

Resolution for a Proposal for Foundations in Applied Behavior Change

WHEREAS, the Psychology Department proposed a **micro-credential in Foundations in Applied Behavior Change**, and

WHEREAS, the proposed micro-credential is designed to help students develop knowledge of principles of learning and skills in facilitating behavioral changes, and

WHEREAS, the proposed micro-credential will offer a valuable set of skills to students who seek career in the rapidly growing mental health sector and other treatment settings, as well as to students who pursue a graduate degree in related fields, and

WHEREAS, the proposal micro-credential consists of three courses which, as a set, provide training in theoretical, application and clinical-diagnostic aspects of learning, and

WHEREAS, these three courses are already offered in the Department as part of an existing undergraduate degree program, and thus the program can be offered with no additional resources,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate approve the proposed **micro-credential in Foundations in Applied Behavior Change**.

Submitted by the Curriculum and Academic Planning Committee (CAP), May 27, 2022

The Proposal approved by CAP on May 27, 2022

[CAP Membership Spring 2022]

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Micro-Credential: Foundations In Applied Behavior Change

Sponsoring Department: Psychology (School of Arts & Sciences)

Faculty Advisors: Laurette T. Morris, Ph.D., Lorenz S. Neuwirth, Ph.D.,

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Purpose and Rationale:

- To provide a modern theoretical approach guided by best practices in psychological research covering the foundation in principles of learning and behavioral sciences that promote evidenced-based behavior change;
- To provide interdisciplinary coursework on the broad range of applications of learning principles in numerous clinical and occupational settings directed towards the purpose(s) of fostering behavioral change;
- To meet the increasing needs and demands for a diverse workforce of individuals seeking employment and training to work with a range of populations in different treatment settings, with particular emphasis on helping individuals with developmental disabilities through the use of evidence-based behavioral techniques;
- To provide the conceptual foundation to students who want to work as applied/basic research assistants, pursue graduate school, or, otherwise engage in applied/basic research activities or meet the needs of behavioral researchers;
- To provide an early foundation to students who wish to attend graduate programs and/or pursue jobs and careers in a variety of health/mental health service areas, including: behavior therapy, counseling, mental health counseling, clinical psychology, social work, health psychology, behavioral health, rehabilitative work, industrial-organizational psychology, sports psychology, special education, applied behavior analysis, and applied or basic behavioral research.

Skills and Competencies / Learning Outcomes:

Students who complete these courses at the stipulated level will have demonstrated the following:

- knowledge and understanding of principles of learning, and how those principles may be applied to implement or facilitate behavior change;
- knowledge and understanding of how to define/operationalize and measure specific target behaviors, to conduct functional assessments and functional analyses, and to assess the magnitude of behavior change;
- awareness and understanding of the rights of clients, patients, research participants (human) and research subjects (animal), as well as limitations and potential ethical issues and concerns with the use of harsh, invasive or aversive procedures to modify, regulate or control behavior.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Criteria for whether or not students have met the above learning outcomes will be determined by earning a grade of B or better in each of the courses for the micro-credential consistent with all other micro-credentials offered by the College.

Demand:

- Projected increased demand of 6% for psychological services between 2015-2030; projected increased demand by 33% for psychological services between 2015-2030 based on racial/ethnic equivalence (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018);
- Increased need for mental health service providers to address increased reporting and incidence of anxiety and depression among teenagers (Zraick, 2021) and various mental health concerns among college students,

including anxiety, depression, stress management, eating disorders and substance abuse (Gabriel, 2010; Kafka, 2021);

- Increased demand for mental health treatment, including telemental health, since the COVID-19 pandemic began (APA, 2021);
- A 28% increase in jobs in the mental health sector reported since 2019, based on job listings on “FlexJobs,” including jobs such as: behavioral health care manager, social worker and case manager;
- A 24% “year-over-year job growth” among mental health professionals, based on LinkedIn data, with the “fastest-growing” positions reported including: behavior therapist, mental health technician and psychotherapist (Hannon, 2021);
- Projected 23% increase in jobs for substance abuse, behavioral disorders, and mental health counselors between 2020 and 2030; and a 15% projected increase in jobs for counselors, social workers, and other community and social service specialists during same decade (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022);
- Continued need for behavioral specialists/behavior therapists to work with individuals with special needs or neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., autistic disorder, intellectual deficiency, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder/ADHD), to work with students with other academic challenges, as well as to address social/emotional or psychological concerns (e.g., anxiety, depression, and reactions to trauma) with children and teens in school settings (e.g., Greschem, 2004; Jaycox et. al., 2012; Ngo et. al., 2008; Reschly, 2004).
[See also: <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/autism/conditioninfo/treatments/behavioral-management>; <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02796015.2004.12086257>]
- Thus, considering the aforementioned supporting data regarding the demand, this micro-credential has the potential to increase student enrollment for each of these courses for new, transfer, and in particular returning students. This latter point is critical given the current reductions in student as an unfortunate consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Resources:

- **Sponsoring Department:** Psychology (School of Arts and Sciences)
- A **three-course sequence**, consisting of **three credit-bearing courses** already regularly offered in the Psychology Department:
 - A theoretical and research background course (*theoretical core* course);
 - An applications course, focusing on application of various techniques and methodologies derived from learning theories and/or relevant research (*applications course*);
 - A neurodevelopmental diagnostic and behavioral treatment course covering a range of needs for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities (*clinical diagnostic course*);

Proposed Micro-Credential Requirements:

- **Three required content courses (12 credits);** All courses must be passed with the grade of “B” or better to count towards the micro-credential;
 - PY3420 - Learning and Motivation (*theoretical core course*) – 4 Credits
 - PY4330 - Behavior Modification (*applications course*) – 4 Credits
 - PY4401 - Developmental Neuropathology (*clinical diagnostic core course*) – 4 Credits

Maximum of one transferred content course can be applied to the micro-credential;

Cost, Financial Aid, Stackability, and Portability:

- **Cost:** Tuition for the three 4-credit courses; students that are eligible may apply for financial aid as either full-time and part-time students;
- Courses stackable to B.A./B.S in Psychology: PY3420 may count as a Group A platform course for the major; and PY4330 and PY4401 may count as 4000-level electives for the major;

- Proposed micro-credential can be stackable or in supplement to/with other micro-credentials, such as the Foundational Counseling Skills Micro-Credential, for students who want to seek a broader background and development to work towards careers in professional areas such as: counseling, mental health counseling, and social work.

Title:

- “Foundations in Applied Behavior Change”—not found to be the title of degree/certificate programs;
- Degree and certificate program titles include: applied behavior analysis, behavior modification, behavioral psychology, applied behavioral counseling, applied behavioral mental health counseling, applied behavior therapy, behavioral health, and behavioral mental health.

Assessment:

- Assessment of the micro-credential as one of the Psychology Department programs is to occur during the periodic five-year reviews.

References

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<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2010/10/mental-health-treatment-demand>
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- Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2022). *Occupational Outlook Handbook, Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors*.
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- [SEE ALSO: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02796015.2004.12086252>]
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<https://doi.org/10.1097/CHI.0b013e3181799f19>

Reschly, D.J. (2004) Commentary: Paradigm Shift, Outcomes Criteria, and Behavioral Interventions: Foundations for the Future of School Psychology, *School Psychology Review*, 33:3, 408-416, DOI: [10.1080/02796015.2004.12086257](https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2004.12086257).

See also the below links for additional references:

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/autism/conditioninfo/treatments/behavioral-management>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02796015.2004.12086257>

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Degree Type:

Micro-Credential

School:

School of Arts & Sciences

Department

Psychology

The micro-credential in Foundations in Applied Behavior Change is designed to provide students with foundational knowledge of behavioral learning principles, methodologies and procedures, and how they may be applied in, various settings, to address problematic behaviors and/or effect adaptive behavior change. This micro-credential is highly recommended for students who wish to pursue careers in various mental health and human service fields including: behavior therapy, counseling, mental health counseling, clinical psychology, social work, behavioral health, sports psychology, special education, as well as applied behavior analysis, and basic or applied behavioral research.

Requirements

Completion of the following three (3) content courses, with the grade of “B” or higher to count towards the micro-credential:

- PY3420: Learning and Motivation – 4 Credits
- PY4330: Behavior Modification – 4 Credits
- PY4401: Developmental Neuropathology – 4 Credits

One transferred course allowed.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the micro-credential are expected to have:

- knowledge and understanding of principles of learning, and how they may be applied to implement or facilitate behavior change;
- knowledge of how to operationalize and measure behaviors, conduct functional assessments and functional analyses, and assess magnitude of behavior change;
- awareness and understanding of the rights of clients, patients, and research participants (humans) and subjects (animals); as well as limitations and potential ethical issues and concerns with the use of harsh, invasive or aversive procedures to modify, regulate or control behavior.