

Request for Proposals: Microcredentials in Behavior Analysis

Introduction

The Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) is announcing a call for proposals to strengthen the quality of both the science and practice of behavior analysis by developing microcredentials that target foundational training in the behavior-analytic science. Individuals can earn microcredentials for demonstrating specific skills they have mastered.

Potential microcredentials could include (a) assessment of skills that individuals already possess (with no additional instruction provided) or (b) a combination of a programmatic learning experience followed by demonstration of the specific skill.

Only individuals from programs recognized by the ABAI Tiered Model of Education system may submit proposals.

Microcredentials Defined

A microcredential is an award based on a short, verifiable presentation that demonstrates that an individual has mastered a specific skill in a content area of behavior analysis. The skill must be observable and measurable. A series of microcredentials could also be awarded for demonstration of “sets” or **stacks** of related skills.

A microcredential usually takes the form of a digital image or badge that can be displayed on social media or other platforms such as Linked-In, or documented in a curriculum vita with a link to the proof. The image or badge is linked to the earner’s name, the achieved learner outcomes, the method of assessment, the date of achievement, the awarding entity, and perhaps other information. Badges are often, but not always, distributed by a third-party vendor (e.g., Accredible™, Credly™, Digitary™).

To earn a micro-credential, an individual must demonstrate competent performance of a skill, on demand, akin to the performance of an expert. Specifically, the individual may submit proof of competent performance through video records, written documents, audio recordings, or other performance-based demonstrations. These demonstrations would constitute a skill assessment that would be evaluated with a **rubric** developed by the micro-credential program designer.

Individuals can earn a microcredential by either submitting a demonstration of existing competence in a skill (without completing additional instruction), or by first participating in instruction before final demonstration of the skill. Note that proposals can be submitted for assessments only or assessments with associated learning modules.

To be considered for funding, the delivery of the microcredential must be based on evaluation of the observable, measurable behavior using a rubric to determine mastery of the skill. Individuals seeking a microcredential should be permitted to resubmit materials if they did not meet the criterion for a microcredential on the first or subsequent submissions.

A microcredential should have an established expiration date to ensure that individuals with microcredentials remain up-to-date on state-of-the-art knowledge or practices related to the micro-credential skill.

Examples of microcredentials

Because of their narrow scope, micro-credentials can be easily stated in verb-object format, such as

- shape behavior of a nonhuman animal
- compare and contrast radical behaviorism with methodological and teleological behaviorism
- fit a curve using an equation from quantitative theories of behavior to an appropriate data set
- identify possible confounding variables related to experiments about behavior
- compare and contrast contingency and temporal contiguity between events, as it relates to learning and behavior
- explain a selectionist approach, including selectionism at biological, behavioral, and cultural levels
- implement a latency-based functional analysis
- measure behavior using X software system
- graph data on the Standard Celeration Chart
- conduct a reinforcement preference assessment
- perform a concept analysis
- design a Precision Teaching program for a specific skill
- conduct an organizational needs assessment
- conduct a values clarification assessment during Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT) with an adult client
- identify antecedents and consequences in naturally occurring streams of behavior
- modify contingencies to reduce consumption of non-renewable energy

Note that some of these microcredentials can be sub-divided into sets or **stacks** of more specific skills, akin to a task or concept analysis of each of the above competencies. Note also that others could be members of a stack of related microcredentials. Preference will be given for proposals that develop stacks of related skills, each correlated with a specific microcredential in the related stack.

Preference will be given to submissions that include online/remote instruction that would be broadly accessible, “evening the playing field” for individuals who might otherwise have limited access to particular training programs or universities, and for members who live in remote areas. However, assessment-only and synchronous or live training will also be considered.

Non-examples of microcredentials

Microcredentials are **not** broad statements of competence such as “applied behavior analysis,” “autism,” “basic behavioral process,” or “instructional design.” Microcredentials are much narrower

in scope than typical recognitions of study endeavors like M.S. or Ph.D. degrees, and licenses or certifications like “BCBA” and “BCaBA.” Micro-credentials target more specific observable, measurable behavior change than most traditional Continuing Education Units (CEUs) that exist in our field. They are not time-based like many CEUs. As important as these traditional recognitions are, they do not concretely indicate an ability to engage in any specific skill.

Scope of Microcredentials

Microcredentials can be related to any sub-area of behavior analysis, such as education; organizational behavior management; adult or family clinical practice; experimental analysis of behavior; behavior pharmacology and neuroscience; applied animal behavior; autism; developmental disabilities; philosophical, conceptual, and historical issues, and community, social and sustainability issues. Microcredentials designed in any sub-area of behavior analysis will be given serious consideration. Preference will be given to stacks of micro-credentials that teach skills related to the experimental analysis of behavior or conceptual issues in behavior analysis.

Instructions

Structure of Submission Process

An on-line form is available for submitting proposals for micro-credential programs. The form is available at <https://saba.abainternational.org/>. The form has 10 sections, described below.

Sections:

I. Applicant Information

- A. Name of the organization/individual who will bear ultimate responsibility for delivering and maintaining the microcredential:
- B. Confirm that organization is already recognized in the ABAI Tiered Model of Education. List name of the program and tier of recognition.
- C. Confirm that the proposed microcredential is mastery-based and includes evaluation of an observable, measurable behavior using a rubric.
- D. Confirm that there is a plan for individuals who do not meet the mastery criterion on the first submission to have an opportunity to resubmit materials for further consideration.
- E. List all individuals working on the proposed microcredential and their role:
 - a. Developers:
 - b. Content area experts:
 - c. Micro-credential/badging experts (including expertise related to the badging system that will be used for the microcredential):
- F. Briefly describe existing infrastructure or knowledge on the team regarding development or implementation of microcredentials or other training/teaching procedures.
- G. Briefly describe the background of individuals on the team responsible for ensuring that the micro-credential is grounded in established knowledge about behavior analysis.

II. Micro-credential Pinpoint(s)

- A. Provide the title of the microcredential:
- B. Check which applies:
 - a. Assessment only
 - b. Assessment with related instruction
- C. Check which format(s) applies:

- a. Remote/online asynchronous
 - b. Remote/online synchronous
 - c. In-person synchronous
 - d. If multiple boxes are checked, elaborate on how multiple formats will be applied.
- D. List the skill(s) that you will evaluate in the proposed microcredential. The skill should be labeled using verb-action formats (“pinpoints”). List each skill as a separate pinpoint. Examples of pinpoints include: create fidelity data collection sheets, analyze a concept, identify naturally occurring contingencies. Nonexamples include: autism (doesn’t have an action verb), group contingencies (doesn’t have an action verb), analyze (doesn’t have an object), graphing (doesn’t have an object). If you are proposing a “stack” of related microcredentials, please describe the stack.
- E. Who is the primary audience(s) for the microcredential? Describe any necessary qualifications or skills that would be needed to be successful with the microcredential (i.e., prerequisite skills or knowledge).

III. **Significance**

- A. Provide a brief description of why the microcredential is needed or the purpose of the microcredential.
- B. Describe the scientific underpinning of the skill(s) that will be taught, being sure to cite relevant primary literature.
- C. Describe any similar or competing microcredentials or training opportunities that already exist.

IV. **Format and Reach**

- A. Check all that apply regarding the format of the microcredential.
 - a. Asynchronous, remote
 - b. Synchronous, remote
 - c. Synchronous, in-person
 - d. Other
- B. How will individuals learn about the microcredential?
- C. How many individuals are expected to complete the microcredential in a year?

V. **Instructional Approach**

- A. Which of the following will the microcredential include?
 - a. Assessment only
 - b. Assessment and instruction
 - c. Instruction only (note: instruction-only approaches would necessarily not include a way to demonstrate that the individual had mastered the skill, and thus would be ineligible for funding)
- B. If instruction will be included, describe the format of the instruction, linking instructional strategies to behavior-analytic, evidence-based instructional practices (e.g., behavioral skills training, interteaching, Direct Instruction, precision teaching, personalized systems of instruction) when possible. Other conglomerates of evidence-based teaching practices are also welcome.

VI. Assessment Approach

- A. Describe the plan for assessing learning outcomes. Provide clear description of what individuals completing the micro-credential will be expected to do and how they will submit evidence of mastery.
- B. Describe the proposed process for evaluating mastery performance, including:
 - i. Who will serve as evaluators, with information about the relevant expertise of the evaluators.
 - ii. How standards will be developed and assessed (e.g., scoring rubrics).
 - iii. How individuals will receive feedback on their performance and what the feedback will consist of.
 - iv. A plan for how to support learners who do not meet the mastery criterion on the first attempt, including the extent to which individuals who require additional training or attempts will be required to pay additional fees.

VII. Micro-credential Delivery

- A. Indicate how the awarded microcredentials and any related learner data will be delivered, stored, and managed, including whether a third-party vendor (e.g., Credly, Badgr) will be used.
- B. Describe and justify the duration of time for which an earned micro-credential will remain active and how “expired” microcredentials will be deactivated from individuals who had earned them.
- C. Indicate whether CEU would be offered in conjunction with the microcredential. If so, provide the organization and provider number.

VIII. Fee Structure

- A. Describe the proposed fee structure, including the expected cost of the microcredential to learners.
- B. If the microcredential will also result in CEU, indicate whether there will be any additional fees for the provision of the CEU.
Describe how funds will be made available to sustain the microcredential over time, including whether it will be self-sustaining or require additional supporting funds over time.

IX. Extent of Development

- A. Characterize the extent to which the assessment and, if applicable, training procedures associated with the proposed microcredential have been developed.
- B. Include pilot data or outcome data, if those data are available, or note that the materials have not yet been sufficiently developed to be tested.

X. Budget and Timeline

- A. What is the total amount requested for the project (not to exceed \$10,000).
Institutional/indirect costs are not permitted.
- B. Provide a line-item justification of the expenses.
- C. Budget must include costs of travel for a lead on the project to present about the credential, including outcome data, at an ABAI convention during or within one year following the project period.
- D. Describe the project period and expected timeline for project completion. Projects should be completed within 1 year of the start date.

Evaluation Criteria

To be considered, the proposal must be submitted by the deadline, from recognized members of ABAI accredited programs in its Tiered Model of Education system. The skills must be stated in verb-object form, and the proposal must include a plan that involves direct assessment of observable and measurable behavior. Proposals that do not meet these criteria will not be considered. Other evaluation criteria include:

- The extent to which the proposal demonstrates inclusion of individuals with appropriate knowledge and technical expertise.
- The potential “reach” of the project, with preference to projects that include broadly accessible online/remote instruction.
- The perceived importance of the skill for a broad array of behavior analysts. Microcredentials from any sub-area of behavior analysis can achieve high ratings. Funding preference will be given to proposals that address skills related to the experimental analysis of behavior or theoretical/conceptual issues in behavior analysis.
- Funding preference will be given to proposals that include “stacks” of microcredentials.
- The existing availability of infrastructure to support the project (e.g., access to badge management platforms, etc.).
- The extent to which the proposed budget matches the necessary scope of work.
- The perceived feasibility of the project, including the clarity and feasibility of assessment, initial instruction (if applicable), and remediation plans.
- The perceived likelihood that completing the microcredential will result in lasting, generalizable skill development for those who complete it.
- The potential sustainability of the microcredential over time.

Proposals will be evaluated with a scoring system that awards points for each of the criteria listed in the Evaluation Criteria bullets immediately above, corresponding to the criteria listed the related sections of your proposal. Scores will be arranged according to NIH scoring guidelines, with scores ranging from 1 to 9, where lower scores indicate more positive ratings.

Reviewers will consist of subject matter experts and individuals with expertise in instructional design or microcredentials.

Terms and Conditions

Ownership

The microcredentials developed as a result of the award will be owned and operated by the program or individual who develops them. The ABAI grant support must be credited in all microcredential materials supported by the award.

Timelines and Payout

Successful proposals must be completed within one year of the award. Funding will be distributed in parcels, with a portion issued at commencement of the project and a portion distributed after work is underway.

Indirect or Overhead Costs

Institutional, indirect, or overhead costs are not permitted.

Contact Information

Interested individuals with questions should contact info@abainternational.org.