



December 8, 2022

The Ohio State University
172 Arps Hall, 1945 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43210-1172

Dear Dr. Sheila Morgan,

On behalf of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) Accreditation Board, I write to inform you that the Board has deferred its decision on the re-accreditation of the Special Education with Applied Behavior Analysis Specialization Ph.D. program, pending the receipt of evidence that the program has made specific improvements within three years.

The Board agreed with the site visit reports that there are commendable aspects to the doctoral program, especially as the program has historically been an effective training program with strong scholarly productivity. There are three areas in which improvements are needed, these overlap with the master's program and are below.

- Standard 2 – Curriculum. Specifically for item 2-107, the site visit report indicated the program met the standard and provided sample contracts; however, the Board was unable to determine if contracts were required for all experiential learning sites. The Board requests that the program continue to ensure each and every experiential learning site (regardless of its involvement in BACB fieldwork) has a signed agreement that specifies the expectations for all parties and ensures the protection of students.
- Standard 8 – Public Disclosure. In general, the program's website is not in compliance with all of the accreditation standards, as requested in items 1-102, 3-109 and 8-100 through 8-104. The Board appreciates the program's response and expects the website to be updated immediately to display the mission statement as it is reported in the self-study, outcomes data (or link to our published report), and accreditation status. Please ensure those required items are easily accessible from the main program page.
- Standard 9 – Degree Program. Specifically for item 9-102, the Board determined the Basic Behavior Analysis course content was unmet. According to the recent self-study application and site visit report, the program believes that ESSPED 8200 fulfills the requirement for 45 hours of basic content. The Board disagrees. Doctoral programs are required to have 90 hours of basic content therefore the program remains deficient in this area. The basic courses are intended to develop competence in understanding how principles of behavior are discovered and



described in the context of basic research. As such the focus of the course must be on experimental research designed to discover, characterize, or clarify fundamental principles of behavior. As you develop appropriate basic courses, you may wish to submit draft syllabi to the Board for review. This would help ensure that the courses you ultimately offer will meet Standard 9-102. As a reminder, the 45 hours of basic content in the master's program can count toward the 90 hours required in the doctoral program.

The site visitors also offered recommendations that you may consider as part of your ongoing efforts at improving the program, but are not required to be formally addressed within the scope of the deferral decision. This includes the administrative resources (Standard 5) and classification of core and associated faculty, and other contributors, in future annual reports and self-study applications (in Standard 6). The Board appreciates the collegial nature of your response to the site visit report, including the correction to the outcomes data (Standard 3). Further, the Board looks forward to the university's continued support of the program.

In accordance with item 3-1-103, from the *ABAI Accreditation Handbook*, the previous grant of accreditation of the doctoral program is automatically extended during the deferral period. **The self-study application must be submitted by April 1, 2025, and the site visit, report, and program response must conclude by December 31, 2025.**

The Board understands that this is not the decision you sought. The Board respects the programs at the Ohio State University, and its success in training quality graduates. By extending the accreditation of the doctoral program during the deferral period, the Board believes it has acted as generously as its governance document allows.

As the doctoral program remains accredited, the program is required to pay an annual sustaining fee as described in Title VII Section 7-1-104 of the *ABAI Accreditation Handbook*, and to remain in compliance with the Board's policies and procedures. As described above, regarding Standard 8, I would like to call special attention to three important policies related to public disclosure. Your program is required to:

1. share the program's accreditation status and display the Board's doctoral-level accreditation seal on the program's web site. (See the Board's *Policy on Public Disclosure of Accreditation Status*.) The program is not compliant with this requirement. Please ensure that the website is updated immediately.
2. display on your website a prominent link to the aggregate report of the program's student outcomes that is posted on the Board's website. The link to



your program's page and aggregate report is:

<https://accreditation.abainternational.org/apply/accredited-programs/the-ohio-state-university.aspx> (See Title IX, Chapter 3 of the *Accreditation Handbook*.)

3. submit an annual report and annual fee, normally due April 1 of each year, as described in Title VII of the *Accreditation Handbook*, using the form posted at <https://forms.gle/hjStiMjAu2FduRp79>. We received your 2021 annual report information – thank you. ABAI will issue the invoice for the 2022 annual sustaining fees.

The aforementioned policies can be found via the “Documents” tab at <https://accreditation.abainternational.org>. As program administrator, you should familiarize yourself with the materials in this section of the Board's website.

If your program assigns a new program administrator during this period, please notify me immediately so I can update our records. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me – I am available to help. I will be glad to discuss the Board's requirements with you and, if you would like, we can include Mike Perone, the Board Coordinator, in the discussion.

We look forward to the continued developments and improvements of the program.

Sincerely,

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Jenna Mrljak, Ph.D., BCBA
Director of Education
Association for Behavior Analysis International
ABAIaccreditation@ABAIInternational.org

cc: Michael Perone, Ph.D., ABAI Accreditation Board Coordinator