INTRODUCTION

The Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling (CMHSAC) is an optional academic and clinical training program offered in conjunction with the MA in General Psychology. The Concentration provides students with a unique foundation in the treatment of substance use and behavioral addictions. Moreover, CMHSAC employs a harm reduction orientation, placing this program at the cutting edge of training in the treatment of substance misuse.

There has been 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 Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling (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 and mental healthcare systems.

Providing a firm grounding in general psychology, the CMHSAC also offers students an opportunity to pursue the New York State Certified Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) credential. The CASAC credential is offered by 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 credential is granted on the basis of a combination of educational training, relevant clinical/work experience, and successful completion of the CASAC exam. The CMHSAC curriculum satisfies the 350-hour educational and training requirements enabling students to apply for CASAC Trainee certification (CASAC-T) and to sit for the CASAC examination. (See Appendix A for CASAC requirements.)

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER THE CMHSAC

The Concentration may be a useful option for:

1) Students who currently work with substance using or dually-diagnosed populations, who would like to complement their practical experience with formal academic training and credentials.
2) Students who may not go on to doctoral work and would like to enhance their marketability after graduation by being eligible to obtain the CASAC-T credential.
3) Students who intend to enter a career in the substance abuse field or plan to work with dually diagnosed patients. This includes Eugene Lang Seniors and BA/MA students.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Admission to CMHSAC: All students who have been admitted to the General MA Program in the Psychology Department are also eligible to enroll in the CMHSAC. There are no separate requirements for admission to the CMHSAC program.

Doctoral students are also strongly encouraged to take CMHSAC classes to prepare to work with clients with substance use disorders.

Students formally enroll in the CMHSAC by completing an enrollment form and submitting it to the Assistant Director of the CMHSAC, who then submits it to the Psychology Student Advisors’ office. The enrollment form is provided in the Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling class, and the deadline to submit the form is October 1st (see Appendix B). Formal enrollment in the CMHSAC is required to be eligible for fieldwork placements or to be able to register for the Professional Issues and Ethics course.

The CMHSAC program currently offers all of the courses necessary for CASAC eligibility, while also satisfying MA and PhD 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 harm reduction psychotherapy, co-occurring disorders, assessment, motivational interviewing, mindfulness-based interventions, 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 and to take them in the recommended sequence.

**Course Requirements:** The CMHSAC degree requirements consist of a total of 31 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.

**CMHSAC PROGRAM CURRICULUM**

Please review the New School for Social Research’s Department of Psychology’s [course catalog](#) for descriptions of course content. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the requirements for the degree within two years.

Students wishing to earn the MA in General Psychology with a Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling must enroll in the following courses. (Courses in red are CMHSAC specific courses taken in addition to the other MA required coursework)

- GPSY 6109 Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling
- GPSY 5155 Adult Psychopathology
- GPSY 6112 Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling
- GPSY 6156 Psychopathology III: Biosocial and Cognitive Theories of Addiction
- GPSY 7011 Professional Issues and Ethics
- GPSY 6101 Introduction to Cognitive Neuroscience
- GPSY 5120 Social Psychology
- GPSY 6133 Introduction to Statistics and Research Design
- Cognitive Psychology, as satisfied by one of the following:
  - GPSY 5110 Introduction to Cognitive Psychology
  - GPSY 5102 Visual Perception and Cognition
  - GPSY 6107 Language and Thought
  - GPSY 6427 Language and the Brain
- Developmental Psychology, as satisfied by either:
  - GPSY 6155 Developmental Psychology
  - GPSY 6281 Development and Psychopathology, which is strongly recommended
- 1 additional elective course (3 credits). Students who intend to apply to the Clinical Psychology PhD program must take:
  - GPSY 6238 Research Methods (unless pursuing the Research MA)
- GEQV 6410 CMHSAC Equivalency Externship (0 credits). Students enrolled in optional clinical externship placements are required to register for this to attend supervision with Dr. Litt or Dr. Todman.

**Course Sequence:** Students are strongly encouraged to enroll in Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling and Adult Psychopathology during the Fall semester of their first year in the MA Program. This will provide the necessary foundation for Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling that Spring. Psychopathology III is recommended in the Spring as well, to ensure that interested students are eligible for optional clinical placements that will start at the end of the Spring term, Summer, or Fall of their 2nd year (see below for more details about clinical placements).
**CASAC-Relevant Courses Taken Elsewhere:** Students 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. These courses, however, 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 OASAS directly prior to doing so.

**Eligibility 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 MA. Electing to pursue the CMHSAC does not in any way preclude a student from applying for admission to the Doctoral Program. Please review the Psychology Student Handbook for an overview of the requirements for admission to the doctoral program.

**CLINICAL PLACEMENTS**

Supervised clinical placements at facilities in the community 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 or at community-based agencies is strongly encouraged. Students are required to commit to a minimum of 2 days per week (up to 8 hours/day). Approved field placement sites may expect a commitment of 6 -12 months. These clinical placements are not a requirement of the CMHSAC; however, students have found that their placement hours may count towards licensure hours for the CASAC credential.

**Goals and Objectives of Fieldwork Placements:**

A) Provide supervised practical experiences to develop students’ clinical skills.

B) Introduce and orient students to professional work in varied substance abuse treatment and research settings with multidisciplinary treatment teams.
   a. Clinical experiences vary by site, but may include observing and co-leading groups, conducting psychosocial intakes, writing treatment plans, case management, discharge planning/referrals, and providing individual psychotherapy.

C) Encourage the integration of academic work with practical experience.

D) Experience clinical supervision

E) Experience discussion of clinical cases with peers.

**Fieldwork Application process:** First, all applicants for placement must be NSSR MA level students who have successfully completed Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling, Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling, Adult Psychopathology, and Psychopathology III with a grade of B or higher. This is best accomplished by completing these courses in the recommended order.

Second, the enrollment form must be completed and returned to Dr. Litt or the student advisors’ office by October 1st as described above. Students meet with Dr. Litt to discuss their interests and experience at the beginning of the Spring term in their first year. Students are placed according to their performance in CMHSAC classes, position availability and at the discretion of the Director and Assistant Director of the CMHSAC. Dr. Litt and Dr. Todman reserve the right to not place students at externship sites based on their performance and behavior in class. Most placement sites will require a brief interview. Depending on site availability, placements will hopefully be finalized by the end of the Spring term or possibly during the summer.

It should 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 positions available at a particular site. Placement is not guaranteed; however, every effort will be made to ensure
that all eligible candidates are accommodated. Students interested in a placement at a site not on our approved list, please consult with Dr. Litt.

**Student malpractice insurance**: All students participating in fieldwork **must** obtain APA Student Malpractice Insurance and provide Dr. Litt with a copy for her records. For more information, please visit: [https://www.trustinsurance.com/Insurance-Programs/Student-Liability](https://www.trustinsurance.com/Insurance-Programs/Student-Liability).

**Recent Fieldwork Sites:**
- The Center - LGBT Community Center, Chelsea, NYC, [gaycenter.org](http://gaycenter.org)
- Realization Center, Union Square, NYC, [realizationcenternyc.com](http://realizationcenternyc.com)
- SuCasa at Lower Eastside Service Center, LES, NYC, [lesc.org](http://lesc.org)
- Greenhope Services for Women, East Harlem, NYC, [greenhope.org](http://greenhope.org)
- Greenwich House, NYC, [greenwichhouse.org](http://greenwichhouse.org)
- Lower Eastside Harm Reduction Center, LES, NYC, [leshr.org](http://leshr.org)
- Mt. Sinai West, Addiction Institute, Columbus Circle, NYC, [addictioninstituteny.org](http://addictioninstituteny.org)
- New York Harm Reduction Educators, Bronx and Harlem, NYC, [nyhre.org](http://nyhre.org)
- St. Ann’s Corner of Harm Reduction, NYC, [sachr.org](http://sachr.org)
- Samaritan Daytop Village, NYC, [samaritanvillage.org](http://samaritanvillage.org)

**FIELDWORK SUPERVISION**

CMHSAC students participating in fieldwork receive on-site clinical supervision as well as supervision by CMHSAC faculty and adjunct supervisors (as needed). On-site supervision must be provided by Qualified Health Professionals (QHPs), which includes: Certified Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC’s), Social Workers, Psychologists, and/or psychiatrists, depending on the nature of the placement and duties.

Supervision with CMHSAC faculty takes place at The New School for Social Research. Students are required to sign up for CMHSAC Equivalency Externship (GEQV 6410) credits while on externship, attend supervision, and maintain regular contact with CMHSAC Faculty regarding their externship. Students may not terminate a placement without first consulting with Dr. Litt and need to sign an externship agreement prior to starting their placement (see Appendix C).

**Evaluations**: In addition to ongoing feedback provided during regularly scheduled supervision, fieldwork supervisors will formally evaluate students (see Appendix D) during their placements. This evaluation form should be returned to the CMHSAC Assistant Director once completed. Again, students are also encouraged to stay in regular contact with CMHSAC Faculty regarding their fieldwork experiences and raise any concerns or issues with Dr. Litt as soon as possible.
**DIRECTORY**

The following is a listing of the names, titles and office locations of the various individuals who are associated with the CMHSAC program. Specific questions about the program should be directed to the designated CMHSAC student advisor, Iris Miao, the CMHSAC student coordinator, Deniz Kocas, and/or to Dr. Litt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McWelling Todman, PhD</th>
<th>Lisa Litt, PhD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Associate Professor of Clinical Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assistant Professor, Assistant Director, Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Director, Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling</strong></td>
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<td>80 Fifth Ave. #618</td>
<td>80 Fifth Ave. #615</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York, NY 10011</td>
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<tr>
<td>(212) 229-5727, ext. 3258</td>
<td>(212) 229-5727, ext. 3256</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:TodmanM@newschool.edu">TodmanM@newschool.edu</a></td>
<td>email: <a href="mailto:LittL@newschool.edu">LittL@newschool.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Deniz Kocas, MA</th>
<th>Iris Miao, MA</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Program Coordinator, CMHSAC</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psychology Student Advisor, CMHSAC</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(646) 504-6595</td>
<td><strong>80 Fifth Avenue #624</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:MHSAC@newschool.edu">MHSAC@newschool.edu</a></td>
<td>New York, NY 10011</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(212) 229-5727, ext. 3107</td>
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<td></td>
<td>email: <a href="mailto:psychadv1@newschool.edu">psychadv1@newschool.edu</a></td>
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APPENDIX A: Description of CASAC Requirements

NYS-OASAS 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 CASAC certification and who intend to continue working towards full CASAC certification. The CASAC-T remains effective for five years from the date that it is issued. During that time, CASAC trainees are considered “Quality Health Professionals” (QHP) in terms of the mandated staffing mix at OASAS-licensed substance dependence programs, and are thus immediately employable.

One way to become eligible for this designation is to complete the required 350-clock hours of academic training. The CMHSAC meets the 350-hour educational and training requirements for CASAC eligibility (Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling, Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling, Adult Psychopathology, Psychopathology III, Professional Issues and Ethics, a 2-hour online Mandated Child Abuse Reporting training, and an online Medication-Assisted Treatment/Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT) training).

Upon completion of the MA and the CMHSAC, a certificate documenting completion of the 350-hour CASAC curriculum will be issued to CMHSAC graduates. CMHSAC graduates will be eligible to apply for the CASAC-Trainee (CASAC-T) certificate and may sit for the CASAC exam. Students have up to five years to complete the required 2000 hours of work experience to obtain full CASAC certification. Additional information is also provided through the OASAS website: oasas.ny.gov/sqa/credentialing

In order to obtain the certificate for OASAS from the CMHSAC, please provide:

1. A copy of your MA transcript that documents successful completion of the MA including the courses listed above
2. Documentation of your online Mandated Child Abuse Reporting training
3. Documentation of your online Medications for Addiction training

**Please note that these certificates are not automatically generated and you need to contact Dr. Litt in order for her to issue a Certificate after graduation.**
APPENDIX B: CMHSAC Enrollment form

NAME: ___________________________________   EMAIL: ___________________________________

STUDENT ID#: __________________________

When have you taken or do you anticipate taking the following courses: ?

At The New School for Social Research             YR / Semester (taken or anticipated)

Adult Psychopathology                                   [ ] ____/______

Psychopathology III                                     [ ] ____/______

Introduction to Substance Abuse Counseling              [ ] ____/______

Advanced Issues in Substance Abuse Counseling           [ ] ____/______

Ethics                                                   [ ] ____/______

Please answer the following:

Do you wish to be considered for clinical placements?   yes [ ]    no [ ]

Do you have an MA 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. 

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Signature: _____________________________________________________   date: _____________

Student Advisor’s Signature: __________________________________________   date: _____________

Director/Assistant Director’s Signature: _____________________________   date: _____________
APPENDIX C: CMHSAC Externship Guidelines

The New School for Social Research
Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling

CHECKLIST

- CV and cover letter sent to sites to start interview process
- Complete all required HR forms and procedures prior to starting (see below)
- APA student malpractice insurance: trustinsurance.com/products-services/student-liability
- Sign up for CMHSAC Equivalency credit (GEQV 6410)
- Supervisor contact info given to Dr. Litt
- Externship evaluation form completed by on-site supervisor during placement

POLICIES

- Students are expected to adhere to their commitment to a designated externship site.
- Concerns, issues, and questions should immediately be brought to Dr. Litt's attention.
- Dr. Litt will maintain contact with externship supervisors regarding your progress and any issues and concerns that may arise.
- Students are to abide by sites' policies regarding dress code, HR procedures (e.g., TB testing, urine drug screens, background checks) and attendance requirements.
- Students are expected to maintain schedule (e.g., 2 days per week, 6-12 month commitment) negotiated with on-site supervisor.
- Students will be on time and follow all on-site procedures (e.g., dress code, paperwork deadlines) as sites reserve the right to terminate the externship for failure to abide by their protocols.
- Students will receive on-site supervision and attend bi-weekly group supervision at The New School with Dr. Litt or Dr. Todman.
- Students will not terminate an externship without consulting with supervisors, including Dr. Litt and Dr. Todman.
- If a student is asked to leave an externship or is terminated by his/her supervisor, Dr. Litt reserves the right to not send student to an additional placement.

CONTACTS

Name and contact information of your on-site supervisor: ________________________________

CMHSAC CONTACTS

McWelling Todman, PhD  Lisa Litt, PhD  Deniz Kocas, MA
Director, CMHSAC  Asst. Director, CMHSAC  CMHSAC Program Coordinator
todmanm@newschool.edu  littl@newschool.edu  MHSAC@newschool.edu

Extern Acknowledgment

______________________________  ______________________________  __________
Name  Signature  Date
APPENDIX D: Externship Evaluation Form

The New School for Social Research
Concentration in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counseling

Student Name: _________________________________
Site Name: ____________________________________  Supervisor: ____________________________

Dates of Placement:  Start Date: __/__/  End Date: __/__/  Evaluation Completed on: __/__/  

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

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OVERALL RATING  

1  2  3  4  5
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__________