



ATHLETIC TRAINING EDUCATION OVERVIEW

This document provides a brief overview of the education and credentialing process for entry-level athletic trainers. Athletic Training is an academic major or graduate equivalent major program that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). The minimum entry point into the profession of Athletic Training is at the baccalaureate level; by 2014-2015, all accredited education programs in Athletic Training will lead to a degree in Athletic Training. Upon completion of a CAATE-accredited Athletic Training education program, students become eligible for national certification by successfully completing the NATA Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC) examination.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Professional, or entry-level Athletic Training education, uses a competency-based approach in both the classroom and clinical settings. Using a medical-based education model, Athletic Training students are educated to provide comprehensive client/patient care in five domains of clinical practice: prevention; clinical evaluation and diagnosis; immediate and emergency care; treatment and rehabilitation; and organization and professional health and well-being. The educational requirements for CAATE-accredited Athletic Training education programs include acquisition of knowledge, skills, and clinical abilities along with a broad scope of foundational behaviors of professional practice. Students complete an extensive clinical learning requirement that is embodied in the clinical integration proficiencies (professional, practice-oriented outcomes) as identified in the *Athletic Training Education Competencies*.

Students must receive formal instruction in the following specific subject matter areas identified in the *Competencies*:

- Evidence-based Practice
- Prevention and Health Promotion
- Clinical Examination and Diagnosis
- Acute Care of Injury and Illness
- Therapeutic Interventions
- Psychosocial Strategies and Referral
- Healthcare Administration
- Professional Development and Responsibility

Clinical Education

Students are required to participate in a minimum of two years of academic clinical education. Through these experiences, students must gain clinical experiences with a variety of patient populations who vary by age and types of activities, and who are at risk for both musculoskeletal and general medical conditions.

Clinical experiences provide students with opportunities for real patient care while under the direct supervision of qualified preceptors (i.e., Athletic Trainer or other credentialed health care professionals).

THE ATC® CREDENTIAL

The ATC® credential and the BOC requirements are currently recognized by 47 states for eligibility and/or regulation of the practice of athletic trainers. The credibility of the BOC program and the ATC® credential it awards are supported by three pillars: (1) the BOC certification examination; (2) the BOC Standards of Professional Practice, and Disciplinary Guidelines and Procedures; and (3) continuing competence (education) requirements.

BOC certification is recognized by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies and is the only accredited certification program for athletic trainers. To be certified, an individual must demonstrate that he/she is an athletic trainer capable of performing the required duties without threat of harm to the public. The BOC traditionally conducts annual examination development meetings during which athletic trainers and recognized experts in the science of Athletic Training develop, review and validate examination items and problems. The knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent performance as an entry-level athletic trainer fall into three categories:

1. Understanding, applying, and analyzing;
2. Knowledge and decision-making;
3. Special performance abilities.

BOC-certified athletic trainers are educated, trained and evaluated in five major practice domains:

1. Prevention
2. Clinical Evaluation and Diagnosis
3. Immediate and Emergency Care
4. Treatment and Rehabilitation
5. Organization and Professional Health and Well-Being

For more information regarding the educational, certification, and licensure requirements for athletic trainers visit:

- National Athletic Trainers' Association – www.nata.org
- National Athletic Trainers' Association Executive Committee for Education - <http://www.nata.org/access-read/public/executive-committee-education-ece>
- Board of Certification – www.bocatc.org
- Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training (to view accredited Athletic Training programs) – www.caate.net

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