

BACB Newsletter



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Content:

- ▶ Introducing the New *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*.. 1
- ▶ Recent and Upcoming Changes to BACB Requirements..... 4

2022 Change to BCBA and BCaBA Eligibility Requirements

As of January 1, 2022, the BACB’s eligibility requirements for BCBA’s and BCaBA’s will change. Although these changes will not take effect until 2022, they will impact students and trainees who are currently preparing for future applications.

We want to remind students, trainees, supervisors, and faculty that the BACB has developed certification-specific transition guides ([BCBA](#) and [BCaBA](#)) as well as supplemental handbooks ([BCBA](#) and [BCaBA](#)) that feature the new eligibility requirements. These resources should be helpful in informing future applicants about the new requirements and providing guidance based on when they plan to apply.

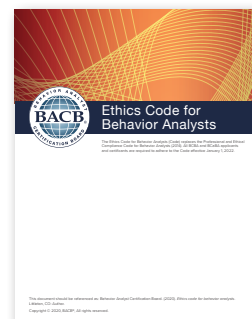
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Introducing the New *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts*

The BACB’s current ethics code for BCBA’s and BCaBA’s—the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts (PECC)—was published in 2014 and became enforceable on January 1, 2016. Like all BACB requirements, the PECC was developed by subject matter experts (SMEs) during a process facilitated by BACB staff, and it was ultimately approved by the BACB Board of Directors. The BACB’s certification-program accreditor—the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA)—requires programs to regularly review certification requirements for possible revision, especially when there are changes in the profession. Given the rapid pace of changes in the applied behavior analysis profession, the BACB initiated a project to revise the PECC in 2018, with primary tasks beginning in earnest in 2019. The project aimed to produce a more efficient and readable code, facilitate code enforcement, and articulate its guiding principles—all with an eye toward improved consumer protection.

Process. The revision process was designed to gather broad stakeholder input, learn how related professions have recently addressed ethics, and identify content that should be added to the revised code. The process included a wide range of activities over a 16-month revision period, including stakeholder surveys, systematic reviews of other ethics codes, and numerous structured SME workgroups. We began by reviewing the ongoing feedback gathered from individuals who have contacted the BACB since publication of the PECC in 2014. We then solicited feedback on the PECC via a survey distributed to all BCBA’s and BCaBA’s that yielded 4,728 responses. We also distributed smaller-scale surveys to behavior analysts with demonstrated expertise in ethics, as well as to representatives from behavior analyst licensure boards. We reviewed and summarized all of this information to begin generating the code revisions. We then implemented a series of virtual meetings with a number of SMEs to review and discuss ethics issues, survey data, and revised code standards. In total, 26 SMEs participated in these activities. The SMEs had a wide range of expertise (e.g., teaching ethics, engaging in ethics-related scholarly work, supervising, holding dual certification/licensure) and collective experience in various practice areas (e.g., autism spectrum disorder and intellectual



disabilities, education, organizational behavior management, criminal justice). Once a draft of the revised code—the newly titled [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#)—was completed, a workgroup of 7 SMEs conducted a final review and provided additional feedback before the Code was finalized and presented to the BACB Board of Directors. The Board approved the Code on July 31, 2020.

Summary. The Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts includes an introduction, a glossary, and the Ethics Standards sections. The introduction—a new addition—serves as a general framework for and guide to the content in the document. It provides descriptions of (a) the Code’s scope and the BACB’s jurisdiction, (b) the 4 core principles that serve as the Code’s foundation, (c) how the Code should be used, (d) considerations for ethical decision making, and (e) the enforcement procedures. The 4 core principles should help guide applicants and certificants in applying the Code and making decisions. The principles are that behavior analysts should benefit others; treat others with compassion, dignity, and respect; behave with integrity; and ensure their competence. The section on considerations for ethical decision making is intended to provide a general framework that certificants can use to assist in addressing ethical dilemmas. The glossary now appears between the introduction and the Ethics Standards sections rather than at the end of the document. This change in location was made to facilitate interaction with the definitions of critical terms appearing in the subsequent standards. We omitted 4 terms from the original glossary, added 12 new terms, and revised all definitions. Readers should note that the first time a glossary term appears in a standards section, it is italicized.

The Ethics Standards sections have been reorganized and revised from 10 sections with a total of 169 individual standards (including enumerated standards and substandards designated with lower-case letters) in the PECC to 6 sections with a total of 85 individual standards in the Code. In addition, some elements identified as unenforceable (e.g., those that might have impacted free speech) were removed from the Ethics Standards sections. Elements from the PECC that do not appear in the Code are generally addressed as expectations for professional conduct in the introduction. The Ethics Standards sections are titled (a) Responsibility as a Professional, (b) Responsibility in Practice, (c) Responsibility to Clients and Stakeholders, (d) Responsibility to Supervisees and Trainees, (e) Responsibility in Public Statements, and (f) Responsibility in Research.

Specific Changes. The large number of changes within the new Code cannot be succinctly detailed; however, some of the more substantive changes are described below.

SECTION 1 – RESPONSIBILITY AS A PROFESSIONAL

1.07 Cultural Responsiveness and Diversity – This new standard was added to clarify that it is the responsibility of behavior analysts to actively participate in professional development activities related to cultural responsiveness and diversity. This standard requires that behavior analysts evaluate their own biases and abilities—as well as those of their supervisees and trainees—in relation to serving those with diverse needs and backgrounds.

1.08 Nondiscrimination – This standard has been revised with a focus on requiring behavior that is equitable and inclusive. It also includes additional groups and statuses.

1.10 Awareness of Personal Biases and Challenges – This standard has been revised with a focus on being aware of and addressing personal biases and challenges.

1.12 Giving and Receiving Gifts – This standard has been revised to indicate that gift exchange is allowable, provided that the monetary value of the gift is under \$10 US dollars (i.e., or the equivalent purchasing power in another country’s currency). This standard also describes conditions under which gift exchange may become problematic.

1.14 Romantic and Sexual Relationships – This now stand-alone standard has been revised to include additional considerations, contexts, and time frames.

SECTION 2 – RESPONSIBILITY IN PRACTICE

2.08 Communicating About Services – This standard has been revised to enhance consumer protection by requiring behavior analysts to ensure comprehension of information when communicating with clients, stakeholders, supervisees, trainees, and research participants.

2.11 Obtaining Informed Consent – This standard has been revised to clarify that behavior analysts must know and comply with the conditions under which consent and assent must be obtained.

SECTION 3 – RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

3.07 Third-Party Contracts for Services, 3.08 Responsibility to the Client with Third-Party Contracts for Services, and 3.09 Communicating with Stakeholders About Third-Party Contracted Services – These standards have been revised to clarify the expectations of behavior analysts in these contexts and to highlight the need to document actions taken.

3.14 Facilitating Continuity of Services, 3.15 Appropriately Discontinuing Services, and 3.16 Appropriately Transitioning Services – These standards have been revised to clarify the information that must be communicated to clients and stakeholders and the steps that must be taken in each of these circumstances.

SECTION 4 – RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPERVISEES AND TRAINEES

4.03 Supervisory Volume – This standard has been revised to include more considerations to assist behavior analysts in evaluating supervisory capacity.

4.04 Accountability in Supervision – This standard has been expanded to set the clear expectation that behavior analysts are responsible for the professional activities of their supervisees and trainees.

4.05 Maintaining Supervision Documentation – This new standard clarifies the requirements related to managing documentation, most notably that behavior analysts are responsible for ensuring that their supervisees and trainees appropriately address all documentation requirements.

4.07 Incorporating and Addressing Diversity – This new standard sets the expectation that behavior analysts must include topics related to diversity in training and supervision activities.

4.11 Facilitating Continuity of Supervision and 4.12 Appropriately Terminating Supervision – These new standards parallel the standards related to service continuity and termination of services.

SECTION 5 – RESPONSIBILITY IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS

5.03 Public Statements by Behavior Analysts – This standard has been revised to clearly indicate that behavior analysts do not give advice about specific client needs in public forums.

5.07 Soliciting Testimonials from Current Clients for Advertising, 5.08 Using Testimonials from Former Clients for Advertising, and 5.09 Using Testimonials for Nonadvertising Purposes – These standards have been revised to better guide behavior analysts through the different requirements and steps that must be taken in these 3 contexts.

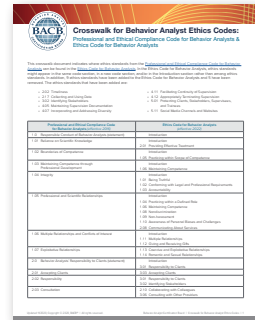
5.10 Social Media Channels and Websites – This standard has been revised to provide a clear distinction between professional and personal websites and social media channels, and it now includes considerations and ethics requirements related to using these platforms.

SECTION 6 – RESPONSIBILITY IN RESEARCH

6.03 Research in Service Delivery – This new standard clarifies the requirements related to research conducted within the context of service delivery.

6.04 Informed Consent in Research – This standard has been revised to include expectations for the use of existing data.

Implementation. The Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts will be enforceable for all BCBA and BCaBAs on **January 1, 2022**. Until then, we encourage certificants, applicants, and trainees, as well as those who supervise others or teach ethics, to become familiar with the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts and make any needed adjustments to their practices or courses. To assist with this effort, we have developed a [crosswalk](#) document to illustrate how specific Code standards relate to the PECC. We will also publish additional resources (e.g., podcasts) designed to increase familiarity with the Code.



Recent and Upcoming Changes to BACB Requirements

The following table summarizes important requirements changes announced in the *BACB Newsletter*.

Effective Date	Area	Change	Newsletter
January 1, 2020	BCBA and BCaBA Maintenance Requirements	Changes to CEU requirements for BCBA and BCaBA certifications.	November 2018
November 1, 2020	RBT Examination	Candidates will have a maximum of eight examination attempts during a one-year authorization period.	November 2019
January 1, 2022	BCBA and BCaBA Coursework Requirements	Changes to the coursework requirements for BCBA (Option 1) and BCaBA credentials.	January 2017
	BCBA and BCaBA Examination Content	All BCBA and BCaBA examinations will be based on the BCBA Task List (5th ed.) and the BCaBA Task List (5th ed.) .	January 2017
	BCBA and BCaBA Experience and 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 and BCaBA Degree Requirements	Changes to the degree requirements for BCBA and BCaBA certifications.	October 2018
	BCBA and BCaBA Ethics Requirements	The new Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts will go into effect.	December 2020