



March 20, 2025

Florida State University  
4750 Collegiate Drive  
Panama City, FL 32405

Dear Dr. Leah Koehler,

On behalf of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) Accreditation Board, I am pleased to inform you that the Board has granted **full accreditation through December 31, 2029**, to the Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis, on-campus program in the Department Psychology at Florida State University, Panama City.

Accreditation is granted to a program that meets the required standards, as represented by a level of operational integrity, financial sustainability, and effectiveness that offers a measure of confidence compatible with the length of the grant awarded. A five-year grant of accreditation is awarded to programs that meet the standards and for which the board has no substantive concerns about their ability to meet standards during the accreditation period. The program's accreditation status is granted based on a calendar year with expiration occurring at the end of the year.

The accreditation process is specifically designed to convey information about a training program's comprehensiveness, rigor, quality, and transparency. Its purpose is to promote quality control and continuous improvement. The Board extends its sincere appreciation to you and your colleagues for your success in helping to preserve the integrity of training in behavior analysis.

The site visitors commended the program on its consistently high certification exam pass-rates, commitment to servicing the community, and long-standing ABAI accreditation. Additionally, the site visitors noted the program's funding model, inclusive of tuition deferral and high rate of pay at practicum sites, as exemplary. The site visitors did not note any areas of required improvement; however, they made several recommendations. First, the site visitors recommended additional participation opportunities for students at the Tallahassee campus, which may be facilitated by a permanent faculty on-site and the incorporation of active student responding strategies. Furthermore, they suggested streamlining supervision and scheduling across the Panama City and Tallahassee campuses, which are situated across two time zones.



The Board agrees with the site visitors' assessment, and applauds the program on its breadth of coursework, which exposes students to different applications of behavior analysis, excellent certification pass rates, no attrition, and substantial student funding. The Board noted some areas requiring attention including program's website discrepancies (8-100), adequate faculty to support students (6-100), and the quality of thesis or equivalent projects (9-109).

During the grant of accreditation, the Board requests updates on the following standards:

- **Standard area 8 – Public Disclosure.** There was some confusion regarding information on the program's website, related to public disclosure requirements. The Board requires the program update their website by **June 1, 2025**, to clarify the following:
  - Current number of credit hours of the program
  - Credit transfer policy
  - Which faculty members serve as core faculty members of the program
  - The program's objectives
  - The thesis or equivalent project requirement (as the website currently states it is a "non-thesis" program)
- **Standard area 6 – Faculty.** The Board is supportive of the program's current searches for two additional faculty members, who will help to maintain the program's quality and rigor. The Board strongly encourages the program to consider hiring a faculty member with expertise in behavior analytic research to support opportunities for students to engage in research and potentially publish their findings. The Board requests an update by **April 1, 2026**, on the progress of both faculty searches.
- **Standard area 9 – Thesis or equivalent project.** The Board recognizes the program recently revised its requirements for the thesis or equivalent project to align with the guidance issued in 2023. The Board encourages the program to continue developing its requirements for an experimental thesis to improve the quality of projects. The Board requests access to all completed thesis or equivalent project documents completed over the next two years (between January 1, 2025, through April 1, 2027) by **April 1, 2027**.

Finally, the site visitors raised concern regarding the exit meeting and reported they were unable to share their full summary of the site visit due to resistance from meeting participants. The Board's hope is that site visits are a collegial and positive aspect of ABAI accreditation. To ensure transparency for future site visitors, the Board strongly encourages the program carefully consider the purpose of each site visit activity, to list the attendees of all meetings on the site visit schedule, and to notify site visitors if there is a change to the scheduled site visit activities.



The Board appreciates the collegial nature of your response to the site visit report and communication throughout the site visit rescheduling process. During this grant of accreditation, the program is required to pay an annual sustaining fee as described in Title VII Section 7-1-104 of the *Accreditation Handbook*, and to remain in compliance with the Board's policies and procedures. I would like to call special attention to three important policies related to public disclosure (Standard 8). Your program is required to:

1. share the program's accreditation status and display the Board's master's-level accreditation seal on the program's website. See the Board's *Policy on Public Disclosure of Accreditation Status*. The copy of the current version of the seal is included in the email.
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 webpage on ABAI's website, inclusive of your aggregate report, is: <https://accreditation.abainternational.org/apply/accredited-programs/florida-state-university,-panama-city.aspx> (See Title IX, Chapter 3 of the *Accreditation Handbook*)
3. submit an annual report and annual sustaining 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>. Your next annual report and sustaining fee are due April 1, 2025.

The aforementioned policies can be found via the "Documents" tab at <https://accreditation.abainternational.org>. Additionally, you may find our current fee schedule at <https://accreditation.abainternational.org/apply/fee-schedule.aspx>. As program coordinator, you should familiarize yourself with the information in these sections of the Board's website.

If your program applies for re-accreditation, please note it is the responsibility of the program to submit the self-study with the appropriate fees by April 1 of the last year of the current grant of accreditation. If your program wishes to apply for re-accreditation, the self-study, supporting documents, and application fee will be due April 1, 2029, with a site visit occurring prior to September 30, 2029. I will reach out to you the year prior to your final year of accreditation to notify you of this process.

Additionally, if your program assigns a new program coordinator 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 Dr. Ben Witts, the Board



Coordinator, in the discussion.

**Important Dates:**

- **Updates Due:** June 1, 2025, April 1, 2026, and April 1, 2027
  - Email to [abaiaccreditation@abainternational.org](mailto:abaiaccreditation@abainternational.org) on University letterhead.
- **Annual Reports and Annual Sustaining Fees Due:** April 1, 2025, April 1, 2026, April 1, 2027, and April 1, 2028
- **Updated Self-Study, Application Fees, and Annual Report Due:** April 1, 2029
  - **Note:** if your program would like to have a spring site visit, please submit the self-study by February 15.
  - **Note:** The annual report is due in 2029, however, ABAI does not charge a sustaining fee the year a program is applying for re-accreditation.
- **Site Visit for Re-accreditation Due:** September 30, 2029

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

Sincerely,

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Alyssa McElroy, Ph.D., BCBA, LBA  
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Association for Behavior Analysis International  
[ABAIaccreditation@ABAIInternational.org](mailto:ABAIaccreditation@ABAIInternational.org)

cc: Ben Witts, Ph.D., IBA, BCBA-D  
ABAI Accreditation Board Coordinator