Bridgewater State University’s Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP)

Frequently Asked Questions

If you would like to visit campus and meet with someone from the Athletic Training Faculty, please call 508.531.1237 to arrange a campus tour through the Admissions Office. While on campus, you can speak with one of the Athletic Training Faculty by pre-arranging an interview time by calling either Dr. Suanne Maurer-Starks, the Undergraduate ATEP Program Director at 508.531.2381 or Dr. Marcia K. Anderson the Graduate ATEP Program Director at .508.531.2072. Every effort will be made to accommodate your travel schedule during the regular academic semester.

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We encourage you to visit the other pages in this Website for more information about the athletic training profession and the Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP).

About Athletic Training/Sports Medicine

What is an Athletic Trainer?

Athletic training is recognized by the American Medical Association (AMA) as an allied healthcare profession. The AMA recommends that every high school should have access to a National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) Board of Certification (BOC) certified athletic trainer to keep America’s youth safe and healthy. BOC certified athletic trainers (ATC) are highly educated and skilled medical professionals specializing in injury prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and illnesses, particularly in the orthopedic and musculoskeletal disciplines. Specifically, the certified athletic trainer has demonstrated knowledge and skill in five practice areas or domains:
As part of a complete health care team, the athletic trainer works under the direction of a physician and in cooperation with other health care professionals, athletic administrators, coaches and parents. The athletic trainer gets to know each patient individually and can treat injuries more effectively and any other single allied health professional.

**How is athletic training different than sports medicine?**

Sports medicine is a very broad term. The American College of Sports Medicine defines sports medicine as multidisciplinary, including the physiological, biomechanical, psychological, and pathological phenomena associated with exercise and sports. It involves any profession or field of study that is dedicated to physical activity and sport either through performance enhancement or through injury care and management. Examples include, but are not limited to, athletic training, physical therapy, sports nutrition, medicine, sport psychology, exercise physiology, biomechanics, sports massage, sports dentistry, orthotists/prosthetists, chiropractic, and strength and conditioning. The uniqueness of athletic training is that it combines all of these practices to work exclusively with individuals who are physically active.

**What are the differences between the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA), the NATA/Board of Certification (BOC), and the Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)?**

The National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA), founded in 1950, is a not-for-profit organization with more than 30,000 members nationwide. The mission of the NATA is to enhance the quality of health care provided by certified athletic trainers and to enhance the athletic training profession. Based in Dallas, Texas the NATA provides a variety of services to its membership including continuing education, governmental affairs and public relations. The NATA publishes the *Journal of Athletic Training*, a quarterly scientific journal; the *Athletic Training Education Journal*, a quarterly journal pertaining to didactic and clinical education; and *NATA News*, a monthly membership magazine.

The NATA/Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC), incorporated in 1989 as an independent non-profit organization, provides the certification program for entry-level Athletic Trainers (ATs). Protecting the public is a central focus of their mission. As such, the BOC establishes and regularly reviews both the standards for the practice of athletic training in the United States, and regulates continuing education requirements for BOC certified ATs. The BOC is the only accredited certification program for ATs in the U.S.

The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) is the agency responsible for the accreditation of 350-plus professional (entry-level)
undergraduate and graduate athletic training educational programs (ATEP). The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) and the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) cooperate to sponsor CAATE and collaborate to develop the Standards for Entry-Level Athletic Training Educational Programs. CAATE qualifies graduates of a CAATE accredited ATEP to sit for the BOC certification examination. Bridgewater State University has reaccreditation status for both the undergraduate and graduate athletic training programs.

**Do I have to attend an accredited Athletic Training Program to become certified as an athletic trainer?**

To sit for the BOC certification exam, candidates must graduate from a CAATE (Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education) accredited entry-level athletic training program. This can be an undergraduate entry-level program or a graduate entry-level program.

Accredited Athletic Training Education Programs include the following curricular areas:

**Basic and Applied Sciences:**

- Human anatomy
- Human physiology
- Biology
- Statistics and research design
- Exercise physiology

- Kinesiology/biomechanics
- Chemistry *
- Physics *

*Recommended but not required by some ATEPs

**Professional Content:**

- Risk management and injury prevention
- Pathology of injuries and illnesses
- Orthopedic clinical examination and diagnosis
- Medical conditions and disabilities
- Acute care of injuries and illnesses
- Therapeutic modalities
- Conditioning, rehabilitative exercise and referral
- Pharmacology
- Psychosocial intervention and referral
- Nutritional aspects of injuries and illnesses
- Health care administration

And Health/Wellness

**What is the BOC certification exam?**
In order to qualify as a candidate for the BOC certification exam, an individual must be endorsed by the recognized Program Director of the CAATE accredited education program. During the final semester of the degree program at Bridgewater State University you will be eligible to sit for the BOC certification exam that will give you the credential of ATC upon formal graduation from the institution. The Board of Certification (BOC) in conjunction with CASTLE™ Worldwide, Inc. offers its ATC® credentialing examination on-demand through a national network of proctored and secure computer-based testing facilities.

**Where do BOC Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC) work?**

More than 50 percent of athletic trainers work outside of school athletic settings; they provide services to people of all ages. Athletic trainers work in physician offices as physician extenders. They also work in rural and urban hospitals, hospital emergency rooms, urgent and ambulatory care centers, military hospitals, physical therapy clinics, secondary schools, colleges/universities, youth leagues, commercial settings and professional sports teams. They are in great demand for their versatile health and wellness services and injury and illness prevention skills. The skills of ATs have been sought and valued by sports medicine specialists and other physicians for more than 60 years. As the U.S. continues its focus on reducing the effects of obesity and other chronic diseases, it is important that people have access to health care professionals who can support lifelong, safe physical activity. ATs are an important part of the health care workforce, especially as the demand for workers is projected to greatly increase over the next decade.

**What are average starting salaries?**

This question is difficult to answer because it depends on which area of the country and what setting you work in. According to a 2008 salary survey across all settings, ATCs with 0-1 years of work experience averaged $29,749; ATCs with 5-10 years of experience averaged $41,677. Overall salaries for bachelor’s degree ATC’s was $39,096 and master’s degree ATC’s was $44,707.

**What are the out of pocket costs associated with the program?**

Students accepted into the ATEP bear all costs associated with admission, didactic, and clinical experiences. These associated expenses may include, but not limited to:

- **Physical examination and up-to-date immunizations**: Physical exams can be performed at BSU Health Services at no cost to the student. Standard immunizations, tetanus (Td), measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and hepatitis B, are also administered free of cost to registered students. Flu and meningitis immunizations are given 'at cost'. Meningitis immunizations are roughly $100; flu immunizations, when available vary depending on market costs. BSU Health Services does not third party bill (submit fees to insurance companies). If your health insurance covers immunization including the meningitis immunization through your primary care provider, that route may be more cost-effective.
CPR and First Aid Cards ($10 each if taken on-campus; off-campus classes may exceed $50 and travel costs
Annual Bloodborne Pathogen training and certification - $15 done online
National Athletic Trainers’ Association membership - $90 (2012 dues structure)
Daily travel to/from campus to your clinical site - average 15-45 miles one way;
students typically have two rotations at sites 35-45 miles away from BSU and two
rotations 10-15 miles away from BSU. When possible, students will be paired up
to travel to some affiliated clinical sites to reduce travel expenses.
Travel to/from physician’s office for orthopedic exams or to watch surgical
procedures.
Uniform staff shirts $20-$30 each
Background (CORI) checks (if required by your clinical site) will be paid for by the
clinical site.

About The Entry-Level Undergraduate Program Admissions

When do I apply to the ATEP?

All students apply by March 1 of the spring semester, typically sophomore year. Please
contact the Undergraduate Program Director for specific information. In any case, the
application will be evaluated for completeness, content, and clarity. Decisions will be
made by the ATEP selection committee.

What are the requirements for admission into the Undergraduate ATEP?

Students must meet the following requirements to be admitted into the athletic training
professional preparation program:

1. Formal letter of application into the ATEP
2. Copy of official transcripts from any college attended
3. Signed Oath of Confidentiality
4. Signed Technical Standards
5. Interview with members of the ATEP Faculty Committee.
6. Successful completion of prerequisites including 40 semester hours. A
   B- or better grade must be attained in PHED 100, ATTR 240, 241,
   and BIOL 251.
7. Documentation of a minimum of 50 hours of athletic training
   observation (arranged through ATTR 241).
8. Two letters of recommendation (one must come from an athletic
   trainer who has supervised you in a clinical setting).

Students meeting all of the requirements above will be evaluated by the Program faculty
with a decision rendered as to their status into the professional phase of the program.
Students accepted into the professional phase must enroll in ATTR 340, 450 and 342
(typically the fall semester junior year) and receive an in major GPA equivalent of B or better in all classes to remain in the ATEP.

**Do you accept undergraduate transfer students?**

Yes, but transfer students must complete all requirements for the undergraduate ATEP. Depending on your past coursework some classes may count towards fulfilling our requirements. Please contact the Undergraduate Program Director about your situation during your fall sophomore year to ensure a smooth transition.

**How many students apply to the ATEP, and how many are accepted?**

It varies every year, but on average about 20-25 undergraduate applicants apply into the ATEP with 12-16 students accepted into the professional phase.

**I'm currently a BSU student, how can I improve my chances of being accepted into the ATEP?**

There are many things that can be done to improve your application into the ATEP. First, complete all of the pre-professional athletic training classes prior to your application. These include:

- PHED 100 Applied Musculoskeletal Anatomy
- BIOL 102 Introduction to Zoology
- ATTR 100 Taping and Bracing
- ATTR 112 Sports First Aid
- BIOL 251 Anatomy and Physiology I
- ATTR 240 Introduction to Athletic Training

Secondly, you may want to talk with as many athletic training students and faculty/staff in the ATEP. During your directed observation experience in ATTR 241, try not to be too shy and let us know who you are. Be professional at all times. Follow the dress code, speak appropriately, and maintain a good rapport with the athletes. This allows everyone to know who you are, and can determine your commitment to the profession. Finally, strive to maintain high academic standards through strong study habits and responsible behaviors.

**I'm currently in high school, how can I improve my chances of being accepted in the Athletic Training Education Program?**

If possible, volunteer to help a certified athletic trainer at your high school or local physical therapy/sports medicine clinic. If you can't do that on a regular basis, see if you can at least job shadow an athletic trainer for one to two days. Ask as many questions as possible about the profession and what a typically week is like.

Take classes such as anatomy to see if you like learning about the human body.
Becoming certified in first aid and CPR can also be very beneficial. The following organizations have classes throughout the year:

- American Red Cross
- American Heart Association
- National Safety Council

**Who should I ask to write my recommendation letters?**

We recommend that you ask people such as Athletic Trainers (other than the ones at BSU) teachers, coaches, and employers. Avoid asking neighbors or friends of the family who may less objectively attest to your academic ability or work ethic. At least one of the recommendations must be written by an athletic trainer who has observed you in a clinical setting to be evidence of your dependability, responsible nature, and desire to become an athletic trainer.

**Can I substitute clinical hours from sites other than BSU (i.e. my high school, local clinic) for the 50 observation hours in ATTR 241 which I need to apply to the program?**

Yes. Although you are welcome to do your hours at another site, it is in your best interest to do the majority of your hours at BSU. This will give the Athletic Training Staff an opportunity to get to know you, and for you to learn where supplies are kept, what some of the policies and procedures are, and whether or not you might enjoy working in athletic training.

**What if I don't get into the athletic training education program the first time I apply?**

You have two options. One, you may reapply into the undergraduate program next year. We will assist you in identifying and correcting your deficiencies. We will let you know if you should consider pursuing another major/profession. Most of the time, those that don't get into the program have poor grades, do not seem to display a full awareness of our program or the profession, or have not demonstrated good interpersonal skills or professionalism. The other option is to change majors, complete the undergraduate degree and apply into the entry-level master’s program.

**Can I take Athletic Training classes without being accepted into the Program?**

There are a few introductory classes that you can take, such as ATTR 100 Taping and Bracing and ATTR 112 Sports First Aid. The higher level classes are designed for only those students in the ATEP. However, if you have met the prerequisites for the lecture/lab classes, you are welcome to enroll in those classes.

**Do you have any scholarships available for Athletic Training?**
Not at this time, but we have a variety of scholarship/awards for outstanding student performance at the University. You can see these scholarships/awards on the Website under Student Services.

**About Our Undergraduate Clinical Experience**

**When do I begin my clinical experiences?**

If you are accepted into the professional program during the spring semester, you will begin the formal clinical program during the subsequent fall semester.

**What clinical experiences will I receive?**

Students will engage in variety of clinical experiences/assignments with BSU teams and off-campus affiliated sites during their tenure in the ATEP. All clinical experiences are under the supervision of a licensed and certified athletic trainer. Required clinical assignments are categorized to include general medical conditions, upper extremity injuries, lower extremity injuries, and equipment intensive sports (e.g., football, hockey). These assignments are distributed through individual/team sports, in-season/out-of-season sports, contact/non-contact sports, and men/women's sports. Clinical assignments are made by the Coordinator of Clinical Education.

Student-athletes accepted into the program may continue to participate in their one season sport provided: (1) they make every effort to put in additional hours prior to the start of the season; (2) put in clinical hours on days that there is no practice or competitive events; (3) they immediately begin clinical rotations once participation has ended for the season, and (4) must demonstrate that they have completed the minimum number of clinical hours each semester. Failure to complete the minimum number of hours for the clinical class may lead to a failing grade in the class, which could result in removal from the program. The majority of the clinical experiences will be completed in the afternoon during 1-6 PM. However, certain sports will practice either earlier or later than this time, and many games are in the evening or on weekends. Once a student is assigned to an approved clinical instructor/sport, they are to check with the ACI about the practice time for that sport.

**What clinical experiences do I complete?**

Students with no experience in athletic training from their high schools or previous colleges will be assigned initially to the BSU Athletic Training Room. After a full semester on campus, and for those students with past experience, students may do clinical rotations off-campus. All students are required to do at least one rotation at an area high school/college and complete hours at a physical therapy clinic and at a physician’s office or health center for general medical conditions. Practicum’s are primarily supervised by Approved Clinical Instructors (ACI) in school settings and guided by the clinical class instructor.
Can I work part-time or participate in extra-curricular activities (e.g., varsity sports, fraternities or sororities) while in the athletic training education program?

Once formally accepted into the program, athletic training students are required to complete 200 laboratory/clinical hours per semester for four consecutive semesters. It is recommended that not less than two hours or more than six hours be done on any given day, and the hours should average 20-25 each week throughout the semester. These hours typically occur from 2-9 p.m. Monday through Saturday depending on the clinical rotation. Because of this time commitment, it may not be possible to work part-time or participate in extra-curricular activities during these hours. Individuals who have concerns about meeting the laboratory/clinical hourly requirement should meet with the Undergraduate ATEP Program Director prior to applying into the ATEP. If playing a major sport is an issue, a recommended option is to complete an undergraduate degree in another subject area, and apply into the graduate entry-level ATEP upon completing the bachelor’s degree program. Go to ADMISSIONS listed below to download the application process and packet for the graduate ATEP application requirements.

About Graduate Program Admissions

What are the requirements for admission into the Athletic Training Education Program?

Preference will be given to students applying into the graduate entry-level program who demonstrate completion of the following prerequisite course work with a B- or better prior to the February 1 deadline.

- One full year of anatomy and physiology (may include separate courses in Human Anatomy and Human Physiology OR a combined course such as Anatomy and Physiology I and II).
- Introductory Psychology
- Care and Prevention of Athletic Injuries OR Introduction to Athletic Training (must show competencies in taping, bracing, and protective equipment)
- Kinesiology OR Biomechanics
- Exercise Physiology OR Exercise Science

In addition to completion of the above prerequisites, students must have:

- Overall GPA of a 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale GRE exam scores are NOT REQUIRED if the GPA is over 3.0
- Three strong letters of recommendation

Other students will be considered for admission in the following order of preference provided they also have three strong letters of recommendation:

1. Those who have completed all prerequisites with a B- or better and have between a 2.5 and 2.99 grade point average with a GRE score greater than 152 on both the quantitative and verbal portions of the exam.
2. Those who have higher than a 3.0 overall grade point average, but may be deficient on a prerequisite.

3. Those who have between a 2.5 and 2.99 grade point average with a GRE score greater than 152 on both the quantitative and verbal portions of the exam, but may be deficient on a prerequisite.

**Applicants with less than a 2.5 grade point average and/or less than a 152 on both the quantitative and verbal portions of the exam will not be considered for admission. In addition, candidates who do not have a completed admission folder by March 1 in the College of Graduate Studies not be considered for admission into the current year’s cohort group.**

Students admitted conditionally must enroll and complete the following classes with a B or better to be retained in the program: ATTR 540, 550, 561, and 562.

**How many students apply to the ATEP each year, and how many are accepted?**

It varies every year, but on the average there are about 20-30 completed applications reviewed. Of these, 10-12 graduate students are accepted annually into the ATEP cohort group.

**I'm currently a BSU student, how can I improve my chances of being accepted into the Athletic Training Education Program?**

It is critical to complete all prerequisites with a B- or better prior to admission into the ATEP by the February 1 deadline. In addition, if you have less than a 3.0 overall grade point average, then it is important to score above 152 on both the quantitative and verbal portions on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) to balance the lower grade point average. The GRE should be taken during the fall semester prior to application so that all documentation is completed and in your folder at the College of Graduate Studies prior to the February deadline.

**Who should I ask to write my recommendation letters?**

At least one recommendation must come from a professor that can attest to your ability to handle graduate academic work including your ability to write and speak effectively, demonstrate decision making skills, work collaborative with class mates, and respect the rights of your peers and educators. At least one of the recommendations should be written by an athletic trainer who has observed you in a clinical setting, OR an employer who can attest to your dependability, responsible nature, and desire to become an athletic trainer. The third letter may come from anyone. We would recommend that this individual also be someone who can discuss your responsible, mature nature.

**Can I take Athletic Training classes without being accepted into the Program?**
University policy allows only the completion of two classes (six credits) prior to formal acceptance into a graduate program. If you choose to do this, it is recommended that you enroll in ATTR 511/PHED 511 as one of the two classes. You may not register for any other ATTR classes prior to being accepted into the program. You may, however, register for any other graduate level class.

_Do you have any scholarships or graduate assistantships available for Athletic Training?_

At this time, we have no scholarship/awards for incoming graduate athletic training students. The College of Graduate Studies does have some graduate assistantships and research assistantships available on campus. If you are interested in applying for any of these assistantships, contact the College of Graduate Studies.

**About Our Graduate Clinical Experience**

**When do I begin classes?**

Once accepted, the first clinical class begins in mid-August, and is taught by the Coordinator of Clinical Education. This class, ATTR 561 Level 1 Clinical Experience in Athletic Training, will introduce you into the clinical aspect of the ATEP. The first class meeting is primarily a “meet and greet,” and will include a comprehensive look at the entire program and student outcomes. The next two days of class is totally hands-on with a review of musculoskeletal anatomy, basic injury assessment and treatment, acute care, and reviewing basic taping and bracing techniques. All students will then begin their first 50 hours of clinical experience at a site assigned to you by the Coordinator of Clinical Education. The class with reconvene prior to the start of the fall semester for a “clinical debriefing” session. Fall clinical assignments begin on the first day of the fall semester. Clinical assignments will be provided during your final summer class time.

**What clinical experiences will I receive?**

Students will engage in variety of clinical experiences/assignments with BSU teams and off-campus affiliated sites during their tenure in the athletic training education program. All clinical experiences are under the supervision of an approved clinical instructor (ACI). Clinical assignments are categorized and expose students to general medical conditions, upper extremity injuries, lower extremity injuries, and equipment intensive sports (e.g., football, hockey). These assignments will be distributed through individual and team sports, in-season/out-of-season sports, contact and non-contact sports, and men and women's sports. Athletic training student clinical assignments will be made by the Coordinator of Clinical Education. The majority of the clinical experiences will be completed in the afternoon during 2-7 PM. However, certain sports will practice either earlier or later than this time, and many games are in the evening or on weekends. Once a student is assigned to an approved clinical instructor, they are to check with the ACI about the practice time for that sport.
What clinical experiences do I complete?

Students with no experience in athletic training from their high schools or previous colleges will be assigned initially to the BSU Athletic Training Room. After a full semester on campus, and for those students with past experience, all students may do clinical rotations off-campus at one of more than 25 approved clinical sites. All students are required to do at least one rotation at an area high school and college, and complete at least 40 hours at a physical therapy clinic, 12-15 hours of a general medical rotation (This may be done at the BSU Health Services) and at least 8 hours working shadowing an orthopedist. Practicum’s are assigned by the Coordinator of Clinical Education and supervised by Approved Clinical Instructors (ACI).

About Our Graduates

What is the First-Time Pass/Fail rate of our students taking the BOC Certification Examination?

For the past three years, the BSU pass rate for the BOC examination has been well above the national average. In 2009-2010 academic year 80% of the graduate students (N=12) passed the BOC examination on the first time; 100% passed the second time. The national average was 43.3% and 33.7%, respectfully. In 2010-2011, again, 80% of the graduate students (N=8) passed the BOC exam on the first time; 100% passed the second time. The national average for this year was 60.7% for first passing rate and 34/1% passing rate for retakes. In 2011-2012, 100% of the graduate students (N=8) passed the BOC exam on the first time. In 2012-2013 90% of the graduate students (N=12) passed the BOC exam on their first attempt with the national average being 80%. The Undergraduate program has seen improvements of first time passing rates from 16% in 2009-2010; 30% in 2010-2011; 80% in 2011-2012 and 60% in 2012-2013. Over the past years, nearly 100% of those students who sought certification are now certified and employed in athletic training or a related field.

What do our students do upon graduation?

Bridgewater State University graduates take a variety of paths to success. Most graduates are immediately employed by area colleges or high schools. In some instances, hospitals hire the graduates to work in an outpatient rehabilitation clinic and then subcontract the athletic trainer to area high schools. Others go on to pursue a Master's degree or doctorate while working as a graduate assistant in that University's athletic training department. Many then accept jobs at clinics, high schools, colleges and universities. Still others pursue post-professional training in physical therapy or medicine as a physician assistant, podiatrist, or chiropractic medicine.

What have been the unique successes of students completing the ATEP?

The ATEP has enjoyed a fair amount of notoriety. In some part, this notoriety is due to the success/visibility of some of its alumni, faculty, and past professional staff. In some
part it is also due to the current recognition of its clinical education program and related research. Many athletic trainers who have attended or worked at Bridgewater State University have held leadership positions within the NATA or the BOC. One of the current faculty served as the District I Director for four years, received an Outstanding Service Award, Most Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award, and was inducted into the NATA Hall of Fame in 2005. Another faculty member, known nationally as the lead author of *Foundations of Athletic Training: Prevention, Assessment and Management*, (one of the leading athletic training textbooks in the United States and Canada), has served on the BOC Board of Directors, and has also received an Outstanding Service Award, Most Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award, was inducted into the inaugural Hall of Fame for the Athletic Trainers of Massachusetts (ATOM) and joined her colleague in the NATA Hall of Fame in 2011. Another faculty member received an Outstanding Service Award in 2010, while yet two others received national recognition for research and writing.

Graduates of our ATEP hold or have held prominent positions as Athletic Trainers for the New England Patriots, Pawtucket Red Sox, Cape Cod Baseball League, Ottawa Links of the Baltimore Orioles, University of New Haven, Yale University, Brown University, Stonehill College, Kansas State University, San Jose State University, Stanford University, University of Miami, University of Delaware, Williams College, Bridgewater State University, Nichols College, Boston College, Tufts University, Wheaton College, Wellesley College, Brockton High School, New Bedford High School, Taunton High School, and have been Athletic Training educators at the University of North Florida, Southern Illinois University, LaSalle University and Bridgewater State University.