

AUTISM BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

To meet the growing need for qualified, highly trained providers of autism services and treatment, Saint Joseph's University offers a B.S. in Autism Behavioral Studies. This program offers a rigorous and comprehensive undergraduate major focusing primarily on medically related services and treatment of autism through extensive classroom education and training, as well as hands-on skill development and practice for mastery of classroom concepts. Students complete this major with the option of obtaining a Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst Certification (BCaBA).

The curriculum for the Autism Behavioral Studies Major is approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB), accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies in Washington, DC. Applied Behavior Analysis has been endorsed by many state and federal agencies, including state health departments and the U.S. Surgeon General. In order to receive BCaBA certification approval, the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) requires an approved Bachelor's degree in a health-related field. With a Bachelor's degree in Autism Behavioral Studies, completion of the required coursework and field hours, and successfully passing the BCaBA exam, students will obtain national certification as Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBA), graduating with a highly marketable credential to work in any area of the United States.

Need and demand

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number of individuals with autism has risen dramatically. Autism is now considered an urgent public health crisis, needing resources, funding and, most importantly, highly trained health professionals and therapists. Research has demonstrated that early, intensive intervention treatment services may greatly improve child development. Further, there is a significant need for adult services for individuals 21 years and older. As the rates of autism continue to climb and the field becomes more specialized, there is an increased demand for highly trained students who specifically focus on autism, especially in the use of evidence-based practices such as Applied Behavior Analysis.

Students majoring in Autism Behavioral Studies will benefit from a comprehensive program of study that includes a rigorous focus in Applied Behavior Analysis and behavioral techniques, biological issues in autism, navigating medical services, community-based advocacy, managing the population of individuals with autism, health policy in autism, coping with the stress of a child or family member with autism, coping methods for providers of autism services, long-term care, ancillary services and other related topics. This comprehensive approach is unique and is highly desirable for students interested in focusing specifically on autism services. These students go on to work in the field of autism as behavior analysts, occupational and physical therapists, speech pathologists, behavioral medicine specialists, health and hospital administrators, health policy makers and advocates and therapists, as well as other areas of medicine and public health.

Undergraduate

- Bachelor of Science in Autism Behavioral Studies (<https://academiccatalog.sju.edu/health-studies-education/autism/bs-autism-behavioral-studies/>)

Undergraduate Minor

- Autism Studies (<https://academiccatalog.sju.edu/health-studies-education/autism/minor-autism-studies/>)

Undergraduate Certificate

- Autism Studies Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (<https://academiccatalog.sju.edu/health-studies-education/autism/pb-autism-studies/>)