



Substance Abuse Studies Training Program

Licensure Track for Counseling Professionals

Frequently Asked Questions

Program Description

We offer the training and resources available in the proven and promising treatment modalities for individuals seeking to become a Licensed Substance Abuse Associate (LSAA), or Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor (LADAC) in New Mexico. Our Licensure Track for Counseling Professionals is specifically designed to meet the educational standards for the LSAA and LADAC in the state of New Mexico, as well as the National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) standards.

Special Note: Classes in case management, prevention and substance abuse education provide additional training and resources to those interested in gaining an understanding of addictions and current practices in a non-counseling environment for prevention specialist, peer educators or peer counselors.

Still searching for answers....the questions and answers below have been gathered over time from conversations and emails with applicants and students with responses from our advisors or instructors.

Q: *How do I become an Addictions Counselor in New Mexico?*

A: Licensure requirements are your degree, specific substance abuse related coursework and the experience. Once you have completed those three requirements you will be scheduled for the NAADAC – NCAC Level I exam
http://www.naadac.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=531&Itemid=129

The New Mexico Counseling and Therapy Practice Board grants licensure once applicants meet the requirement for either LSAA or LADAC. To apply for LADAC, the applicant must have the appropriate degree. Applicants need to have approx. 15 semester hours in counseling, psychology.

Q: *My first step is to have a degree?*

A: To provide counseling services in New Mexico counselors must be licensed, For New Mexico Licensure, the NMCTPB requires a degree in a counseling or counseling related area. The Law requires a "counseling related degree". When this was translated into regulations, they identified certain degrees, and the list has been updated several times. The Board has been very firm about nursing, education, criminal justice, business, fine arts, etc. degrees are not qualifying.



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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

Q: *My degree is not in one of the areas mentioned for licensure in addiction counseling, what would you recommend?*

A: We still do accept students into the UNMCE Substance Abuse Studies Training program who have the AA or higher degree but to be clear, LADAC licensure will likely require additional degree work for the non-counseling degrees. The NM Counseling and Therapy Practice Board has very specific requirements for licensure. There are other related careers that have various requirements, by having a prevention certificate for work for any prevention program, you might delay applying for LSAA/LADAC. A lot of the funding now is coming down in the form of prevention programs.

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

For information on Certification (CADAC) or prevention fields, please visit the NM Credentialing Board for Behavioral Health Professionals at <http://www.nmcbbhp.org/welcome.htm>

Q: *What is LSAA?*

A: The Licensed Substance Abuse Associate (LSAA) is your first step into the addictions counseling profession. If the board approves the application with a non-counseling degree, the Board will only accept for LSAA. The main trouble for non-counseling professionals, such as nurses or educators, is that they cannot count any of their experience hours in most cases. Those working in psychiatric nursing with addicted populations have the best chance, but for the most part, nursing is considered a separate discipline, and though they do a lot of counseling and patient education, it doesn't "count".



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After 90 hours in drug and alcohol specific studies, which is 6 of the SASTP weekends, you should apply for the LSAA. This 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. And yes, you can bypass the LSAA, if you have a license in another counseling area or are a Licensed Master Social Work (LMSW) or Licensed Independent Social Work (LISW). The LSAA is for those who don't have a license of another kind, since you can't accrue hours without a license. Of course, the LMSW is better, so if that is imminent, just go that route.

Q: *Is it true that employers only hire people with a master's degree and LADAC license?*

A: This is a common misunderstanding of people in the counseling field. Most mental health counselors have no idea what is required for a LADAC, and do not realize that 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.

The quickest most affordable degree program for Albuquerque area students is a Family Studies Associate degree. Unfortunately, this has little or no substance abuse courses in it, so it is fortunate for those students to have SASTP for specific training. Contact the Academic Advisors of the college or university for more information. UNM now has the Bachelor in Psychology: Basics in Addiction Counseling (BAC) Concentration. Contact the Department of Psychology Academic Advisor <http://psych.unm.edu/>. Other programs can be found at ENMU and WNMU.

Sadly the requirement for Medicaid is a master's, so LADAC's without one cannot be reimbursed. For those who are interested in further education, which we strongly urge, the social work emphasis, followed by a B. Social Work and finishing with a Master's of Social Work. On the other hand, there are many programs that will NOT pay an MA in counseling, but have to have a LADAC, most of whom do not have an MA. The factors to consider are where one is employed; the type of third party payers and what services are involved. I recommend anyone entering the field to aim for the Master's level, because it is the direction the field is going.



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Q: *Is there are 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 right now. Once you submit the application for LADAC, you will schedule the NAADAC – NCAC Level I exam. A LADAC exam preparation course is offered at UNMCE every term and should be taken about 1-2 months prior to your estimated date to test.

Q: *What Substance Abuse Studies Training Program (SASTP) classes do I need to take and how do I enroll in them?*

A: You can find our current schedule online at <http://dce.unm.edu/substance-abuse-studies-training-program.htm> . Please see the 2011-2012 Substance Abuse Studies Training Information document.

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. 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 for NMCTPB licensure. As a note, one college class equates to 45 contact hours. Classes in the series are offered once a year. If you skip or miss a class you may take it the following year. So if you have some of these classes, you may not need all the coursework at SASTP. Of course, it is recommended you enroll in these classes because you will not find any finer training anywhere that is so affordable.

Q: *I have taken a class similar to one offered in the program can I transfer that to this program? Can I transfer these classes to my degree program?*

A: The SASTP program is non-credit. We do not evaluate transcript or prior training records to make exceptions or substitutions for courses you have taken elsewhere. We provide CEUs certificates for each class you successfully complete. You may register for any or all 14 classes. You may also 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 me for the UNM Extended University application and additional fees.



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Q: *I am not interested in becoming a licensed addiction counselor but in my field, knowledge of addictions will be useful. Will I be able to take classes in this program?*

A: Some students are not interested in licensure but want more info about the field. The program does not intend to lose sight of these people who need current substance abuse training to work with their clients and addiction issues. The **Support and Service Training in Addictions (SSTIA)** courses provide professionals working in non-counseling areas specific training in addictions and are approved for CEUs and other certification programs accepting NAADAC approved courses.

Q: *I just need hours for re-licensure in counseling/social work; will I be able to take classes in this program?*

A: You may enroll in SASTP classes for CEUs toward re-licensure. Space is limited in this section so register early. There is no discount for individual classes in the training program. Books for required reading will need to be purchased prior to the class date. Specific reading assignments will be listed in the syllabus and on the Required Reading List.

Q: *I feel my sobriety and experiences can help those with these problems, 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 (AA degree or higher) or experience (counseling or social work license or certification) 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 dilemma is that I am without a job and without a supervisor. From what I 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.

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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: *What classes do you offer in the summer?*

A: This summer we have a unique program to offer for CEUs. Seminar in Substance Abuse: Film Panel Series (39100).

Seminar in Substance Abuse: Film Panel Series (#39100) **July 29-30, 2011** UNMCE Auditorium

Engage in the dialog about alcoholism using the power of storytelling. The Substance Abuse Studies Training Program is hosting this seminar to highlight the impact of alcoholism in our community.

NAADAC approved for 4 CEUs per session for a total of 16 hrs. \$100 for full series or \$30 per individual sessions.

Friday

Media Images of Alcoholism

39100 SQA 9:00am-1:00pm

Alcoholism – All in the Family

39100 SQB 3:00pm-7:00pm

Saturday

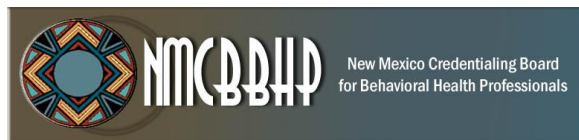
It Takes a Village to Heal

39100 SQC 9:00am-1:00pm

***Readiness for Change –
Recovery in Alcoholism***

39100 SQD 3:00pm-7:00pm

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Also the summer LADAC exam prep will be offered on

Class Title: 39310 LADAC Exam Preparation, Section SQA

Date of Class: 06/25/2011

Saturday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM; 1 session on June 25, 2011

Class fee: \$249.00 TEXTBOOK INCLUDED

7 NAADAC CEUs

the Advanced Ethics will be offered on

Class Title: 39132 Advanced Ethics, Section SQA

Date of Class: 07/09/2011

Saturday, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM; 1 session on July 9, 2011

Class fee: \$129.00

6 NAADAC CEUs

Q: *I still have questions. Who do I talk to?*

A: Contact Loree Nalin, program supervisor, at (505) 277-6025 or hhs@dce.unm.edu.

Loree may be able to answer your short questions over the phone or by email. If you need additional time to discuss your goals and curriculum options, you may want to make an appointment for advisement.