up-to-date with BACB requirements, the table below summarizes upcoming changes announced in this and in past issues of the BACB Newsletter.

Effective Date	Area	Change	Newsletter
January 1, 2019	BCBA/BCaBA Experience & Supervision Requirements	Changes to the Experience Standards and implementation of the monthly experience system.	March 2018
November 1, 2019	RBT Eligibility and Maintenance Requirements	Changes to several RBT eligibility and maintenance requirements.	December 2018
	RBT Supervisor Requirements	Changes to requirements for those who supervise RBTs.	December 2018
	Supervisor Training Curriculum	A new version of the supervisor training curriculum will take effect for anyone who offers the 8-hour supervisor training.	December 2018
	RBT Examination	The RBT examination will be based on the RBT Task List (2nd ed.)	December 2018
January 1, 2020	BCBA/BCaBA CEU Requirements	Changes to the CEU requirements for BCBA and BCaBA certifications.	November 2018
January 1, 2022	BCBA/BCaBA Eligibility Requirements	Changes to the coursework requirements for BCBA (Pathway 2) and BCaBA certifications.	January 2017
	BCBA and BCaBA Examinations	BCBA/BCaBA examinations will be based on the BCBA Task List (5th ed.) and the BCaBA Task List (5th ed.).	January 2017
	BCBA/BCaBA Experience & Supervision Requirements	Changes to the "Structure and Amount of Supervised Fieldwork", "Terminology Revisions", "BCBA & BCaBA Fieldwork & Supervision Requirements", "Appropriate Clients", and "Activities".	October 2017
	BCBA/BCaBA Degree Requirements	Changes to the degree requirements for BCBA and BCaBA certifications.	October 2018
	BCBA/BCaBA Maintenance Requirements	Changes to CEU requirements for BCBA an BCaBA certifications	November 2018