

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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

(CMHSAC)

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
GRADUATE FACULTY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
65 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK NY 10003**

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 (NYSOASAS) 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 (see the attached NYSOASAS description of the CASAC requirements). 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 NYSOASAS has recently created the “CASAC Trainee Certificate” 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 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, students.

Another reason for pursuing CMHSAC lies in the fact that individuals with M.A. degrees in fields such as psychology, are required to complete only one year (rather than the usual two years) of paid clinical/work experience in order to become eligible to sit for the CASAC exam. Consequently, students who are currently working in the substance abuse field, or have done so in the past, may be eligible to sit for the exam immediately upon completion of the program. However, as noted above, the Trainee Certificate permits students with little or no paid clinical experience to seek and obtain employment in the field, provided that they have completed the CASAC academic requirements. (See appendix II for the “Revised Process for Counselor Credentialing” notice from OASAS)

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER THE CMHSAC

The CMHSAC was created to meet a number of curricular and programmatic needs in the psychology department at the Graduate Faculty. 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) 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 from one of the co-directors. There is also a blank form appended to the manual (Appendix III). 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 at the New School - Beth Israel Center for Clinical Training and Research.

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. 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 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. The three required courses for the CMHSAC are offered during the regular academic year.

The specific program curriculum is as follows (For 2001-2002 academic year only):

A. Basic Distribution Requirements.

- [*"A" course distribution requirement*] : Three courses in the General Psychology. CMHSAC students must take Intro. to Cognitive Neuroscience as one of the three required "A" courses. Those students who intend to apply to the doctoral program may defer taking the course until after gaining admission to doctoral level study. However, students who fail to gain admission to the doctoral program must take Intro. to Cognitive Neuroscience in order to graduate with a CMHSAC degree. (9 credits)
- [*"B" course distribution requirement*] : Psychopathology I and II and two other "B" courses in the area of either social, developmental or personality. Students who intend to apply to

the doctoral program may wish to consider including “Assessment of Individual Differences” as a “B” course selection. (12 credits).

B. Required Substance Abuse - Relevant Courses.

- Psychopathology III: Bio-social and Cognitive Theories of Addiction. (3 credits)
- Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling (3 credits)
- Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling (3 credits)

C. Students who intend to apply for admission to the Doctoral Program are also required to take:

- Assessment of Individual Differences [If not taken as one of the “B” course distribution requirements. This requirement applies only to applicants to the Clinical Program] (3 credits)
- One M.A. level Research Methods course (3 credits).
- Statistics I [If exemption exam is not taken] (3 credits)

[Refer to the Graduate Faculty course catalog for descriptions of course content]

Students are encouraged to complete the requirements for the degree within two years.

D. Effective Fall 2002, those 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:

- Professional and Ethical Issues (1 credits)
This course (“E” course) will satisfy the professional issues course requirement for Ph.D. students in the clinical program.

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.

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 advisors 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 an 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 admission 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.

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 enrolled in the CMHSAC will be permitted to defer the “Introduction to Physiological Psychology” requirement until after completion of the comprehensive exam. However, it should be understood that completion of the “Introduction to Physiological Psychology” course is a requirement of the CMHSAC, and can only be deferred by gaining admission to the doctoral program. Students who fail to gain admission to the doctoral program or who choose not proceed beyond the M.A., will not receive a CMHSAC degree until they have fulfilled the physiological psychology requirement.

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:

- Introduce/orient students to professional work in varied substance abuse treatment and research settings;
- provide supervised practical experiences and promote the development of students’ clinical skills;
- encourage the integration of academic work with practical experience

Students will not be eligible for placements at Beth Israel (or other sites) until they have been formally approved for such a placement by a Co-Director of the program and/or the Coordinator of Substance Abuse Training at the New School - Beth Israel Center for Clinical Training and Research. It should also be understood that like all good things, there are limits to the number of students that can be accommodated at Beth Israel at any given time. Consequently, there will be times when there will be more applicants than there are slots available at the Beth Israel 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 within the Beth Israel site.

Application process: This consists of two elements. First, all applicants for placement must be interviewed by one of the CMHSAC faculty. These interviews are conducted to insure that students are adequately prepared and to identify future placements that best fit student needs and interests. 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 interview data, serves as the basis for placement decisions.

Structure:

CMHSAC field work is composed of three 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 people experiencing substance related problems.

Level II field work is designed to enable students to work over an extended period of time (e.g., six months) in a substance abuse treatment program or clinical research project with onsite supervision. Finally, Level III field work experiences are reserved for doctoral level students who have completed Levels I and II, and are currently enrolled in the core clinical sequence. Level III is intended to allow students to assume a higher level of clinical responsibility in a substance abuse clinical/clinical research setting.

Level I: Clinical Interviewing for Substance Abuse Programs

All students who apply and are accepted for field work in the CMHSAC program will participate in the Level I experience, which will take place through the New School - Beth Israel Center for Clinical Training and Research. This will be a 5-6 week (one day a week) rotation, in which students will observe and assist with the intake process for Beth Israel Substance Abuse programs (e.g., Stuyvesant Square).

Each student will be expected to conduct a clinical interview (under supervision) to assess and describe a client's substance related problems and related clinical issues. (For example, this may involve exploring the person's substance use history in detail.) Students may also administer structured and semi-structured assessment tools to help understand and describe the patient's difficulties. Students will be expected to write a clinical summary which will be used to assist with dispositional decisions, diagnosis, and subsequent clinical work, and to formulate a case conceptualization.

Level I Field Work will take place in the Spring semester when students are enrolled in the Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling course. Students will be eligible for participation in Level I field work only after having formally enrolled in the CMHSAC program and completed at least one substance abuse course at the Graduate Faculty (i.e., Psychopathology III or Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling). Moreover, unless a student has had significant clinical experience in the field, he/she is strongly urged to take at least one other CASAC-relevant course as early on in the program as possible.

Students may elect, with permission from the supervisor (Dr. Karen D'Avanzo), to participate in a second 5 week Level I Field Work experience to enhance their comfort and familiarity with substance abuse clinical/research work.

Level II: Extended Field Placement

Extended field Placements will be arranged for selected students who have successfully completed the Level I Field Work and have obtained a grade of at least a "B" in both Psychopathology III and Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling. (Note that "successful completion" means a "satisfactory" rating by the field work supervisor, Dr. D'Avanzo).

Extended Field Work Placements will generally take place in the second year of the CMHSAC program. Students will be expected to participate for a minimum of 8 hours a week for a period of 6 months.

Students will be placed in various treatment and clinical research settings including substance abuse treatment programs at Beth Israel Hospital (e.g., Stuyvesant Square 28 day Rehab. Program, Stuyvesant Square Partial Hospital Program, Detoxification Programs, Outpatient Substance Abuse Program, Dual Diagnosis Inpatient Unit, substance abuse clinical research programs, etc.) and other treatment facilities (e.g., Smithers, NYU Division of Substance Abuse Services, etc.)

Students' activities will depend upon the student's prior clinical experiences, skills and degree of comfort, but will typically involve clinical intake interviews, semi-structured assessments, observing or co-leading groups, participation in milieu programs, or short term focused individual interventions

or counseling. (Note that the possibility to work as an individual counselor will depend upon the nature of the placement, the student's level of experience/skill, and the time constraints of the placement.)

Students will be assigned an "on-site supervisor" who works at the placement site. Students will also meet with a supervisor in the New School CMHSAC Program (Dr. Todman or Dr. D'Avanzo).

Level III: Post M.A. Placement

Level III Field Work experiences are reserved for doctoral level students who have completed Levels I and II, and who are currently enrolled in the core clinical sequence. Level III is intended to allow students the opportunity to assume a higher level of clinical responsibility in a substance abuse clinical/clinical research setting (e.g., as an individual or group therapist in the Beth Israel Outpatient Substance Abuse Program). These placements will be determined on the basis of student interest and availability.

Evaluations:

In addition to ongoing feedback provided during regularly scheduled supervision, supervisors will formally evaluate students at regular intervals (e.g., after 2 months and at the end of a six month rotation). At these same intervals, students will also be asked to evaluate their field work placements and supervisors.

Description of Substance Abuse Services at Beth Israel.

Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment Services

This unit is a new development within the Psychiatry Department at Beth Israel. It serves primarily non-schizophrenic, dually diagnosed (i.e., mentally ill, substance abusers) patients.

Stuyvesant Square

This is a continuum of treatment services that include: a 28 day inpatient drug rehabilitation program for chemically dependent individuals; a partial hospital program; evening groups; specialized groups such as Life Style Modification groups and Growth groups; and individual counseling.

Alcohol and Drug Detoxification Service

This is a voluntary short term inpatient program for medically supervised withdrawal from alcohol, cocaine, heroin, methadone, and other opiates.

Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program (MMTP)

This is a city-wide network of clinics that provide methadone maintenance services to opiate dependent individuals.

Training Opportunities at Other Sites

Smithers Alcoholism Treatment and Training Center
Contact Person: Joanne Fishman, Ph.D.

NYU Medical Center/ Department of Psychiatry/ Division of Substance Abuse
Contact Person: Robert Maslansky, M.D.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Beth Israel hosts a number of clinical research programs related to substance abuse. Depending upon the student's level of experience and interests, placements within the various projects can be arranged.

DIRECTORY

The following is a listing of the names, titles and locations of the various individuals who are associated with the program, either directly or indirectly, in the roles of teachers, supervisors, administrators etc. Specific questions about the program should always be directed to the student advisors and/or to Drs. Todman, Levin or D'Avanzo.

GRADUATE FACULTY

- McWelling Todman, Ph.D. Co-Director and Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
Office: 344
Phone: (212) 229-5763
E-Mail: TodmanM@newschool.edu

- Karen D'Avanzo, Ph.D. Coordinator of Substance Abuse Training at the New School - Beth Israel Center for Clinical Training and Research and Assistant Professor in Psychology
Office: Graduate Faculty/Psychology
Phone:
E-Mail: Davanzo@newschool.edu

- Polly Scarvalone, Ph.D. Director of the New School - Beth Israel Center for Clinical Training and Research and Lecturer in Psychology
Office: Fierman Hall, BI
Phone: (212)420-4485
E-Mail: PScarvalone@Bethisraelny.org

- Chris Muran, Ph.D. Director of Psychology Beth Israel Center for Clinical Training and Research and Lecturer in Psychology
Office: Fierman Hall, BI

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Appendix I: DESCRIPTION OF CASAC REQUIREMENTS

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

Appendix II: CMHSAC Enrollment form

Enrollment Form

M.A. in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling (CMHSAC)

[Please complete and return to the Student Advisors]

PART 1

NAME: _____

STUDENT ID#: _____ SOC. SEC.#: _____

Which of the following CMHSAC courses have you taken:

<u>At the Graduate Faculty</u>	<u>_YR / Semester</u>
Psychopathology I	[] _____/_____
Psychopathology II	[] _____/_____
Psychopathology III	[] _____/_____
Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling	[] _____/_____
Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling	[] _____/_____

PART B.

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

[Note: An interview with one of the co-directors or
the coordinator is required. Enrollment in the
CMHSAC does not guarantee
a clinical placement at Beth Israel.]

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

APPENDIX V: RECOMMENDED COURSE SEQUENCE FOR CMHSAC
 Effective Fall 2004/2005

YEAR 1

GRADUATE FACULTY

FALL	PSYCHOPATHOLOGY I (B/c)	(3 CREDITS)	
	PSYCHOPATHOLOGY III (B/s&c)	(3 CREDITS)	
	INTRO. TO SUB. ABUSE COUNSELING	(3 CREDITS)	[9 CREDITS]
SPRING	PSYCHOPATHOLOGY II (B/c)	(3 CREDITS)	
	INTRO. TO PHYSIO. PSYCHOLOGY (A) OR OTHER "A" COURSE IF DEFERRED.	(3 CREDITS)	
	ADVANCED ISSUES IN SUB. ABUSE COUNSELING	(3 CREDITS)	[9 CREDITS]

LEVEL I FIELDWORK PLACEMENT (OPTIONAL)

YEAR 2

FALL*	ONE "A" COURSE	(3 CREDITS)	
	<i>LEVEL II FIELDWORK PLACEMENT (OPTIONAL)</i>		
	ONE ELECTIVE COURSE	(3 CREDITS)	[6 CREDITS]
SPRING*	PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES (E)	(1 CREDITS)**	
	ONE "A" COURSE	(3 CREDITS)	[7 CREDITS]
	ONE "B" COURSE (Assessment of Individual Differences recommended)	(3 CREDITS)	

LEVEL II FIELDWORK PLACEMENT (OPTIONAL)

* = Students who wish to apply to the Doctoral Program are encouraged to take or audit additional comps-relevant courses during the Fall and Spring semesters of Year 2.

**= Optional CASAC-relevant course for students who wish to fulfill the CASAC eligibility requirements.

