

Athletic Trainer

Athletic training is practiced by athletic trainers, health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to optimize activity and participation of patients and clients. Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and intervention of emergency, acute, and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations, and disabilities.



History

Work on establishing standards for athletic training educational programs was initiated in 1959 by the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), with the first two programs approved in 1969. By 1979, there were 23 undergraduate programs and two graduate programs approved by NATA. By 1997, NATA had approved 87 entry-level and 13 graduate athletic training educational programs.

In 1989, NATA applied to the AMA Council on Medical Education (CME) for recognition of athletic training as an allied health occupation; recognition was granted in 1990. Also in 1990, an initial meeting was conducted to develop the *Standards* (Essentials) for accreditation of educational programs for athletic trainers; standards were subsequently adopted in 1991.

Following the separation of the AMA from the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA), the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) was formed, with the Joint Review Committee for Athletic Training functioning as a Commission on Accreditation of that group. On July 1, 2006, the JRC-AT separated from CAAHEP and became the independent accreditor CAATE (Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education). At the time of separation, all CAAHEP-accredited athletic training education programs became CAATE-accredited.



Career Description

Past role delineation studies have concluded that the role of an athletic trainer includes, but may not be limited to:

- Prevention
- Clinical evaluation and diagnosis
- Immediate care
- Treatment, rehabilitation, and reconditioning
- Organization and administration
- Professional responsibility



Employment Characteristics

Athletic trainers typically provide their services in one or more of the following settings: secondary schools, colleges and universities, professional athletic organizations, physician offices, hospital-based clinics, private sports medicine, rehabilitation and therapy clinics, industrial/occupational commercial facilities, military, and performing arts.



Salary

Entry-level salaries in 2008 averaged \$35,000. The average overall salary is \$45,000, with the upper ranges from \$55,000 to \$85,000. For more information, refer to www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary.



Educational Programs

Length. Baccalaureate degree programs require 4 years of study. Postbaccalaureate programs are generally 2 years.

Prerequisites. Applicants for the 4-year baccalaureate degree programs must have a high school diploma or equivalent and meet institutional entrance requirements. Applicants for postbaccalaureate programs should have a baccalaureate degree that includes appropriate course work and clinical experience, as specified by the institution.

Curriculum. The professional curriculum includes formal instruction in:

- Risk management and injury/illness prevention
- Pathology of injury/illness
- Clinical examination and diagnosis
- Acute care of injuries and illnesses
- General medical conditions and disabilities
- Therapeutic modalities
- Therapeutic exercise
- Conditioning and rehabilitative exercise and therapy
- Health care administration
- Psychosocial intervention and referral
- Medical ethics and legal issues
- Pharmacology
- Professional responsibilities

The didactic curriculum is augmented by a series of structured laboratory and clinical experiences.



Certification

Almost all states require that athletic trainers hold the ATC® (Athletic Trainer, Certified) credential, which is issued by the Board of Certification Inc. The ATC credential is supported by three pillars: the BOC certification examination, BOC Standards of Practice and Disciplinary Process, and continuing competence requirements. The 1-day written and practical examination verifies that the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent performance as an athletic trainer have been met.



Inquiries

Careers

National Athletic Trainers' Association, Inc
2952 Stemmons Freeway, Suite 200
Dallas, TX 75247
214 637-6282
800 TRY-NATA
214 637-2206 Fax
www.nata.org

Certification

Board of Certification Inc
BOC Administrative Offices
4223 S 143rd Circle
Omaha, NE 68137
402 559-0091
402 561-0598 Fax
www.bocatc.org

Program Accreditation

Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education
(CAATE)
2201 Double Creek Drive, Suite 5006
Round Rock, TX 78664
512 733-9700
512 733-9700 Fax
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