

ASCEND FAQs

Advancing SUD Counselor Education and Development Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the ASCEND Program?

The ASCEND program consists of 12 individual courses aligned with the 12 core competencies, totaling 80 hours of instruction, as mandated by Assembly Bill (AB) 2473 and Health & Safety Code section 11833. Each course is designed to be self-contained, allowing learners to take any course independently without requiring prerequisite knowledge from other courses, thereby providing flexibility for learners. The courses are offered in an asynchronous online delivery format. Students complete the course work on their own schedules within the quarter start and end dates, and do not have to be present for synchronous class meetings. Each course is supported by an instructor who offers biweekly office hours and is available to assist as needed.

2. Who is eligible?

The ASCEND program is free for California residents and intended for individuals who are seeking to provide substance use disorder (SUD) counseling services within California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) licensed and/or certified alcohol or other drug (AOD) recovery and treatment programs, first year registered counselors, and registered counselors. It provides the required 80-hour core competency education mandated by California law (AB 2473).

3. Is ASCEND approved by the certifying organizations?

The ASCEND program is approved by [CADTP](#) as satisfying the 80-hour core competency training required by AB 2473.

ASCEND is approved for [CCAPP](#) ADC Academic Content Domains of Case Management, and Introduction and Overview of Alcohol and Other Drug Counseling (as outlined on the [CCAPP certification framework](#)).

4. What is the difference between ASCEND and Extended Studies' Substance Use Disorder Counseling certificate program?

ASCEND is intended for first year registered counselors, and registered counselors, and provides the required 80 hours of education and core competency education mandated by California law (AB 2473).

The [Substance Use Disorder Counseling](#) certificate program is designed for individuals looking to complete an educational program that meets CCAPP and CADTP minimum requirements to become a Certified Alcohol Drug Counselor I (CADC-I) or Substance Use Disorder Certified Counselor (SUDCC), respectively.

5. Are ASCEND credits transferable towards certification?

Individuals who complete the ASCEND program will receive a 15% off discount and 1 unit of credit towards UC San Diego Extended Studies' Substance Use Disorder Counseling Certificate program. Extended Studies is working with other providers to create pathways into additional certification programs.

6. How do I apply for ASCEND?

Visit extendedstudies.ucsd.edu/ASCEND to apply to the ASCEND program. You will be required to upload proof of California residency (CA driver license or ID, car registration, or voter registration) with your application. This free program is only available to residents of California.

7. How do I enroll?

Once your application is accepted, you will receive enrollment instructions including section IDs to self-enroll in individual courses. To enroll in individual courses, complete the steps below:

1. Log in to [MyExtension](#).
2. Click the shopping cart next to your name on the top right.
3. Enter the Section ID and click ADD.
4. Select Grading Option.
 - o Note: To receive credit toward [CCAPP](#) and [CADTP](#) certification, students must enroll in all courses for a letter grade.

8. Do I have to take all 12 courses in one quarter?

You can enroll in all 12 courses in one quarter, or you can split them between two quarters. Each course is offered quarterly for 12 weeks, but you will likely finish each one in 1 – 2 weeks.

9. How do I take classes?

The classes are available online to you in [Canvas](#). There are no prerequisites and you can take the classes in any order. Click this [link](#) for step-by-step instructions to log in to Canvas.

10. How long do I have to complete the program?

Under AB 2473, first year registered counselors are required to complete eighty (80) hours of education, including core competency topics, within six (6) months of registration.

11. Will I receive a certificate when I complete the program?

Once you have passed all 12 courses with a C-/70% or better and grades are posted for the quarter, you will be eligible for an Award of Completion. You may also request one free official transcript.

12. Can I take ASCEND courses for CEU credits?

No, ASCEND courses may not be used for CEU credits.