

BACB Newsletter



NOTICE: The information contained in BACB Newsletters may be outdated and should be independently verified via our website.

Note: The information in this newsletter has been updated to reflect that beginning January 1, 2025, when an individual becomes certified at a higher level, their lower-level certification will remain active for 90 days **or** until it expires, whichever comes first.

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APBA Accreditation Recognized Under BCBA Pathway 1

Since 2022, the primary educational requirement for BCBA® certification under Pathway 1 has been a master’s degree from a university program accredited by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). ABAI’s accreditation system has been the only one of its kind in behavior analysis since the early 1990s. However, the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA) recently established its own [accreditation system](#) for master’s degree programs “that focus on training students to become scientist-practitioners in the profession of applied behavior analysis.” In the Spring of 2023, APBA submitted a request to the BACB® Board of Directors to have their new accreditation system recognized alongside ABAI’s under BCBA Pathway 1. The BACB Board of Directors reviewed their request and directed BACB staff to convene a panel of qualified subject matter experts (SMEs) to study it.

In June 2023, a committee of 8 SMEs met virtually to review APBA’s accreditation requirements to determine whether the completion of a master’s degree from an APBA-accredited university program would be appropriate as an additional qualification method under BCBA Pathway 1. The committee comprised 5 faculty members and 3 practitioners from a diverse range of universities, organizations, geographic locations, genders, and races/ethnicities. After reviewing APBA’s requirements, the committee deemed the coursework (based on current and 2027 BCBA coursework requirements) and nondidactic requirements (e.g., capstone project, BCBA examination pass-rate standards) acceptable as BCBA eligibility requirements. Ultimately, the committee decided that applicants who receive a master’s degree from an APBA-accredited university program should be able to qualify for BCBA certification under Pathway 1. The committee’s recommendation was approved by the BACB Board of Directors and is **effective immediately**.

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The following table illustrates how this change will be incorporated into 2022, 2027, and 2032 BCBA requirements:

	Pathway 1: Degree From APBA-Accredited Program or ABAI-Accredited or Recognized Program (ABAI Tier 1, 2a, or 2b)	Pathway 2: Behavior-Analytic Coursework	Pathway 3: Faculty Teaching and Research	Pathway 4: Postdoctoral Experience
2022	Degree	Master's degree or higher from an APBA-accredited program or an ABAI-accredited or recognized behavior analysis degree program (ABAI Tier 1, 2a, or 2b)	Graduate degree	Doctoral degree
	Behavior-analytic content		Graduate degree	Postdoctoral experience in applied behavior analysis
	Fieldwork	Practical fieldwork in applied behavior analysis	Behavior-analytic coursework	Practical fieldwork in applied behavior analysis

	Pathway 1: Degree From APBA-Accredited Program or ABAI-Accredited or Recognized Program (ABAI Tier 1, 2a, or 2b)	Pathway 2: Behavior-Analytic Coursework
2027	Degree	Graduate degree
	Behavior-analytic content	Behavior-analytic coursework
	Fieldwork	Practical fieldwork in applied behavior analysis

	Pathway 1: Degree From APBA-Accredited Program or ABAI-Accredited Program
2032	Degree
	Behavior-analytic content
	Fieldwork

If you have questions about APBA's new accreditation system or want more information, please contact [APBA](#).

Remote Delivery of RBT Examination Discontinued

Remote delivery of the RBT® examination was first made available just over 3 years ago at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, RBT examination content has been repeatedly stolen during examination deliveries. We have confirmed that at least 700 examination items have been stolen, but the loss could be greater. Each compromised item must be retired and replaced with a new item that has undergone the lengthy process of item writing, item review, and pilot testing. Over the past few years, we have persistently worked to improve security and build up our item bank to counteract future thefts. We also filed and won multiple lawsuits in federal court. Regrettably, none of our efforts have sufficiently deterred the theft of RBT examination content. Because it is essential that we protect the integrity of the RBT examination, the BACB Board of Directors recently made the difficult decision to discontinue its remote delivery, effective September 1, 2023.

Before making this decision, RBT candidate volume and Pearson VUE's testing center capacity were assessed to ensure that they could handle an influx of new in-person appointments. Pearson VUE operates the largest network of testing centers in the world, and we have confirmed that their testing centers are fully equipped to support the influx. Although we do not anticipate any capacity constraints, we are monitoring capacities closely.

Pearson VUE US Sales Tax Collection

On **January 1, 2024**, Pearson VUE, the organization that delivers all BACB examinations, will begin collecting US sales tax on examination appointments in certain locations where required by law (currently in Hawaii, New Mexico, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico). If applicable, state or territory sales tax will be added to the examination fee paid directly to Pearson VUE at the time of scheduling or when purchasing a prepaid voucher.

Multiple Certifications Policy Updated

Historically, the BACB has allowed certificants to hold multiple BACB certifications at once. This policy was initially established to allow those holding higher-level certifications (e.g., BCBA) to also hold lower-level certifications (e.g., BCaBA®, RBT) in cases where a funder only recognized the latter. Although holding multiple certifications is permitted, this practice has been discouraged for two primary reasons: First, the individual holding multiple certifications must meet the requirements for each certification independently. For example, an individual who holds both BCBA and RBT certifications must meet the RBT ongoing supervision requirements (i.e., receive supervision from a BCBA or BCaBA for 5% of the hours they spend providing behavior-analytic services), which would likely result in an unusual supervision arrangement. Second, higher-level certifications include the knowledge, skills, and abilities of lower-level certifications, so it should be presumed that, for instance, a BCBA is qualified to provide services as an RBT, raising questions about the need for holding more than one certification.

Only 250 BACB certificants (out of over 210,000) actively hold more than one certification (i.e., they recertified their lower-level certification at least once after obtaining their higher-level certification). In other words, the overwhelming majority of BACB certificants let their lower-level certification lapse as soon as they obtain a higher-level certification. Based on the geographic distribution of the 250 certificants with multiple certifications, there do not appear to be any regional or funder requirements that necessitate holding multiple certifications. For these reasons, the BACB Board of Directors decided to update the Multiple Certifications Policy so that individuals may only hold one BACB certification at a time. Beginning January 1, 2025, when an individual becomes certified at a higher level, their lower-level certification will remain active for 90 days **or** until it expires, whichever comes first.

BCBA and BCaBA Reinstatement Period Reduced to 30 Days

BCBAs and BCaBAs currently have a 90-day grace period, called a reinstatement period, to submit their recertification application after their recertification date. During this period, the individual's BCBA or BCaBA certification is considered inactive, and they may not complete continuing education units (CEUs) to meet the continuing education requirement. Many have asked why the reinstatement period is so long when CEUs cannot be completed during it. The 90-day reinstatement period was relevant when recertification applications were mailed to the BACB. Now that these applications are submitted online, such a long window is no longer needed. The data reflects this, as the full reinstatement period is rarely used. Of those who recertified their BCBA or BCaBA certification in 2021 and 2022, 99.7% recertified before their recertification date or within 30 days of the passing of their recertification date. As a result, the BACB Board of Directors voted to reduce the reinstatement period for BCBA and BCaBA certification to 30 days. This change will go into effect on **January 1, 2024**.

Clarifying the Assessor's Role in the RBT Initial Competency Assessment

When the Initial Competency Assessment was introduced as one of the eligibility requirements for RBT certification, the intent was that the assessment would be completed by a qualified assessor at the organization where the RBT applicant was or would be providing services. However, in some situations, there is not a clear relationship between the person being assessed, the assessor, and the clients involved in the assessment. This is a concerning trend, most notably for the clients, and it is not aligned with the original intent of the Initial Competency Assessment. As a result, an SME committee developed additional stipulations to clarify these roles. This clarification was approved by the BACB Board of Directors.

The following will be added to the Initial Competency Assessment requirements:

The responsible assessor, assistant assessor(s), and RBT applicant must be employed at (or all have a contractual relationship with) the same organization. That organization must also be the entity providing services to the client involved in the assessment. If the responsible or assistant assessor is a BCaBA, their supervisor must also be employed at (or all have a contractual relationship with) the same organization where the client is receiving services. This relationship requirement applies to the entire assessment and not just the portions involving clients.

These relationship expectations are currently in place but will be enforced for all RBT certification applications submitted on or after **January 1, 2024**.

Sunsetting of Noncertified RBT Supervisors

In December 2018, the BACB began allowing 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 (ABA) to supervise RBTs under the oversight of an RBT Requirements Coordinator. This change was made to provide flexibility, as there are some proficient behavior analysts who are not certified by the BACB.

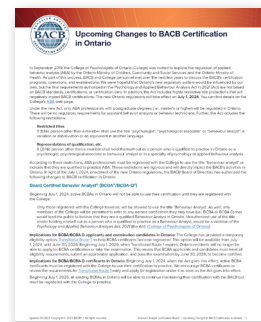
We have since learned that this provision is not widely used. In a recent survey of RBT Requirements Coordinators, 92% indicated that they had never used a noncertified RBT Supervisor. We have also encountered several problems with this provision, primarily that a number of licensed behavioral health professionals (a) believe that behavior analysis is within their legislative scope of practice when it is not and (b) cannot clearly demonstrate competence in delivering and supervising ABA services.

In the interest of consumer protection, a recent SME committee recommended the removal of the noncertified RBT Supervisor provision. The BACB Board of Directors approved this recommendation. Effective **January 1, 2026**, RBT Supervisors must hold BCBA or BCaBA certification. Individuals applying for noncertified RBT Supervisor status before then should start by reviewing the [Noncertified RBT Supervisor Form](#). Noncertified supervisors will not be allowed to provide BACB-required supervision to RBTs as of January 1, 2026. During this transition, RBT Requirements Coordinators who currently attest to the qualifications of noncertified supervisors should begin to make preparations to ensure continuity of care for their clients.

New Regulations Necessitate Changes to BACB Certification in Ontario

On September 18, 2023, we informed Ontario candidates and certificants about upcoming changes to BACB certification in Ontario necessitated by new provincial regulations. In summary, the Psychology and Applied Behaviour Analysis Act, 2021 (Act) was passed in Ontario on June 3, 2021, and it will go into effect on **July 1, 2024**. This Act will negatively impact BACB certification in Ontario.

If you are a BACB applicant, examination candidate, or certificant in Ontario or interested in moving to Ontario, these changes may affect you. For details, please review the [Upcoming Changes to BACB Certification in Ontario](#) document and visit the College's [ABA](#) web page.



Free Speech and BACB Ethics Requirements

Recently, individuals certified by the BACB have been involved in concerning discussions on social media. This has led some to wonder whether making a repugnant or controversial public statement constitutes a violation of the BACB's ethics requirements. The following activities are not typically actionable by the BACB due to US First Amendment rights that supersede the BACB's authority:

- opinion statements
- parodies
- hypothetical discussions

While we appreciate the concerns about controversial speech and might share those concerns in some cases, the BACB cannot be the avenue for redress unless the speech includes a violation of client rights, the law, or BACB ethics requirements.

US Zip-Code Data Now Available

The [BACB Certificant Registry](#) now includes the option to export a .csv file containing the number of BACB certificants per certification level in each US zip code. We are providing these data for those interested in the geographic distribution of our certificants for workforce development and service availability purposes. The data are proprietary to the BACB and may not be sold or commercially distributed. Look for the following box on the BACB Certificant Registry web page to use this data-export feature.

Looking for data on the U.S. geographic distribution of BACB certificants? Click the button below to download a .csv file containing the # of BACB certificants per certification level in each U.S. zip code.

U.S. ZIP CODE EXPORT TABLE

For those interested in the change in BACB certificant numbers over time in specific regions (i.e., countries, Canadian provinces, US states), visit the [Region-Specific Certificant Data](#) web page.

Self-Reporting Reminder

Over the years, the BACB has offered extensive guidance about self-reporting to the BACB professional and personal conduct or conditions that could pose a risk to others. BACB applicants and certificants must be aware of and adhere to the reporting requirements detailed in the following resources:

- Ethics and Self-Reporting section of the [RBT](#), [BCaBA](#), or [BCBA Handbook](#)
- [Self-Reporting](#) web page
- [Considerations for Self-Reporting](#) document
- [March 2023](#), [April 2017](#), and [November 2016 BACB Newsletters](#)

Recent and Upcoming Changes to BACB Requirements

The following table summarizes important changes to certification requirements.

Effective Date	Area	Change	Source
January 1, 2023	Application and Examination Jurisdiction	Only individuals who reside in the US, Canada, Australia, or the UK may apply for BACB certification and/or take a BACB examination.	Recent Changes to the BACB's International Focus December 2019 announcement
July 1, 2023	Coursework from VCSs approved under Alternative Pathways	The BACB will no longer accept non-university coursework, including coursework from a Verified Course Sequence approved under an Alternative Pathway in which courses are taught outside of an accredited educational institution.	International Development & Support web page
September 29, 2023	BCBA Pathway 1 Update	Applicants who receive a master's degree from an APBA-accredited university program can apply under BCBA Pathway 1.	September 2023 Newsletter
January 1, 2024	BCBA and BCaBA Reinstatement Period	The BCBA and BCaBA reinstatement period for recertification will be reduced to 30 days.	September 2023 Newsletter
	BCBA and BCaBA Coursework Expiration Policy	A rolling 10-year expiration date will be placed on coursework submitted as part of a BCBA or BCaBA certification application.	March 2022 Newsletter
	RBT Initial Competency Assessment	The responsible assessor, assistant assessor(s), and RBT applicant must be employed at (or all have a contractual relationship with) the same organization where the client is receiving services. This requirement applies to the entire assessment.	September 2023 Newsletter
July 1, 2024	RBT and BCaBA Certification in Ontario	Ontario residents will no longer be able to apply for RBT or BCaBA certification. Those holding RBT and BCaBA certification in Ontario will have their certification placed on voluntary inactive status.	Upcoming Changes to BACB Certification in Ontario
January 1, 2025	Multiple Certifications Policy	BACB certificants may only hold one BACB certification at a time.	September 2023 Newsletter
	BCBA Examinations	The BCBA examination will be based on the BCBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.).	February 2022 Newsletter
	BCaBA Examinations	The BCaBA examination will be based on the BCaBA Test Content Outline (6th ed.).	February 2022 Newsletter

Effective Date	Area	Change	Source
January 1, 2026	BCBA and BCaBA Verified Coursework	All Pathway 2 certification applications will require that a VCS Coordinator Coursework Attestation is completed by a designated program contact.	January 2023 announcement to VCS Coordinators
	Noncertified RBT Supervisors	RBT Supervisors must hold BCaBA or BCBA certification.	September 2023 Newsletter
July 1, 2026	BCBA Certification in Ontario	Ontario residents will no longer be able to apply for BCBA/BCBA-D certification. Those holding BCBA/BCBA-D certification in Ontario will be able to maintain their certification.	Upcoming Changes to BACB Certification in Ontario
January 1, 2027	BCBA Eligibility and Maintenance Requirements	Revisions to core certification requirements, including degree, coursework, supervised fieldwork, continuing education, and ongoing supervision. Pathways 3 and 4 discontinued.	March 2022 Newsletter
	BCaBA Eligibility and Maintenance Requirements	Revisions to core certification requirements, including degree, coursework, supervised fieldwork, continuing education, and ongoing supervision.	March 2022 Newsletter
January 1, 2032	BCBA Eligibility Pathways	Pathway 1, which requires a degree from an accredited university training program, will be the only eligibility pathway for BCBA certification.	March 2022 Newsletter