

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**M.A. CONCENTRATION IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE COUNSELING  
(CMHSAC)**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH  
80 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK NY 10011**

## INTRODUCTION

With the pressures of health care reform in general, and managed care in particular, there has been a growing interest at the State and National levels in standardizing and raising the educational and training standards for providers of substance abuse services. The Master of Arts degree in mental health/ and substance abuse services (CMHSAC) is a response to these developments and is intended to place students in an advantageous position for securing future employment throughout the substance abuse/mental health system.

In addition to providing a firm grounding in general psychology, the program is designed to allow students the with opportunity to satisfy the academic eligibility requirements for the Certified Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) examination by completing all of the required and optional CASAC –relevant courses offered through the CMHSAC program. The CASAC certificate is a credential offered by the New York State through the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS) to indicate that an individual has met the local and national standards for clinical practice in the substance abuse field. The certificate is granted on the basis of a combination of: Educational/academic training, relevant clinical/work experience, and successful completion of the CASAC exam (Appendix I).

Certified individuals are currently accorded professional status in most states and it has become increasingly difficult to secure certain types of clinical positions in the field without the benefit of a CASAC certificate or a comparable type of credential.

Although only three of the six CASAC-relevant courses currently offered under the auspices of the CMHSAC are considered requirements for the completion the concentration, there is a significant benefit to taking all of the courses. One major advantage lies in the fact that NYS OASAS has recently created the “CASAC Trainee Certificate” ( CASAC-T) as an intermediate level certification for those individuals who have completed a specific portion of the overall requirements for certification and intend to continue working towards full CASAC certification. The certificate will remain effective for a period of five years from the date that it is issued. During that time, CASAC trainees will be considered a “Quality Health Professional” (QHP) in terms of the mandated staffing mix of OASAS-licensed substance dependence programs, and thus immediately employable. One of the ways of becoming eligible for this designation is to complete the required 350 clock hours of academic training; something that can be accomplished by completing all of the required and optional CASAC –relevant courses offered through the CMHSAC program. In addition to CASAC-T eligibility, those who have completed the 350 hours of academic training will immediately be able to sit for the CASAC exam. Students will receive their scores and have up to five years to earn the required 2000 hours of work experience to obtain CASAC certification.

## WHO SHOULD CONSIDER THE CMHSAC

The CMHSAC was created to meet a number of curricular and programmatic needs in the psychology department at the New School for Social Research (NSSR). Specifically, it is a program that was designed to be particularly attractive and beneficial to:

- 1) Those students who do not intend to continue on to doctoral study but would like to significantly enhance their marketability after graduation;
- 2) Students who currently work with substance abusing or dually diagnosed populations and who would like to complement their practical experience with formal academic training and credentials; and
- 3) Eugene Lang seniors, NSSR M.A. and Ph.D. students who intend to enter into a career in the substance abuse field.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

*Admission to Program:* There are no separate requirements for admission to the CMHSAC program. All students who have been admitted to general M.A. study in the Psychology Department are also eligible to enroll in the CMHSAC. However, students will not be considered enrolled in the program until they have completed an enrollment form and submitted it to the Psychology Student Advisors' office. Blank copies of the enrollment form can be obtained from the advisors' office or on the CMHSAC website. There is also a blank form appended to the manual (Appendix II). There is no deadline for enrolling, and students are free to take any number of the required courses before submitting a formal application. However, students should be aware that until a formal application is submitted, they will not be eligible for fieldwork placements or able to register for the seminar on Ethics.

The CMHSAC program currently offers all of the courses necessary for CASAC eligibility, and does so in a way that also satisfies many of the M.A. and Ph.D. course requirements as well. Based on the existing strengths of the psychology program, as well as the current and anticipated needs within the field over the next five to ten years, the CMHSAC curriculum has been designed to emphasize the areas of dual diagnosis, assessment, relapse prevention, and program evaluation.

*Advising and Registration:* It is extremely important that students confer with the student advisors prior to registering for any of the courses offered in the CMHSAC.

*Course Requirements:* The CMHSAC degree requirements consist of a total of 30 Graduate credits, 9 of which are in the area of substance abuse. All of the courses are usually offered once a year during certain semesters. The three required courses for the CMHSAC are offered during the regular academic year.

## CMHSAC PROGRAM CURRICULUM

*\*Please refer to the New School for Social Research course catalog for descriptions of course content. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the requirements for the degree within two years.*

### A) Basic Distribution Requirements:

- a. *"A" Course Distribution Requirement : Three courses in General Psychology*
  - i. CMHSAC students must take Intro. to Cognitive Neuroscience as one of the three required "A" courses.
  - ii. Students who intend to apply to the doctoral program may wish to consider including "History & Systems" as an "A" course selection. (9 credits)
- b. *"B" Course Distribution Requirement : Adult Psychopathology and two other "B" courses in the area of either social, developmental or personality*
  - i. Students who intend to apply to the doctoral program may wish to consider including "Assessment of Individual Differences" as a "B" course selection.
  - ii. Students also on the clinical track may use Psychopathology III as their social "B" level courses (9 credits).

### B) Required Substance Abuse - Relevant Courses:

- a. Psychopathology III: Bio-social and Cognitive Theories of Addiction. *This course may be used to fulfill the social "B" level course* (3 credits)
- b. Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling (3 credits)
- c. Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling (3 credits)

### C) Required Courses for Students Intending to Apply to Doctoral Program:

- a. Assessment of Individual Differences (3 credits), if not taken as one of the "B" course distribution requirements
- b. History & Systems (3 credits), if not taken as one of the "A" course distribution requirements
- c. One M.A. level Research Methods course (3 credits)
- d. Introduction to Statistics & Research Design (3 credits)

**D) Effective Spring 2011, students who wish to satisfy the academic eligibility criteria for the CASAC trainee certificate and the CASAC exam will have to take the following additional courses:**

- a. Professional and Ethical Issues (1 credits)
  - i. This course ("E" course) also satisfies the professional issues course requirement for Ph.D. students in the clinical program.
- b. One free, 2-hour online training on Child Abuse Reporting provided by the New York State Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS). This training is typically completed during the Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling course and is offered through the following website:  
<http://www.nysmandatedreporter.org/default2.html>

*In short, students who wish to satisfy the academic eligibility criteria for the CASAC trainee certificate (and the academic eligibility requirements for the CASAC exam) will need to take 1 additional CASAC relevant credit and a 2-hour online course free of charge.*

*CASAC-Relevant Courses Taken Elsewhere:* Students should bear in mind that they are free to supplement the CASAC-relevant courses of the CMHSAC program with CASAC-relevant courses offered at other institutions. Although courses from other institutions cannot be used to fulfill the requirements for the CMHSAC degree, they can be used in conjunction with any of the CASAC-relevant courses taken in the CMHSAC program to satisfy the CASAC Trainee certificate eligibility requirements. Since OASAS has strict guidelines regarding the content distribution of the CASAC curriculum, students who are considering the possibility of taking CASAC courses at another institution should consult with the student coordinator or a member of the CMHSAC faculty prior to doing so.

*Eligibility for admission to the Doctoral Program:* It is important to reiterate and emphasize the fact that electing to pursue a CMHSAC degree does not in any way preclude a student from applying for admission to the Doctoral program. CMHSAC students who wish to apply to the doctoral program are subject to the same admissions requirements that apply to those enrolled in the general M.A. These requirements include: a satisfactory grade-point average; passing the comprehensive exam; successfully passing both a M.A. level research methods course and the "Assessment of Individual Differences" course; and completing the elementary statistics requirement.

*Please note the following caveats:*

- 1) Given the possibility that some students will feel disadvantaged in their ability to take some of the so-called "comps -relevant" courses as electives, students are strongly encouraged to audit as many comps-relevant courses as their schedule allows.
- 2) The one-credit Ethics course and the online, two-hour Child Abuse Reporting training are NOT requirements for the CMHSAC, but are necessary for fulfilling the academic requirements for CASAC eligibility.
  - a. Consequently, those students who wish to complete all of the academic requirements for the CASAC will need to take the Ethics course, thus increasing their total credits to 31, along with the free, 2-hour online training on Child Abuse Reporting.
- 3) Students who wish to apply for admission to the clinical Ph.D. program will also have to take the Research Methods, Intro to Stats & Research Design, and History & Systems courses. Thus, they will not take elective courses but instead will complete one additional "A" level course.
- 4) The Adult Psychopathology course is not part of the required CMHSAC curriculum but it is required for the CASAC eligibility and is also part of the Clinical M.A. track.

## CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

Supervised clinical placements at Beth Israel and other facilities are available to eligible students in the program. Although participation in such placements is not a requirement for the degree, hands-on clinical exposure, either through opportunities at the student's place of employment, the New School - Beth Israel Center for Clinical Training and Research, or at a similar type of facility, is strongly encouraged. The goals of field work experiences in the program are to:

- A) Introduce and orient students to professional work in varied substance abuse treatment and research settings
- B) Provide supervised practical experiences and promote the development of students' clinical skills
- C) Encourage the integration of academic work with practical experience

Students will not be eligible for placements until they have been formally approved for such a placement by the Assistant Director of the program. It should also be understood that there are limits to the number of students who can be accommodated at placement sites at any given time. Consequently, there will be times when there will be more applicants than there are slots available at a particular site. Nonetheless, in terms of Level I Fieldwork, (see below for description) every effort will be made to insure that all eligible candidates are accommodated.

*Application process:* This consists of two elements. First, all applicants for placement must be NSSR M.A. level students who have completed Psychopathology III with a grade of B or higher and must be enrolled in or have taken one or both of the counseling courses when doing fieldwork.

Second, the enrollment form must be completed and returned to the student advisors' office. The information contained in the enrollment form, in conjunction with the student's performance during the required courses, serves as the basis for placement decisions.

*Structure:* CMHSAC field work is composed of two levels of experience.

- Level I field work is designed to familiarize students with varied substance abuse treatment/research settings and professional roles, and to provide introductory clinical experiences with individuals experiencing substance-related problems.
- Level II field work is designed to provide students with more in-depth clinical experiences (e.g., co-leading groups, conducting psychosocial intakes, writing treatment plans, and possibly following individual cases depending on the particular site).

*Possible Fieldwork Sites:*

- Beth Israel Rehab unit, Stuyvesant Square, NYC
- ACQC: AIDS Center of Queens, Jamaica, NY
- The Center- LGBT Community Center CARE Recovery (CCR), 13<sup>th</sup> St. & 7th Ave., NYC
- Realization Center, Union Square, NYC
- Exponents, 26<sup>th</sup> St., NYC
- Odyssey House, East Harlem, NYC
- Addiction Institute Roosevelt Hospital, 59<sup>th</sup> St. & 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., NYC
- Daytop Manhattan Outpatient Clinic, 8th Ave. & 35th St., NYC

*\*Please note that the number of available slots will vary from year to year because the sites also cater to students from other programs.*

## **FIELDWORK SUPERVISION**

CMHSAC students participating in fieldwork through the CMHSAC program are supervised by on-site clinical and research supervisors as well as by CMHSAC Faculty. On-site supervision may be provided by Certified Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC's), Social Workers, Psychologists, and/or psychiatrists, depending on the nature of the fieldwork placement and the students' activities. CMHSAC Faculty will also provide group/individual supervision or consultation to fieldwork students. This supervision will take place at The New School for Social Research. The primary contact in this regard is the CMHSAC Program Assistant Director, Dr. Jenifer Talley (TalleyJ@newschool.edu).

*Evaluations:* In addition to ongoing feedback provided during regularly scheduled supervision, fieldwork supervisors will formally evaluate students (see Appendix IV) at the end of their placements. This evaluation form will be returned to the CMHSAC Assistant Director once completed. Students are also encouraged to stay in regular contact with CMHSAC Faculty regarding their fieldwork experiences.

## **DIRECTORY**

The following is a listing of the names, titles and locations of the various individuals who are associated with the CMHSAC program, either directly or indirectly, in the roles of teachers, supervisors, and administrators. Specific questions about the program should always be directed to the student advisors, the CMHSAC student coordinator, Hillary Levinson, and/or to Dr. Talley.

### The New School for Social Research Faculty

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### Student Program Coordinator

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**Appendix I: DESCRIPTION OF CASAC REQUIREMENTS**

In a recent and important development, the New York State Office of Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) has made it possible for CMHSAC graduates to sit for the CASAC exam immediately following completion of the program which provides the 350 hour Educational Requirements for CASAC eligibility (Intro & Advanced Substance Abuse courses, Path 3, Adult Path, Ethics and a 2-hour online Mandated Child Abuse Reporting training). A certificate documenting completion of the 350 hour CASAC program can be issued to CMHSAC graduates (contact the Student Coordinator for more information). Please note that as a result of this change, work experience may be acquired later.

Graduates from the CMHSAC may take the exam, receive their scores but will not be granted CASAC certification until they have completed the required 2000 hours of work experience. They will, however, be eligible upon graduation from the CMHSAC to apply for a CASAC-Trainee (CASAC-T) certificate.

See Student Coordinator for most recent description. Also available at New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) website:

<http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/sqa/credentialing/CASACCover.cfm>

**Appendix II: CMHSAC Enrollment form****CMHSAC Enrollment Form***[Please complete and return to the Student Advisors]*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ SOC.SEC.#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the following CMHSAC courses have you taken?**

<u>At The New School for Social Research</u>	YR / Semester
Adult Psychopathology	[ ] _____/_____
Psychopathology III	[ ] _____/_____
Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling	[ ] _____/_____
Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling	[ ] _____/_____

**Please answer the following:**

Do you wish to be considered for clinical placements at Beth Israel and other affiliated sites?      yes [ ]    no [ ]

What times of the week would you be available for a clinical placement? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an M.A. from another institution?    yes [ ]    no [ ]

Do you intend to pursue a doctoral degree in psychology?    yes [ ]    no [ ]

Are you currently employed?      FT [ ]    PT [ ]    Not employed [ ]

Are you employed at either a mental health or substance abuse facility?    yes [ ]    no [ ]

Briefly describe any prior research and/or clinical experience.

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Advisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director/Assistant Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_



### APPENDIX III: Recommended Course Sequences

30 credits total (31 credits with CASAC eligibility).

CMHSAC Track	CMHSAC & Clinical Track
<b>Year 1</b> <i>Fall Semester</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proseminar</li> <li>2. Adult Psychopathology</li> <li>3. Psychopathology III</li> <li>4. Intro. to Sub. Abuse Counseling</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proseminar</li> <li>2. Adult Psychopathology</li> <li>3. Psychopathology III</li> <li>4. Intro. to Sub. Abuse Counseling</li> </ol>
<i>Spring Semester</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advanced Issues in Sub Abuse Counseling</li> <li>2. A-Level course (History &amp; Systems, Visual Perception, or Cognitive Psychology)</li> <li>3. A-Level course (can be taken in Year 2)</li> <li>4. Child Abuse Reporter Training (2hr free online session, CASAC only)</li> <li>5. Level I Fieldwork (optional)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advanced Issues in Sub Abuse Counseling</li> <li>2. History &amp; Systems</li> <li>3. A-Level course (can be taken in Year 2)</li> <li>4. Child Abuse Reporter Training (2hr free online session, CASAC only)</li> <li>5. Level I Fieldwork (optional)</li> </ol>
<b>Year 2</b> <i>Fall Semester</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intro. to Cognitive Neuroscience</li> <li>2. Elective course (see advisor for options)</li> <li>3. Level II Fieldwork (optional)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intro. to Cognitive Neuroscience</li> <li>2. Intro. to Stats &amp; Research Design</li> <li>3. Level II Fieldwork (optional)</li> </ol>
<i>Spring Semester</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A-Level course</li> <li>2. B-Level course (Assessment of Individual Differences recommended)</li> <li>3. Ethics (1 credit, CASAC only)</li> <li>4. Level II Fieldwork (optional)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research Methods</li> <li>2. Assessment of Individual Differences</li> <li>3. Ethics (1 credit, CASAC only)</li> <li>4. Level II Fieldwork (optional)</li> </ol>

**APPENDIX IV EXTERNSHIP EVALUATION FORM**

**The New School for Social Research  
Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling  
Externship Evaluation Form**

Extern: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Placement: Start Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Evaluation Completed on (date): \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*Please rate the extern's performance in comparison with that of other externs at the same externship level you have supervised, in each of the following areas:*

1= Needs Improvement; 2= Adequate; 3= Good; 4= Very Good; 5= Excellent

**Therapeutic Skills**

Clinical Diagnosis & Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Individual Interventions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Group Interventions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Reporting & Record Keeping	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Treatment Planning & Referrals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Crisis Management	1	2	3	4	5	NA

**Presentational Skills**

Quality of oral reports	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Quality of written reports	1	2	3	4	5	NA

**Professional Development**

Ability to use supervision appropriately	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Relations with staff and other trainees	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Understanding of ethical standards	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Responsibility for timely work completion	1	2	3	4	5	NA

<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
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**Narrative Summary**

Please describe the extern's strengths:

Please comment on the extern's weaknesses:

Suggestions for further preparation:

Comments by extern on evaluation:

Supervisor's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_