FAQ – Substance Abuse Studies Training Program
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Other Information Sources: Catalog; website at dce.unm.edu

Substance Abuse Studies Training Program
Q: How do I enroll in the program?
A: To enroll in the Licensure Track for Counseling Professionals, you need to have a current counseling or social work license or a counseling degree (or related area) in the following:

The regulations define Counseling Related Degrees as:
- Counseling
- Guidance and Counseling
- Mental Health/Community Counseling/Agency Counseling
- Psychology
- Human and Family Studies
- Clinical Psychology
- Counseling Psychology
- Family Studies
- Social Work
- Art Therapy or Art Education with counseling emphasis

TO BEGIN: Please create your profile online at [http://newmexico.augusoft.net/](http://newmexico.augusoft.net/). You may also call the UNMCE Registration Office at 277-0077 to set up your profile. Ask the staff to transfer you to my phone so that I can finish your approval. To request a UNM Continuing Education catalog, contact our reception desk at (505) 925-9562 or hhs@dce.unm.edu.

NEXT: please fax or email your counseling license or a copy of your degree transcripts or diploma along with responses to the questions below to the Program Supervisor at (505) 277-8975 or email sastp@unm.edu.

What are your professional goal(s) for the program?

How have your background, education, work, culture, and life experience led you to the field of addictions counseling?

What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenge in this program?

When you are approved for enrolling in the Substance Abuse Studies Training Program, expect a follow up email welcoming you to the SASTP program. Once approved, you may enroll by phone (505) 277-0077.

Q: How do I become an Addictions Counselor in New Mexico?
A: To apply for LADAC, the applicant must have the appropriate degree. Licensure requirements are 1) your degree, 2) specific substance related coursework, 3) experience hours determined by your degree and 4) passing national NAADAC – NCAC Level I.
The reason you may need the rest of the classes is that you have to have at least 276 clock hours of drug/alcohol related education. The SASTP program provides 224 hours. One college class (3 credit hours) equates to 45 contact hours. You may also have workshops and in some cases, in-service training that may be acceptable. Of course, I recommend taking all 14 classes in the program to provide you with a comprehensive body of knowledge to prepare you for your experience hours and the certification exam. The added bonus is the affordable tuition of these classes.

Q: I am currently in recovery but feel that I can help those with the problems that I have had, will I be able to enroll in these classes?
A: To support student success and to be in line with the professional education and training requirements for licensure in the addictions field, we incorporate educational and experience prerequisites in our program as part of the registration process. Due to the intensity and nature of the program, we request that those in recovery have been sober for a minimum of one year. Some may find it more helpful to have two or more years in recovery. Please note that the courses are not intended as part of a recovery program to support participant sobriety, or as a replacement for therapy. Courses are intended to prepare students to become effective addictions counselors. Students are expected to be open-minded, willing to learn about, discuss, and practice new and different approaches for the treatment of addictions.

Q: My first step is to have a degree? Is it true that employers only hire people with a master’s degree and LADAC license?
A: Finding a degree program if you do not currently have an Associate degree in a counseling related field begins with talking to an Academic Advisor of the community college or university you plan to attend. UNM now has the Bachelor in Psychology: Basics in Addiction Counseling (BAC) Concentration. Contact the Department of Psychology Academic Advisor [http://psych.unm.edu/](http://psych.unm.edu/). An Associate Degree in Family Studies would meet the licensure requirements. CNM offers several options in family studies, social work and general studies depending on your goals. Other state and private colleges have a variety of programs that may be right for you. It is recommend anyone entering the field to aim for the Master’s level, because it is the direction the field is going.

Most mental health counselors are not aware what is required for a LADAC, and do not realize over half the positions are filled with those who have associate degrees. This specialty is the only one with entry level positions at the Associate level. For New Mexico Licensure, the NMCTPB requires a degree in a counseling or counseling related area. They have been very firm about nursing, education, criminal justice, business, fine arts, etc. degrees are not qualifying.

Visit the New Mexico Counseling and Therapy Practice Board website for more information on licensure as a Substance Abuse Counselor in New Mexico. The rules and regulations for
all counseling areas, along with contact information is available on the website if you have further questions. Their website is http://www.rld.state.nm.us/boards/Counseling_and_Therapy_Practice.aspx.

Q: I have taken a class similar to one offered in the program can I transfer that to this program? Can I transfer SASTP classes to my degree program?
A: UNMCE does not evaluate transcripts. These non-credit classes are not applicable to degree programs. You may apply for 1 credit hour per each 16 hour class through the UNM Department of Psychology. If interested in a Psychology 250 credit, please contact the program supervisor for the UNM Extended University application and additional fees.

Q: What is LSAA?
A: To provide counseling services in New Mexico, counselors must be licensed, the Licensed Substance Abuse Associate (LSAA) in your first step into the addictions counseling profession if you are not licensed in another counseling area. You will want to get you LSAA as soon as possible, which is recommend, once you have 90 hours in drug and alcohol specific training (which is 6 of the SASTP weekends). In New Mexico, it is illegal to do counseling work without a license. An LSAA license will enable you to begin to accrue the needed supervised experience hours you will need for the LADAC. Once you accumulate required experience hours with substance abuse clients, along with 100 hours face to face supervision with an approved supervisor, you will qualify to apply for the LADAC. A person with a counseling license already can bypass the LSAA; if you currently have a license in counseling or LMSW. This does not apply to all licenses, such as nursing or education. The LSAA is for those who don’t have a license in counseling, since you can’t accrue hours without a license.

Q: All these designations are confusing, what are these other than LADAC?
A: LADAC – Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor (NM License through NM Counseling and Therapy Practice Board)

CPS, SCPS – Certified Prevention Specialist and Senior Certified Prevention Specialist (NM Certification through NM Credentialing Board for Behavioral Health Professionals)

CADAC – Certified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor (national Certification through NM Credentialing Board for Behavioral Health Professionals)

One could supplement training on the way to the LSAA/LADAC and get a prevention certificate, work for any prevention program. A lot of the funding now is becoming available to prevention programs. A person may quickly qualify for a Prevention Certificate and obtain employment in the field. Training and experience does not require a counseling related degree but may count toward LADAC. Many students find employment as case managers and behavioral management specialists while working toward a LADAC.

To become a Certified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor (CADAC) or Certified Prevention Specialist (CPS) or Senior Certified Prevention Specialist (SCPS) you will find information on Certification (CADAC) or prevention fields, please visit the NM Credentialing Board for
Behavioral Health Professionals at http://www.nmcbbhp.org/welcome.htm. For some people, the CADAC may be more practical. The NM Counseling and Therapy Practice Board will accept a passing score on the CADAC exam with five years of a licensure application. An applicant with a qualified certification (ICADC) can be licensed by credential.

Also check the New Mexico Addictions Education Network at www.nmaen.org for other good resources to licensure.

Q: Again, my dilemma is that I am without a job and without a supervisor. From what I can see I cannot submit for the LSAA without form C. That said, I am open for any suggestions. Do you offer internship placement or job placement services or help with my job search?
A: The UNMCE program does not offer a clinical or internships in the program. Students needing to earn experience house will need find a supervisor and maintain complete and accurate records to document the specific number of hours necessary. You can't get the LSAA without the attachment C, but something small will do for starters. If a person has time, one of the best ways to start is to get the LSAA and begin doing some work in the field while deciding; even a little volunteer time is enough to help with the decision making. It is recommended in such cases that candidates do volunteer work, at least 10 hours a week. This can be anything in the 12 core functions, so if you pick an agency in which you are interested there will be something to get you started. Try searching the United Way volunteer agencies website. You can have more than one supervisor and site, so when you get gainful employment you can add another attachment C or start new. If you do there are certain documents you should collect before you leave a placement. The NM Counseling and Therapy Practice Board would need to advise you on submitting your LSAA application and matters regarding licensure.

Q: Is there a certifying exam for Addiction Counselors?
A: You can't sit for the exam until your experience hours are complete, so that needs to be the priority first. You will be given a testing cycle once you submit your application to NMCTPB.

Q: I am not interested in becoming a licensed addiction counselor or I just need hours for renewal will I be able to take classes in this program?
A: Some people are not interested in licensure but want more info about the field. Professionals working in the area of education, nursing and legal professions and the courts, community social services and others can learn more through other human service programs offered through UNM Continuing Education.

Q: How do I enroll for classes in the Substance Abuse Studies Training Program (SASTP)?
A: Once you have completed the process for approval and been notified, you may call our Registration Office at (505) 277-0077 to enroll. You may enroll for all the classes in each term or for specific classes as you choose.
Q: Do you offer in the summer classes?
A: UNMCE offers classes in Advanced Ethics, LADAC exam preparation and a Seminar in Substance Abuse. They are NAADAC approved for CEUs to meet renewal requirements.

Q: Which class should I take first? Do I have to wait to begin the series if the Introduction to Substance Abuse has past? What if I cannot attend a class during the term?
A: The series begins in September with 7 classes during the fall term. The spring term finishes up with an additional 7 classes. The series is designed to add to previous knowledge but students can begin later in the program if necessary.

Q: I still have questions. Who do I talk to?
A: Contact Program Supervisor at sastp@unm.edu or 505-277-6025.