

Hello, I would like to thank the members of the committee and others present for taking the time to hear from members of the community about the proposed licensure bill. My name is Dr. Sara Kupzyk (SPELL NAME HERE) and I am a Licensed Psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral. I am an Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO). Within the department, I teach courses and advise students in the joint UNO/Munroe-Meyer Institute Applied Behavior Analysis Master's Program.

I would like to share about our program as an example of the training required for individuals to become Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). Our students complete a total of 48-51 credit hours, with the number of course requirements to increase in coming years to meet requirements for accreditation by the Association for Behavior Analysis International. The courses are consistent with the requirements outlined by the Association for Behavior Analysis International for a verified course sequence which includes content in principles of learning, behavior analytic assessment and treatment, ethics and law, and research methods. Students also take courses in developmental psychology and foundations of assessment, complete a thesis or research other than thesis project, and must pass a comprehensive examination. One aspect of our program that has been unique was our inclusion of coursework that enabled students to be eligible for a credential as a mental health practitioner. However, with changes to course requirements for licensure as a mental health practitioner and the increasing requirements for accreditation with the Association for Behavior Analysis International, this option will not be available without students taking additional coursework beyond those required for our program. This is similar to most behavior analysis programs across the country that do not include the additional coursework for an individual to obtain both credentials. Requiring students to complete the coursework for mental health license in addition to an already rigorous program of study is likely to pose barriers and may impact the number of individuals entering the behavioral workforce in Nebraska.

Throughout the time in the program, students are engaged in intensive supervised fieldwork experience, with a total number of hours ranging from 1500 to 2000 depending on the type of experience selected. Programs across the nation differ with the types of fieldwork experiences available to students. Within our program, students select one of three primary tracks: intensive clinical services, clinical outpatient behavioral health, or school-based services. They can also receive experience in another track depending on their professional goals. After graduating and completing the fieldwork, students must pass an exam to receive the BCBA credential.

On average we have about 8 graduates each year. Upon graduation, our students are highly sought after, with all students obtaining employment upon graduation. Our graduates are working in community agencies providing ABA services for individuals with autism and related disorders, clinics that serve individuals with severe behaviors, clinics that serve children with significant feeding disorders, and school systems.

Licensure is important to increase regulation of practice particularly as the demand for behavior analysts continues to increase at a significant rate. In Nebraska in 2021, there were 265 job postings, an increase of 42% from 2020 (BACB, 2022). Most importantly, licensure is needed to protect individuals receiving treatment and their families. As more companies come into the state to develop clinics, it is imperative that consumers have a means to report problematic or unethical behavior and for a process to be in place to examine and take appropriate action.

In summary, I ask that the members of the committee approve the licensure bill given the strength of training received by those who meet the requirements outlined in the bill. To obtain the BCBA

credential, individuals complete a rigorous program that includes coursework, fieldwork experience, and an examination. Licensure will help to regulate the practice of behavior analysis in Nebraska and protect those receiving services.

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2022). US employment demand for behavior analysts: 2010–2021. Littleton, CO: Author. [https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/BurningGlass2022\\_220208.pdf](https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/BurningGlass2022_220208.pdf)