Frequently Asked Questions

If a program needs to be in candidacy for two years, how will entry-level master's programs become accredited after 2004?

The current standards require three years for full accreditation to take place. Master's programs, inherently, are not longer than two-year programs. How can entry-level master's programs continue to be developed with the three-year minimal standard?

This has been built into the candidacy process, where an institution may be visited during the last term that the courses are being offered. This allows the institution to be accredited after the visit, which would normally be following the second year of candidacy. The first year of candidacy is developmental, generally without students enrolled. The second year allows the courses to be instructed to matriculated students, and the site visit is then completed during the third year when students would be completing the program.

Originally there was an emphasis put on having a clinical coordinator for programs, but the Standards do not mention such a position. Why?

The clinical coordinator is a designated person responsible for overseeing the clinical portion of the athletic training education program. The program director may serve as the clinical coordinator or may choose to designate another individual for this role. The decision to appoint a distinct clinical coordinator should be based on faculty workloads. As such, it is up to the institution to decide if a separate position is needed.

In what part of the Competencies is the work ethic that has always set our profession apart included? Where does the student learn that athletic training involves long hours, travel in a lot of cases, a coach's wrath, parents and athletes that question the treatment program, etc.?

This is what the profession should not be instructing. The use of students for 30 to 40 hours of clinical experience per week implies this is what should be acceptable. It also implies that students are qualified to take the place of a certified athletic trainer. In essence, if we continue to propagate this through instruction, it will not better the profession or our personal lives.

The aspects of parent, coach and athlete interactions are incorporated in the Competencies. These are further enhanced through the clinical experience and the observation of the ATC mentor. We are not taking the students out of the practice setting, so the professional assimilation into professional practice is still there.

There are also certain legal considerations to knowingly exposing tuition-paying students to "a coach's wrath." Regardless of the circumstances, the clinical setting is a classroom. Similar to a classroom, the behaviors, language and demeanor of faculty and staff must be respectful of the student.

Is it permissible for an upper level athletic training student who has demonstrated competency to provide coverage in selected settings in close proximity to the supervising certified athletic trainer if there is radio contact?

The certified athletic trainer responsible for the care of the student-athletes would have to determine whether or not the athletic training student is acting as an athletic training student (thereby needing supervision) or a first responder with a specified scope of practice/authority as outlined by state regulation (if applicable) and/or the institution policy and procedure manual.

Why are students allowed to be first responders? Does this create a liability problem?

A student who is qualified to be a first responder should hold a valid credential such as professional rescuer CPR and first aid certification. Based on this statute, this individual is qualified to be a first responder 24 hours a day.

As the NATABOC states, the institution's policy and procedure manual and the scope of practice must be clearly evaluated for liability and conformance with state practice acts. Institutional legal counsel review of this document and the scope of practice would be prudent.

The delineation often boils down to decision-making. If the individual is placed in a position where the decisions (e.g., return to play, treatment) should be made by an ATC or physician, the student is no longer acting as a first responder.

What should we tell athletic training students about supervision?

Supervision involves daily personal/verbal contact at the site of supervision between the athletic training student and the certified athletic trainer who plans, directs, advises and evaluates the student's athletic training experience. The supervising certified athletic trainer must be physically present in order to intervene on behalf of the individual being treated.

The JRC-AT has adopted the NATABOC definition of supervision and curriculums have had to adhere to the NATABOC definition since the days of the NATA Professional Education Committee.

The bottom line is that if an ATC is not present, the student is no longer acting as an athletic training student as he or she is not being supervised.

What happens after 2004 if an institution does not receive accreditation? What happens to the students in the program(s)? Do they have to leave that institution and transfer to an accredited institution?

Students graduating from this institution would have to show completion of an accredited program before they would be allowed to sit for the NATABOC examination. This may mean transferring to an accredited

entry-level master's program. (Source: NATABOC certification requirements)

If the program director has been following the candidacy guidelines, these students should have been planning to be eligible via the internship route also. The NATABOC's December 2003 deadline is an APPLICATION deadline. This was established to allow examination candidates who will be graduating in the spring of 2004 the opportunity to apply as internship candidates. Candidates must submit a complete and accepted application in order to be eligible.

Incomplete or unsatisfactory applications will be returned and the candidate will NOT be eligible to resubmit as an internship candidate. If their institution becomes accredited in the spring of 2004, the candidate's application status will be changed to one of a curriculum candidate. This may be important for state licensure in some states that grant licenses only to curriculum graduates (e.g., Massachusetts).

What is the best mechanism to contact the appropriate agency when questions arise?

Questions regarding certification should be directed to the NATA Board of Certification, Inc. Those questions regarding accreditation and the accreditation process (including candidacy) should be directed to the Joint Review Committee on Athletic Training. Questions regarding the educational process, techniques, theories or resources should be directed to the NATA Education Council.

If you are unsure of which agency would be appropriate for your question, contact the Education Council and we will assist you in finding the correct source.

How do I contact the NATABOC, the JRC-AT or the Education Council?

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"Education Task Force Report," p. 9, April 1995

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