Behaviour Analysis (Professional psychology training)

Information for Applicants

"Behaviour analysis is the science in which procedures [usually] derived from the principles of behaviour are systematically applied to improve socially significant behaviour to a meaningful degree, and to demonstrate experimentally that the procedures employed were responsible for the improvement ..."[1]. The effectiveness of behaviour analysis has been shown in a wide range of areas including education, special education, dementia care, organisational management, parent training, occupational safety, sports psychology, brain injury rehabilitation, forensics, and clinical psychology. Additionally, behaviour analysis is often recommended as the best-practice approach for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or neurodiversity (e.g., autism). Behaviour-analytic methods can be used to evaluate almost any treatment/intervention.

Worldwide demand for competent behaviour analysts exceeds current supply, especially in the education of, and remediation of behavioural problems. We offer one-, two- and three- year programmes of postgraduate study in behaviour analysis. Successful completion of the three-year programme will make a graduate eligible to apply to the New Zealand Psychologists Board (NZPB) to be a Registered Psychologist (http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz/). The programme obtained NZPB accreditation until 2027.

Those who will benefit most from the behaviour analysis programme start with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology (including undergraduate level knowledge about behaviour analysis or learning), have a commitment to using scientifically- supported interventions to improve people's lives, and have practical experience in service providing agencies.

Programme Structure

This programme satisfies the regulations for a few degrees and diplomas and requires that a student enrol in a different degree or diploma each year. Consequently, students can undertake one, two, or three years of fulltime study and earn a new qualification each year. In addition, this structure offers the flexibility to accommodate students who have already completed other postgraduate qualifications (see more details under Individualised Programmes below). The degrees/diplomas and courses in which students should enrol are described below.

YEAR 1-2

First-year students with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or with a Bachelor of Science (BSc) and a major in Psychology should apply to enrol in the 240-point Master of Behaviour Analysis. The 1st year requires a full-time[2] student to enrol in courses that have a total value of 120 points.

[1] Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2007). Applied behaviour analysis (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson

STRUCTURE

Essential core courses

PSYCHOL 702	The Science of Behaviour Analysis	30 points
PSYCHOL 703	Clinical Behaviour Analysis	30 points
PSYCH 754	Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities	15 points
PSYCH 741	Communicating Behaviourally	15 points
PSYCH 749	Applied Behaviour Analysis Ethics	15 points
PSYCH 759	Advanced Behavioural Psychology	15 points

Course Descriptions can be found on the webpage: https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/science/about-thefaculty/school-of-psychology/courses-programmes/courses-pg

This degree requires a student to conduct research and submit a thesis based on research. The thesis is worth 120 points. In addition to designing and conducting research supervised by a staff member, students will attend weekly workshop/seminar sessions arranged by programme team for research students in the Behaviour Analysis Programme.

A student must achieve a Grade Point Average of 5.0 (B) or higher in the first 120 points of taught courses prior to enrolment in PSYCH 796. If this Grade Point Average is not achieved, enrolment in the Master of Behaviour Analysis cannot continue.

Once agreement for supervision has been reached with a staff member, students should submit the Psychology Expression of Interest form. This form is available online: https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/science/our-research/finding-your-supervisor

Students who complete and pass the thesis will be eligible to apply for a place in the Year 3 courses, or to apply for enrolment in the School of Psychology's PhD programme. We recommend students complete Year 3 before a PhD if they would like to pursue a career as a clinician.

YEAR 3

Mission Statement: *This specialised programme is designed to equip graduates with sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities in the essential elements of applied behaviour analysis to provide responsible behaviour-analytic services. Responsible services are those that are effective and protect clients, the public and the professions (Psychologist and Behaviour Analyst) when the student graduates to their first job as a newly-qualified Registered Psychologist with specialist skills in behaviour analysis. The programme provides the rationale and skills for graduates to maintain up to-date knowledge of the methods and procedures of behaviour analysis throughout their careers.*

Graduates of Year 2 can apply to enrol in the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Psychology (PGDipAppPsych). Part-time enrolment for Year 3 is not encouraged. Master's theses must be submitted and marked before the student can start the third year of the programme.

For Behaviour Analysis students, this diploma requires a student to enrol in:

PSYCH 651	Practicum	60 points
PSYCH 728	Portfolio in ABA	30 points
PSYCH 730	Professional Psychology Practice in New Zealand	15 points
PSYCH 757	Advanced Applied Behaviour Analysis	15 points

The Practicum will involve at least 1500 hours over 12 months of supervised practical work across two settings in which behaviour-analytic services are valued. The settings in which students work will be negotiated with each student individually, but all students will conduct practical work for at least 30 hours per week. The student's primary duties during the Practicum will involve designing, implementing, and monitoring behaviour-analytic assessments, interventions, and programs, and/or overseeing the implementation of behaviour-analytic work by others.

To comply with New Zealand Law, PGDipAppPsych students must apply for NZPB registration under the 'Intern Psychologist' scope of practice, before commencing the Practicum. Payment for registration is the student's responsibility. Graduates of Year 3 will be eligible to apply to the NZPB for registration as a Psychologist.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: https://www.calendar.auckland.ac.nz/en/courses/faculty-ofscience/psychology

Individualised Programmes

Enrolment in individual courses toward a Certificate of Proficiency is available for students who already have postgraduate qualifications, have passed some behaviour-analytic courses, but require further coursework for degree completion. Students interested in the Certificate of Proficiency should email Andrea Mead (a.mead@auckland.ac.nz) for advice prior to applying formally.

A set of undergraduate courses in Psychology can be recommended for students who wish to enrol in the Year 1 courses and have a Bachelor's degree but without a major in Psychology. These courses are known as bridging courses, and a student enrolling in these courses will enrol in a Graduate Diploma. Contact with Andrea Mead should also be made for more details on this.

Study for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) can be negotiated initially between a prospective applicant and academic staff.

Application and Selection Processes

Master of Behaviour Analysis

Applications are due in October for entry in the next academic year, which starts in March each year. Forms will be available online on the following link: https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/science/about-thefaculty/school-of-psychology/forms-and-guides

Applicants will be informed if they have been successful in gaining a place by the end of November.

YEAR 3

Entry to the PGDipAppPsych and the associated courses in Year 3 depends on the availability of supervisors for the Practicum. Completion of the Master of Behaviour Analysis programme does not guarantee admission to this programme.

Applicants should apply via the Admissions Portal: https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/study/applicationsand-admissions/apply-now. Applications will close on 15 October. Interviews will be conducted in November with a selected number of applicants. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process before December. Students interested in the PGDipAppPsych are advised to contact the Behaviour Analysis programme staff for discussion before applying formally.

Selection Criteria

Programme staff will consider an applicant's academic record, work experience, career aspirations, intended programme of study, and personal qualities when selecting students for 'reserved' places in Year 1 or Year 3 courses. Preference will be given to those signalling a commitment to a career underpinned by a behavioural approach and obtaining employment as Psychologist with specialist skills in behaviour analysis in New Zealand. We strongly encourage Māori and Pasifika students to apply.

The selection of students for the Master's thesis in Year 2 by individual staff members is less formal than Year 1 and Year 3 selection. The factors that are usually considered by staff include the student's research interests, the academic preparedness of the student for that research, clinical skill level, and resources available in the School or through the student for the research.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the Programme Director, Dr Rebecca Sharp at r.sharp@auckland.ac.nz

General enquiries about postgraduate studies in Psychology and online enrolment via Student Services Online should be directed to scifac@auckland.ac.nz or by visiting the Student Hubs

Graduates of universities overseas and/or those without New Zealand citizenship or permanent resident status should correspond with the International Students Office (https://auckland.ac.nz/international). Information about fees is available at https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/study/fees-and-money-matters/tuition-fees/fees-by-faculty .

Although every reasonable effort is made to ensure accuracy, the information in this document is provided as a general guide only for students and is subject to alteration. All students enrolling at The University of Auckland must consult its official document, the Calendar of The University of Auckland, to ensure that they are aware of and comply with all regulations, requirements and policies.