

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

ATHLETIC TRAINING

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Preparing for a Career in Athletic Training

Since 1996, when the American Medical Association recognized athletic training as an allied health profession, specialized health care for athletes and the physically active has continued to expand and draw more interest from students each year. The University of Pittsburgh undergraduate athletic training education program, established in 1978 as a National Athletic Trainers' Association-approved curriculum, has since passed an extensive program evaluation, and is currently accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). This well-established program in athletic training prepares students for a career in the multidisciplinary field of sports medicine.

The athletic training education program, enrolling approximately 40 students, is structured to provide a rigorous plan of study to include both academic and clinical education experiences. Students study under the instruction and supervision of certified athletic trainers, team orthopedic and primary care physicians, researchers, and other allied health personnel. Clinical experiences include direct patient care and evaluation of skills by an approved clinical instructor who supervises the student's clinical experience. Students rotate through three on-campus athletic training facilities and several off-site affiliated settings during their clinical education, acquiring valuable skills under the direct supervision of certified athletic training staff in a variety of settings including all levels of collegiate athletics, secondary schools, sports medicine clinics, and professional sports.

As a part of the internationally renowned School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, the athletic training education program leads to a Bachelor of Science degree in Athletic Training. Upon successful completion of the four-year baccalaureate degree, students are eligible to challenge the Board of Certification (BOC) Inc. examination. Passing this national exam awards the candidate with the credential of ATC® along with opportunities in a variety of employment settings, including athletic training positions at the high school, college, or university level; sports medicine and rehabilitation clinics; and professional athletic teams. Additionally, many students pursue graduate education opportunities in a number of sports medicine-related professions.

Requirements

To pursue a degree in athletic training, you begin by taking courses in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences in the School of Arts and Sciences during your freshman and sophomore years. You need to fulfill the following prerequisites during your first two years, prior to applying to the program:

- I. Complete at least 60 credits, including these courses (a grade of C- or better is required for 1–11 and B or better for 12–13):
 1. Foundations of Biology/Lab (4) (BIOSC 150)
 2. General Chemistry/Lab (4) (CHEM 0110)
 3. Introduction to Physics (3) (PHYS 0110)
 4. Mathematics (3) (MATH 0031)
 5. Statistics (4) (STAT 0200)
 6. Psychology (6) (PSY 0010, 0310)
 7. Writing/English Composition (6) (ENGCOMP 0200 minimum)
 8. Computer Science (3) (CS 0131)
 9. Public Speaking (3) (COMMRC 0520)
 10. Humanities Electives (6) to include courses from the arts, economics, English literature, foreign languages, history, music, philosophy, sociology
 11. Emergency Medical Technician (4) (EM 1102)
 12. Basic Athletic Training (3) (REHSCI 1811)
 13. Basic Athletic Training Lab (1) (REHSCI 1812)



- II. Maintain an overall minimum grade point average of 2.5.
- III. Complete 45 clinical observation hours under the direct supervision of the certified athletic training staff at the University of Pittsburgh.
- IV. Submit proof of 20 hours of observation outside the University of Pittsburgh and under the direct supervision of a certified athletic trainer. The 20 hours must be distributed evenly between a high school and a sports medicine clinic.
- V. Completion of admissions application including technical standards for admission.

Note: While not a requirement, students also should exhibit personal qualities of enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment to athletic training, physical fitness, and good health.

Curriculum

The following course sequence is recommended for your freshman and sophomore years:

Freshman Year

First Term (16 credits)

BIOSC 0150/0050 Foundations of Biology/Lab (4)
 ENGCOMP 0200 General Writing (3)
 MATH 0031 Algebra (3)
 Elective (3)
 Elective (3)

Second Term (14 credits)

CHEM 0110 Chemistry/Lab (4)
 PSY 0010 Introduction to Psychology (3)
 Composition Elective (3)
 STAT 0200 Basic Applied Statistics (4)*

Sophomore Year

First Term (16 credits)

PSY 0310 Developmental Psychology (3)*
 PHYS 0110 Introduction to Physics 1 (3)
 REHSCI 1811 Basic Athletic Training (3)+%
 REHSCI 1812 Basic Athletic Training Lab (1)+%

Second Term (16 credits)

EM 1102 Emergency Medical Technician (4)+
 COMMRC 0520 Public Speaking (3)
 CS 0131 Software for Personal Computing (3)*
 Elective (3)
 Elective (3)

Junior Year

First Term (18 credits)

REHSCI 1200 Human Anatomy and Lab (4)
 REHSCI 1205 Human Physiology and Lab (4)
 REHSCI 1821 Injury Evaluation and Treatment 1 (3)
 REHSCI 1824 Athletic Training Practicum 1 (3)
 REHSCI 1831 Therapeutic Modalities and Lab (4)

Second Term (15 credits)

REHSCI 1220 Kinesiology and Biomechanics (3)
 REHSCI 1822 Injury Evaluation and Treatment 2 (3)
 REHSCI 1832 Therapeutic Exercise and Lab (4)
 REHSCI 1833 Strength and Conditioning (2)
 REHSCI 1835 Athletic Training Practicum 2 (3)

Senior Year

First Term (14–18 credits)

HRS 1006 Introduction to Human Nutrition (3)
 REHSCI 1215 Exercise Physiology (3)
 REHSCI 1225 Introduction to Rehabilitation Sciences (1)
 REHSCI 1235 Medical Terminology (1)
 REHSCI 1823 Administrative Aspects of Athletic Training (3)
 REHSCI 1841 Athletic Training Practicum 3 (3)
 Elective (1–4)

Second Term (14–18 credits)

HRS 1000 Introduction to Research (3)
 REHSCI 1265 Pharmacology (3)
 REHSCI 1834 Special Topics in Athletic Training (2)
 REHSCI 1842 Athletic Training Practicum 4 (3)
 REHSCI 1866 Psychology of Sport (3)
 Elective (1–4)

* Indicates the recommended course

+ Indicates course may be taken in either fall or spring term

% Basic Athletic Training and Basic Athletic Training Lab should be taken by the end of the first term of the sophomore year.

The certified athletic trainer is a highly educated and skilled professional specializing in athletic health care. In cooperation with physicians and other allied health personnel, the athletic trainer functions as an integral member of the athletic health-care team in secondary schools, colleges and universities, sports medicine clinics, professional sports programs, and other athletic healthcare settings.

Education

Certified athletic trainers have, at minimum, a bachelor's degree, in athletic training. In addition, athletic trainers study human anatomy, human physiology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, pharmacology, nutrition, and psychology/counseling. Athletic training students also participate in extensive clinical affiliations with athletic teams under appropriate supervision.

Certification

Certified athletic trainers have fulfilled the requirements for certification established by the Board of Certification Inc. The certification examination administered by the BOC Inc. evaluates the skill acquisition and clinical decision-making abilities of eligible candidates seeking certification as entry-level athletic trainers. The examination covers a variety of topics within the six practice domains of athletic training, including:

- Prevention
- Clinical Evaluation and Diagnosis
- Immediate Care
- Treatment, Rehabilitation, and Reconditioning
- Organization and Administration
- Professional Responsibility

Once athletic trainers successfully pass the BOC Inc. certification examination proving skills and knowledge within each of the six domains, they are awarded the credential ATC®.

A Typical Day

The typical day for a certified athletic trainer varies with the level of competition, employment setting—traditional, clinical, industrial, or corporate—and other institutional requirements. Some high school athletic trainers are hired by school districts and also may teach. These individuals must manage their time carefully to ensure that students receive professional academic instruction in the classroom and quality health care in athletic endeavors.

Prior to athletic participation, the athletic trainer employs a number of preventative measures for patients such as taping, bandaging, wrapping, and bracing as well as strengthening and conditioning. During participation, the athletic trainer evaluates injuries and other medical conditions and determines whether referral to a physician is necessary or if following standing orders is more appropriate. The athletic trainer must ensure continual communication between the injured individual, physician, coach, and family on when and how a return to practice and competition can be safely and successfully accomplished.

As specialists in the prevention, recognition, and rehabilitation of injuries and illnesses incurred by athletes and the physically active, athletic trainers administer immediate emergency care and, under the supervision of a licensed physician, use their knowledge of these conditions and the factors influencing them to develop a treatment and rehabilitation program based on medical, exercise, and sports sciences.

Female Athletic Trainers

Although athletic training was once considered a male-dominated profession, more than 50 percent of all members of the National Athletic Trainers' Association are women.

Applying

You apply to the athletic training program during the spring term of your sophomore year and are admitted for the fall term of your junior year. If you follow the recommended sequence, the athletic training curriculum can be completed within four years. Your application must include one letter of recommendation, a statement of your career goals, a self-evaluation, and an interview with the selection committee.

Getting Active, Getting Involved

As someone interested in sports and the allied health-related professions, you will find hundreds of opportunities and places to get active on the Pitt campus. There are 19 varsity sports teams on campus, all of which compete in the Big East Conference, including baseball, basketball, cross country, football, gymnastics, soccer, swimming and diving, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling. Intramural programs are offered in many of these sports as well. Campus locations such as the Fitzgerald Field House, Trees Hall, and the Petersen Events Center give you access to basketball, squash, and handball/racquetball courts, weight and exercise rooms, an indoor track, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and a dance studio, as well as equipment for wrestling and gymnastics. Clubs on campus bring together devotees of activities such as rowing, martial arts, bowling, rugby, lacrosse, fencing, skiing, and ice hockey. There are great places to play tennis, golf, bike, ski, hike, go white water rafting, and camp in the city or within an hour's drive. On a larger scale, Pittsburgh is home to the Penguins, Steelers, and Pirates major league sports teams.

For more information on the athletic training education program, contact:

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For information on majors in the School of Arts and Sciences, contact:

University of Pittsburgh
Office of Admissions and Financial Aid
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