

WHAT TO CONSIDER

CHOOSING

AN ATHLETIC TRAINING PROGRAM

There are several factors to consider when determining which athletic training program is the right fit for you. It's important to investigate potential programs and weigh how each does or doesn't meet your personal needs. Here are some factors to keep in mind as you navigate your options.



ACCREDITATION STATUS

To be eligible to sit for the Board of Certification exam to become a certified athletic trainer, students must graduate from an athletic training program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

One way to measure a program's success is through its BOC exam first-time pass rate. CAATE programs are required to have a minimum three-year aggregate first-time BOC exam pass rate of 70 percent. Programs must also post their retention, graduation and placement rates, which can be used to assess quality.



COST

In addition to evaluating a program's cost of tuition, fees and AT-related expenses, also investigate possible financial support as some programs offer scholarships, grants, out-of-state waivers and assistantships. Some programs also provide other forms of support, such as the clothing and apparel worn during clinical rotations, travel support, conference registration costs, etc.



DEGREE LEVEL

Fall 2022 is the last term bachelor-level programs may admit, enroll or matriculate students. After that, all CAATE-accredited programs will be at the master's level.

CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

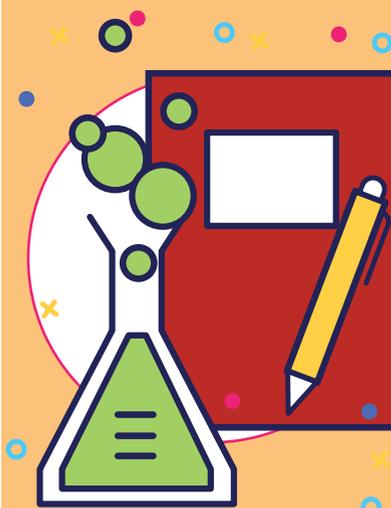
When considering a program, don't forget to look at the institution as a whole as the campus environment will influence your overall college experience. Some factors to consider are campus size, location, safety and weather, among others. A campus tour is a great way to get a feel of the university's environment, athletic training program and student life.





CLASS SIZE

In most cases, students are admitted into a cohort group and those students take most, if not all, of their classes together. Small cohorts generally have a low student-to-faculty ratio, increasing possible one-on-one time with faculty. Large cohorts, however, can provide a greater opportunity for peer interactions and a potentially larger network after graduation.



CLASSES OFFERED

While accreditation requires similar courses, many programs offer additional courses or content, such as gross anatomy, public health, sports sciences, nutrition, manual therapy and research. Students should investigate these program differences and determine what best fits their interests and career goals.



TEACHING METHODS

Do you prefer the traditional lecture-lab format or hybrid courses, which combine online and in-class learning? What about problem-based learning, through which students conduct case studies and essentially teach one another with faculty guidance? There are many ways in which to learn, so students should investigate the teaching methods of prospective programs.



CURRICULUM DESIGN

Stand alone master's programs are traditional two-year programs that require students to complete a bachelor's degree prior to beginning the program. Other programs, known as 3+2 programs, have an undergraduate preparatory component that allow students to complete bachelor's and master's degrees in five years. Whether a program is a stand alone master's degree or a 3+2, the two-year master's degree is the accredited component necessary to become an athletic trainer.



CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Athletic training programs are required to offer clinical education experiences with a variety of patient populations and in a variety of settings over a minimum of two academic years. These rotations are program specific, with geographic location and access influencing what clinical settings are offered.



FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

Program administration and faculty are important to a student's success as they offer guidance while in the program, assistance when seeking employment and continued support after graduation. Students should consider faculty involved in professional organizations as it may assist in professional networking as well as his/her own volunteer involvement.