



# YOUR COLLEGE **DECISION**

*Florida Institute of Technology*



## WHY GET A DEGREE IN **Behavioral Science?**

Behavioral science is the study of human behavior. It is a systematic critical investigation of the interactions among people and their environment in order to understand, predict and change behavior for personal wellness, social improvement and organizational effectiveness.

The field is diverse, offering a broad range of career paths, with many specializations in the areas of psychology and applied behavior analysis. This diversity gives graduates the advantage of developing a career in any number of industries including education, social service agencies, medical organizations, residential facilities, counseling firms and private practice.

As society and employers expand their interest in gaining deeper insight into human behavior, niche specialty areas continue to develop offering long-term career opportunity.

# BEHAVIOR SCIENCE DEGREE AND CAREER OPTIONS

Working in a behavioral science field demands an interest in the human condition, as well as the understanding and analysis of data. Degrees in behavioral science typically encompass the science of psychology, performance management and education. Using observation, interpretation, research and communication, behavioral scientists work to further understand human behavior and to modify social and individual behavioral problems.

Those in the behavioral sciences often choose to become psychological therapists, behavior analysts and social workers. However, graduates in the field are discovering a high demand for their skills in business, social and public policy, criminal justice and social networks, to name a few. Because of this, individuals must consider what level of education they should pursue, and what accreditation is applicable for their desired career path.

## WHAT EDUCATION DO YOU NEED?

### DOCTORAL DEGREE

Programs are research-based advanced study in the foundations of behavioral science as well as the methods of research and experimental design and analysis. Additionally, those practicing in the field of psychology can choose from the following doctorate options: Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.), Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Possible careers include:

- Private Practice (Psychology)
- Public Health and Public Policy Maker
- Researcher
- University Professor
- Neuro Psychologist
- Quantitative Psychologist
- Developmental Psychologist

### MASTER'S DEGREE

Programs allow students to choose an area of emphasis, along with corresponding curriculum, research experience, legal and ethical training and internship. Persons with a master's degree often work under the direction of a doctoral psychologist. Possible careers include:

- Behavioral Gerontologist
- Applied Behavior Analyst
- Outpatient Therapist (such as residential treatment centers)
- Autism Specialist
- Social Psychologist
- Government and Industry Data Analyst
- Human Resources

### BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Bachelor's degree programs typically give graduates proficiency in the analysis of human behavior and interactions, research experience and preparation for further study in social work or psychology. Possible careers include:

- Social Worker
- Assistant Social Services Caseworker
- Youth Services Counselor
- Human Resources

## ACCREDITATION & BOARD CERTIFICATION

Accreditation indicates that an educational program has met quality standards outlined by an accrediting agency, which assesses that schools are meeting the standards. Accreditation can be awarded to an institution and/or to a program. Beyond degree education, board certification is available for many fields in psychology and behavior analysis, which demonstrates competency in specialty areas and a commitment to the field.

To learn more about accreditation and board certification, consult the websites below.

*This is not a comprehensive list of organizations for every behavioral science career field. Please conduct research as needed for your particular area of expertise.*

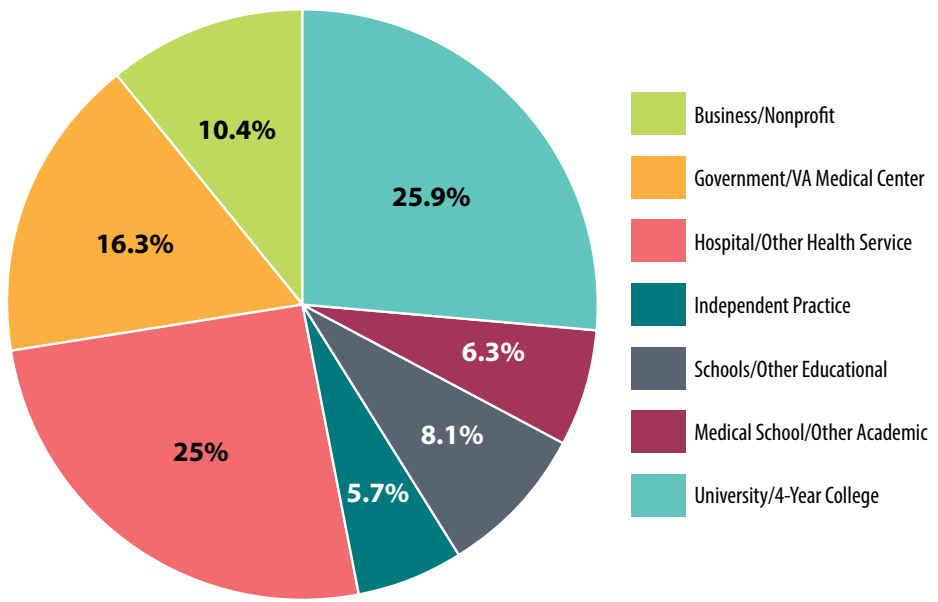
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [Association for Behavior Analysis International](#)
- [Behavior Analysis Accreditation Board](#)
- [Behavior Analysts Certification Board](#)
- [The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards](#)
- [American Board of Professional Psychology](#)
- [American Academy of Counseling Psychology](#)
- [American Academy of Clinical Psychology](#)



## BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE SPECIALTIES

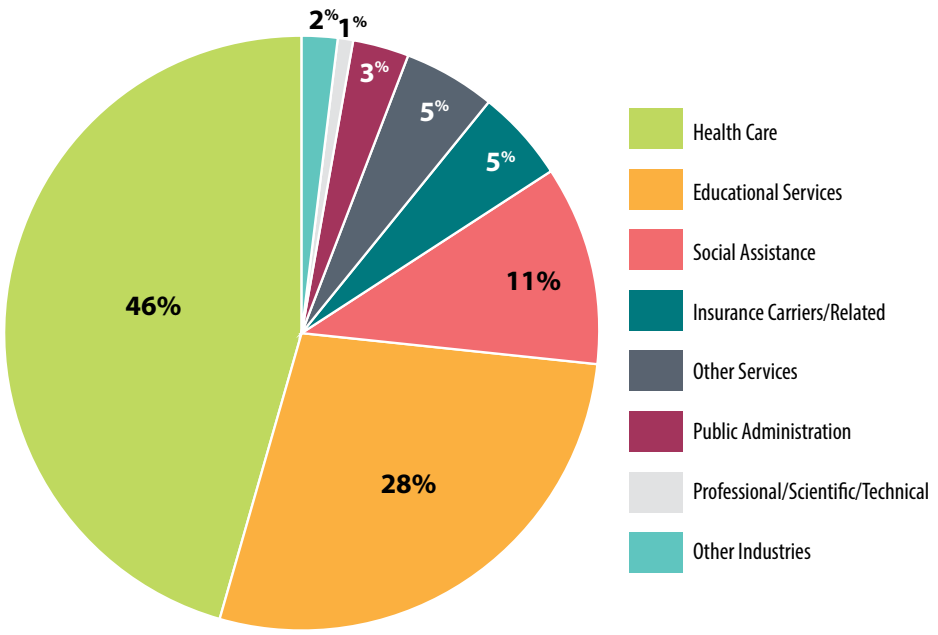
- Addiction
- ADHD
- Aging & Gerontology
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Autism
- Behavioral Gerontology
- Children & Teens
- Crime, Delinquency & Forensic
- Death & Dying
- Depression
- Disability
- Eating Disorders
- Gender & LGBT
- Hate Crimes
- Health, Sports & Fitness
- HIV & AIDS
- Human Centered Design
- Human Rights
- Human Resources
- Industrial
- Organizational
- Learning & Memory
- Marriage/Divorce
- Military & Veterans
- Organizational Behavior Management
- Personality Disorders
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Sexual Abuse/Addiction
- Sleep
- Speech Therapy
- Technology Addiction
- Trauma & Violence

### Where Psychologists Work



Source: <http://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/careers.aspx>

### Where Applied Behavior Analysts Work



Source: <https://bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/151009-burning-glass-report.pdf>





## CAREER OUTLOOK FOR PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

There are too many potential career paths in behavioral sciences to list them all and adequately cover the scope of the career and provide income projections in each career niche. Additionally, data from agencies such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics and industry associations is often a collective presentation of the industry, with career data grouped under a broader category. For purposes of this document, career information is detailed under the broader category of psychology and applied behavior analysis.

For more information on the scope of specialties available in each of these disciplines, visit:

[Careers in Psychology](#)

[Association for Behavior Analysis International](#)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook projects that overall employment of psychologists is expected to grow 19 percent through 2024. While job prospects should be best for individuals with doctoral degrees, both the American Psychological Association (*Demographics of the U.S. Psychology Workforce* report) and the 2015 Burning Glass Technologies report for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (*U.S. Behavior Analyst Workforce: Understanding the National Demand for Behavior Analysts*) cite increases in job growth in both fields of psychology and applied behavior analysis.

Why? Because **psychologists** are in demand to help individuals best manage emotional challenges, using an assortment of cognitive, interpersonal and behavioral therapies. This covers a wide range of applications including

work with the aging population, veterans suffering from war trauma, and individuals with autism and other disorders. As awareness and acceptance of the link between mental health and learning grows, so will jobs for school psychologists to work with special needs students or those with behavioral disorders.

Psychologists are also impacting the workforce. **Industrial-organizational (I/O) psychology** is a continually growing facet of psychology that focuses on assessing organizational aspects of the workplace. Using theory, research, statistics and quantitative models to understand the psychology of people at work, psychologists study the performance of employees and the organizational dynamics to analyze how behavior can be influenced or changed, which in turn leads to solutions that benefit the employees and the company. The business

community continues to look to psychologists who specialize in I/O to select and retain the best employees, increase organizational productivity and efficiency, develop criteria to evaluate performance of employees and maximize employee satisfaction.

Practitioners in **applied behavior analysis (ABA)** focus on the function of behavior, using principles of behaviorism to affect behavior—either to obtain a more positive outcome or to avoid a behavior. The use of applied behavior analysis has expanded steadily over the past 30 years due to the acceptance by insurance companies of it being a viable means of treatment for children suffering from autism and other behavioral issues such as ADHD and personality disorders.

Applied behavior analysts study and measure behavior to train individuals, support professionals,

continued ►

teachers and parents in the techniques and interventions that bring about positive behavior changes. This is a successful treatment for behavior issues in children and adults, those with special needs and mental disorders, kids with educational apathy, the elderly, athletes, industrial workers and those with criminal behavior.

In this field of behavioral science, demand has more than doubled between 2012 and 2014, with 85 percent of the job postings in health care, educational services and social assistance industries. Growth also comes as a result of increased advocacy and a growing awareness of treatment benefits.

Other job opportunities include:

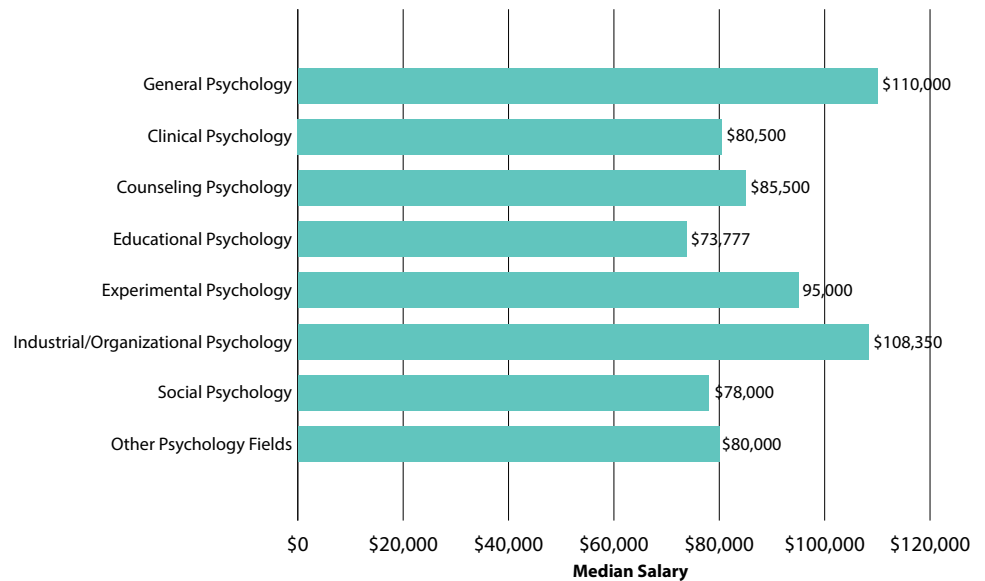
- Behavior Interventionist
- Behavior Clinician
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Managerial (health care and service provider agencies)

## PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SALARY EXPECTATIONS

### PSYCHOLOGY SALARIES

According to the National Science Foundation's 2013 National Survey of College Graduates:

- The median annual salary for psychologists was \$80,000.
- More than half (57 percent) of psychologists had salaries within the range of \$60,000 to \$120,000.
- The median salary for psychologists in research positions was \$87,000. Salaries were also dependent on level of education, with master's and Ph.D. professionals earning the highest salaries.



Source: <http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/2013-salaries/index.aspx>

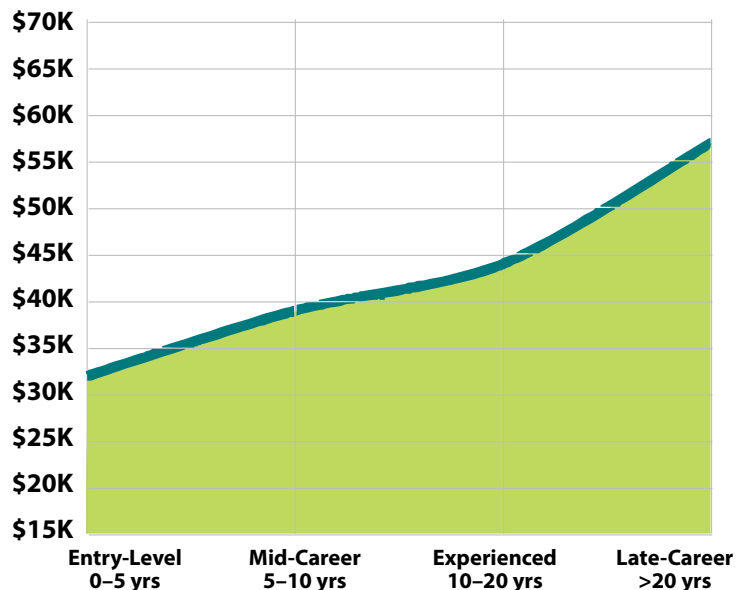
### BEHAVIOR ANALYST SALARIES

According to [Payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com):

- The median annual salary for applied behavior analysts is \$54,682, with growth to \$90,067.
- A master's degree in applied behavior analysis, psychology, special education or a related field is required.
- The field offers certification as an Applied Behavior Analysis Therapist (ABA), a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Certified Autism Specialist (CAS).

Source: [http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Applied\\_Behavior\\_Analysis\\_\(ABA\)\\_Therapist/Hourly\\_Rate](http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Applied_Behavior_Analysis_(ABA)_Therapist/Hourly_Rate)

### Pay by Experience Level for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapist



Median of all compensation by years of experience

# NEW CAREERS IN BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

## BEHAVIORAL GERONTOLOGY

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 13 percent of the population was over 65 years of age in 2010, with 10 percent of this population diagnosed with dementia. By 2050, 20 percent of the population will have reached 65 years of age. While the average lifespan has continued to increase, the attention to physical and mental issues associated with advanced age has not kept pace. In fact, the National Institute on Aging estimates that 5,000 full-time, doctoral-level geropsychologists will be needed by 2020 to accommodate the increasing demands of aging baby boomers.

As the elderly experience problems such as dementia, Alzheimer's disease, depression and anxiety along with general health issues, problematic behaviors also present themselves including hoarding, confusion, paranoia, apathy and decreasing personal hygiene, to name a few. These scenarios can set the stage for injury, abuse, fear, isolation and deteriorating health. A behavioral gerontologist is able to identify the environment related to problematic behaviors, apply a functional approach to the situation and uncover solutions without the use of drugs or punitive techniques. As the population continues to age, behavior analysts will have a wealth of job opportunities.

Median Salary: \$45,635 with growth to \$65,260



## ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Organizational behavior management is a subfield of applied behavior analysis that uses behaviorism to influence specific behaviors in the workplace, such as safety behaviors. Unlike industrial/organizational psychology, that uses psychological theories and principles to increase workplace culture and productivity, behavior analysts approach the workplace with an eye toward very explicit goals, using prediction and control of behaviors to make change.

This entails finding solutions to problematic workplace issues, building an environment of positive reinforcement or helping a business owner understand how to train

employees more effectively. Practitioners also address culture, motivation, decision making, and policies and procedures to address attitudes and behaviors that affect positive working relationships, instill ethics, build leadership and negotiate conflict.

Organizational behavior analysts are found in any number of industries, and may consult with a company or be a staff employee. Responsibilities typically include observation, analysis and recommendation of workplace improvements. The future shows no sign of job decline as corporations learn the benefits of behavior analysis in the workplace.

Median Salary: \$108,705

## AUTISM

Both psychologists and applied behavior analysts work with autistic individuals. However, as behavior analysis has expanded and been applied in different treatment areas, it has become widely recognized as a safe and effective treatment for autism, helping persons with the disorder enjoy a better quality of life, develop basic personal skills and succeed in an educational environment.

Working in this field affords an individual the chance to work closely with clients to design and oversee a treatment program that supports the entire family and their journey to successfully reach their goals. It involves teaching skills, self-control, the ability to maintain learned behaviors and reducing negative behaviors. Certified Applied Behavior Analysts are found working as consultants in private practice, in cooperation with a clinical psychologist, a member of an autism research and treatment center or in an educational environment.

The treatment of autism has grown over the past decade due to insurance companies providing coverage for treatment, new initiatives as a result of parent advocates and corporate support to raise money for autism research. In fact, because 1 in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder ([Centers for Disease Control](#)), and increasing treatment costs and needs for special education, autism support chapters, diagnostic and therapeutic research and treatment centers and service providers are popping up across the country focused on better understanding the disease and new, more effective treatment methodologies. Advocacy groups are out in force to impact public policy and even employers like Microsoft and Google are supporting an "Autism at Work" initiative that recruits adults on the spectrum with support and retention programs. These activities set the stage for career opportunities to be plentiful for individuals trained to treat those with autism.





## The Scott Center

Facilities like The Scott Center for Autism Treatment at Florida Tech in Melbourne, Florida, place an emphasis on research and training of its clinical personnel to provide the most advanced diagnosis and treatment programs for those individuals living with autism spectrum disorder. This affords graduate students with state-of-the-art training and supervision from doctoral-level faculty and the first professional experience as a psychologist or applied behavior analyst.



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**The Scott Center  
for Autism Treatment**



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