



**Athletic Training Program Handbook
Master of Science in Athletic Training
Western Carolina University**

June 2022

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SECTION I: PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

The Athletic Training Handbook has been designed to maintain an effective and efficient athletic training program at Western Carolina University (WCU). The contents of this manual are designed to provide policies and procedures to guide quality athletic training education along with safe, prudent, and effective care for the patients with which we interact. This document will serve as a required and referenced text for all athletic training courses throughout the program. Furthermore, the athletic training faculty and preceptors will use this manual as a guide for administrative and professional decisions pertaining to the Athletic Training Program. It is imperative that athletic training students are knowledgeable of the contents of this manual. Any questions about the content of this document should be directed to the Athletic Training faculty.

CAATE Accreditation Status

The Western Carolina University Athletic Training Program achieved its initial accreditation in 2007 and its reaccreditation, for the maximum allowable 10 years, in 2012. In 2019, the Athletic Training Program was approved to move to the post-baccalaureate level beginning in 2020. The Western Carolina University Athletic Training Program will undergo re-accreditation in 2022-2023.

Program History

The athletic training program at Western Carolina University, established in 2004, admitted its first class for the 2004 – 2005 academic year. Dr. James Scifers was the founding Director of the Program and was hired in 2003. Professor Jill Manners was hired in 2004 as the founding Clinical Education Coordinator. The Athletic Training Program was initially housed in the Department of Health Sciences in the College of Applied Sciences and was based in Moore Hall, Room 306. In 2007, the program graduated its first class of 12 students, all of whom became certified and licensed athletic trainers. In 2010, Jill Manners became Program Director. In 2017, Dr. Melissa Snyder stepped into the role of Program Director, Tara Peterson assumed the role of Coordinator of Clinical Education, and Dr. Ashley Thrasher became the Didactic Education Coordinator. In 2020, Dr. Ashley Thrasher assumed the role of Program Director for the Master of Science in Athletic Training Program while Dr. Melissa Snyder continued as the Program Director for the undergraduate program until 2022.

In 2020, the Athletic Training Program moved to the post-baccalaureate level. The last graduating class at the baccalaureate level is the Class of 2022. The inaugural cohort for the Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) cohort began in 2020. Currently, this program is housed in the College of Health and Human Sciences and within the School of Health Sciences. The Athletic Training Program is housed in the Health and Human Sciences Building, rooms 351 – 355.

Current and Previous Athletic Training Faculty Members:

Nicholas Martin, MS, LAT, ATC	2006 – 2007
Doug Branch, MS, LAT, ATC	2010 – 2011
Ashley Long, PhD, LAT, ATC	2008 – 2013
C. Robert Dingle, HSD, LAT ATC	2011 – 2014
James Scifers, DScPT, PT, SCS, LAT, ATC	2003 – 2015
Kent Scriber, EdD, LAT, ATC, FNATA	Spring 2016
Jill Manners, MS, MPT, LAT, ATC, PT, COMT	2004 – 2018
Julie Miller, MAEd, ATC	2018 – 2020
Tara Peterson, MS, LAT, ATC, CSCS	2013 – Present
Melissa Snyder, PhD, LAT, ATC, CSCS	2014 – Present
Ashley Thrasher, EdD, LAT, ATC, CSCS	2016 – Present
Jessica Kirby, EdD, LAT, ATC	2020 – Present

Current and Previous Adjunct Faculty
Erin Grimsley, MS, LAT, ATC
Lynette Gibson, MS, LAT, ATC
Emily Mitzel, MS, LAT ATC
Angela Arndt, MS, LAT, ATC
Sarah Gilleland, MS, LAT, ATC

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SECTION II: VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

WCU Vision Statement

To be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.

WCU Mission Statement

Western Carolina University creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on campus, off campus, on-line and international experiences. The university focuses its undergraduate, master's and three doctoral programs, educational outreach, research, creative, and cultural activities to sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina and beyond.

WCU Core Values and Guiding Principles

1. Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Scholarship, and Service
2. Collaboration with and Respect for our Communities
3. Free and Open Interchange of Ideas
4. Responsible Stewardship and Organizational Effectiveness
5. Organizational and Environmental Sustainability
6. Cultural Diversity and Equal Opportunity

College of Health and Human Sciences Vision Statement

To make a positive and lasting impact on the well-being of the communities we serve.

College of Health and Human Sciences Mission Statement

The College of Health and Human Sciences serves students and communities through an active learning environment that uses interprofessional collaboration and scholarship to develop healthcare professionals skilled in patient-centered care, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, innovative technology, and community engagement. We value serving the people of Appalachia.

College of Health and Human Sciences Core Values

1. Integrity
2. Inclusive Excellence
3. Respect
4. Service
5. Compassion
6. Leadership
7. Collaboration
8. Altruism

School of Health Sciences Vision Statement

The School of Health Sciences aspires to develop exceptional leaders in the health professions through active learning and community engagement in a multi-disciplinary, collaborative learning environment.

School of Health Sciences Mission Statement

The School of Health Sciences cultivates exceptional health professionals.

School of Health Sciences Core Values

1. Respect
2. Integrity
3. Excellence
4. Collaboration
5. Student-Centered

Athletic Training Program Vision Statement

Through a comprehensive and innovative experience, the Western Carolina University Athletic Training Program aspires to be a recognized leader in preparing highly skilled and professionally progressive leaders in the field of athletic training.

Athletic Training Program Mission Statement

The mission of the WCU AT Program is to develop exceptional athletic training clinicians who provide patient-centered holistic care.

Athletic Training Program Core Values

1. Inclusiveness
2. Collaboration
3. Advocacy
4. Respect
5. Engagement

Athletic Training Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: The WCU Athletic Training Program will provide a comprehensive didactic and clinical education program to prepare graduates to become proficient athletic trainers.

- Objective 1.1: Graduates will pass the Board of Certification (BOC) Exam.
- Objective 1.2: Graduates will secure employment as athletic trainers.
- Objective 1.3: Students will matriculate through the Athletic Training Program within three years.
- Objective 1.4: Students will engage in high-quality clinical education experiences.

Goal 2: Graduates will provide high quality patient-centered care independently as athletic trainers.

- Objective 2.1: Demonstrate the ability to evaluate, synthesize, and apply athletic training knowledge and skills in order to develop a comprehensive plan of care.
- Objective 2.2: Demonstrate professional behaviors (e.g., ethical, moral, legal) consistent with professional and employment expectations for the entry-level athletic trainer.

Goal 3: Graduates will collaborate as a member of an inter-professional healthcare team while providing patient-centered care

- Objective 3.1: Students will demonstrate professional behaviors while interacting with a variety of healthcare professionals providing patient-centered care.
- Objective 3.2: Students will demonstrate verbal and written communication skills in order to successfully interact with stakeholders, maintain accurate medical records, and appropriately disseminate information.

Goal 4: Graduates will be able to critically evaluate current literature in order to guide clinical practice and address complex issues in Athletic Training

Objective 4.1: Students will use appropriate patient-centered clinical questions to identify and critically appraise current literature to guide clinical practice and address complex issues

Objective 4.2: Students will apply the available evidence and patient goals / values to implement current, safe, and effective patient care for complex issues.

Goal 5: Graduates will demonstrate professional engagement and serve the community in which they live.

Objective 5.1: Students will serve the community by participating in volunteer activities.

Objective 5.2: Students will be engaged in the profession as demonstrated by attending and presenting at professional conferences.

Objective 5.3: Students will evaluate the various determinants of health (e.g., social, economic, environmental, biological, policy/law, cultural) which may affect community healthcare.

Goal 6: The faculty of the WCU Athletic Training Program will maintain contemporary expertise to provide high quality instruction.

Objective 6.1: Faculty will participate in comprehensive analysis and reflective practice to improve instruction.

Objective 6.2: Faculty will engage in one professional development event directly related to one or more of their respective course assignments for the year.

Objective 6.3: Tenured/tenure-track faculty members will engage in scholarship to demonstrate contemporary expertise.

SECTION III: ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Academic Program

The Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) degree at Western Carolina University meets all academic and clinical requirements to allow students who successfully complete the program to be eligible to apply for the Board of Certification (BOC) Examination to become a Certified Athletic Trainer. The MSAT at Western Carolina University is currently accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). The Athletic Training Program fulfills the educational *Standards* as defined by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education and *Practice Analysis 7th edition* (2016) by the Board of Certification (BOC). These documents serve as guides for the construction of the BOC Certification Examination for Athletic Trainers. The NATA Code of Ethics and the BOC Standards of Professional Practice serve as guides regarding professional code of conduct. These documents provide the foundation for professional practice within the WCU Athletic Training Program and are expected to be followed at all times. Successful completion of the Athletic Training Program requires successful completion of all academic and clinical requirements.

Technical Standards

The Athletic Training Program at Western Carolina University is a rigorous and intense program that places specific requirements and demands on the students enrolled in the program. Athletic Trainers and Athletic Training Students must possess mental, physical, and behavioral abilities that are essential in providing patient care to a wide variety of patients/clients. The technical standards set forth by the Athletic Training Program establish the essential physical and mental skills and abilities a student needs to fulfill the academic and clinical requirements of the program. In the event a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, the student will not be able to begin the program or may be dismissed from the program. Compliance with the program's technical standards does not guarantee a student's eligibility for the BOC certification exam. See Appendix B for technical standards.

Prerequisite Course Policy

The prerequisite coursework required for the MSAT Program includes the following:

- 8 Credits of Anatomy and Physiology (must include lab)
- 4 Credits Biology (must include lab)
- 4 Credits Chemistry (must include lab)
- 4 Credits Physics (must include lab)
- 3 Credits Psychology (introduction)
- 3 Credits Nutrition

Students must successfully complete the pre-requisite coursework with a "C" or higher.

Prerequisite courses may be completed at a community college or through early college (post-secondary education); but must receive a letter grade score (e.g., A, B, C, D, F). Advanced Placement courses do not satisfy the prerequisite requirement. Courses must occur at the post-secondary level.

Prerequisite courses will be evaluated by the MSAT program faculty at the time of application. To determine if the courses are appropriate for prerequisites, the course prefix and title are evaluated. If there is a course that does not have a title that clearly demonstrates the prerequisite course is met (e.g., Introduction to Biology vs. Cells and Molecular Function), the faculty will request a course description to determine if requisite information is met. If the faculty

cannot make that determination from the course description, they will request the syllabus. The faculty will then evaluate the syllabus to determine if the appropriate course content is met.

If students have not completed all the prerequisite courses at the time of application, faculty will still review the application; however, any offers of admission will be contingent on successfully completing all the prerequisite courses with a grade of “C” or higher. Students must complete all prerequisite courses prior to beginning the MSAT program.

****Due to Covid-19, some universities instituted satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) grading. The MSAT faculty determined S/U grades would be accepted if courses are completed at an accredited post-secondary institution. Advanced Placement courses still do not satisfy the prerequisite requirements.**

Graduation Requirements

To complete the Athletic Training Program, students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Successfully complete each course with a B or higher and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students may receive a maximum of one C during the Athletic Training Program.
2. Successfully pass yearly comprehensive exams
3. Successfully complete all proficiencies
4. Successfully complete all clinical experiences
5. Meet the annual Professional Development Unit requirements

Refer to the [Graduate School catalog](#) for more information about graduation requirements and information.

Retention

The student is retained in the Athletic Training Program if the student maintains acceptable academic achievement, clinical progress, and appropriate professional conduct. Students may be placed on probation or dismissed from the Athletic Training Program for failure to meet the retention requirements. Remediation may be required for students placed on probation. In order to be retained in good standing:

1. Students are required to successfully complete all didactic and clinical coursework
2. Students are required to take all courses as outlined in the 6-semester plan
3. Students are required to pass all practical examinations
4. Students are required to practice the profession of athletic training in an ethical manner
5. Students are required to exercise good professional judgment
6. Students are required to adhere to all policies and procedures as outlined in the Athletic Training Handbook
7. Students are required to maintain an overall 3.0 Grade Point Average
8. Students must earn a grade of B or better in all courses. One C is permitted.
9. Students are required to join/renew membership to the National Athletic Trainers' Association each year
10. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all required program sessions including but not limited to courses, guest lectures, program meetings, and comprehensive examinations.

Remediation

If a student is placed on probation for any reason, remediation may be required. Remediation will be developed for students on a case-by-case basis guided by the area that needs remediation. Remediation may include, but is not limited to, additional readings, assignments, retaking practical examinations, or professional development activities. The Program Director

will notify students who are placed on probation. The faculty will determine the method of remediation, which will be communicated to the student by the Program Director. Once the student successfully completes remediation requirements, the Program Director will remove the probationary status and notify the student.

Dismissal and Readmission

Students may be dismissed from the Athletic Training Program if they fail to meet the retention requirements or technical standards. The Program Director will notify the Graduate School in writing of the decision to dismiss a student from the program. Students will be informed of the program dismissal by the Graduate School. Program dismissal does not automatically result in dismissal from the Graduate School; the student may apply to another WCU graduate program as long as they are in good academic standing (GPA of 3.0 or better and fewer than three Cs or one F). However, registration for future terms will be dropped and a registration hold will be applied to the student's record until s/he applies for and is accepted into another program.

Students are permitted to reapply to the program only once following dismissal. Program faculty will evaluate the request and examine a student's potential for success in the program. Approval of readmission may be accompanied by additional requirements. Upon readmission, the student must meet all program requirements under the graduate catalog in effect at the time of readmission unless the program faculty determines the student should meet requirements of the previous catalog. Refer to the Graduate School catalog for more information about dismissal and readmission.

Leave of Absence

On occasion, students who have been enrolled into the Athletic Training Program may request a leave of absence for personal or medical concerns. A leave of absence is granted to the student when they require absences in excess of several weeks. In cases of leaves of absence, students will be allowed to return to the program at the same point where the leave of absence was granted. Due to the nature of program design and the progressive nature of the curriculum, this is typically one full academic year after the leave of absence is granted. Students typically cannot progress out of sequence with didactic or clinical education. The leave of absence should not exceed one calendar year. Leave of absences will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Students who wish to request a leave of absence must complete the following steps:

1. Submit a letter to the Program Director requesting a leave of absence
2. Follow all Graduate School and University policies regarding medical or personal leave of absences
3. One semester prior to the student's return to the program, they must contact the Program Director, in writing, to identify any academic or clinical requirements that must be met in order to return to the program. Requirements may include, but are not limited to, background checks, drug screens, medical screenings, immunizations, and updated coursework.

Deferred Admission

On occasion, students who have been admitted to the Athletic Training Program may decide to defer their admission due to personal or medical concerns. In this case, students may defer admission for one year only. Students who have been granted a deferred admission may be required additional background checks, drug screens, or medical documentation prior to matriculation.

Students who wish to defer admission must pursue the following steps:

1. Once the admission letter is received, the student must accept their seat in the Athletic Training Program and return the contract as instructed.
2. The student must submit a letter addressed to the Program Director requesting a deferred admission and the rationale for requesting a deferral.
3. The Athletic Training Program Selection Committee will consider all deferral requests and a response will be sent to the student no more than 10 days following receipt of the request.
4. Once approved by the Athletic Training Program, the student will submit a deferral request to the Graduate School for review. Many considerations are involved, so applicants considering deferral are encouraged to contact the Graduate School as soon as possible.

SECTION IV: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Certification

Students must obtain CPR certification prior to their first day of clinical experiences and maintain certification continuously throughout their time in the Athletic Training Program. Students are expected to complete this training on their own. CPR certification must be BLS for the Healthcare Providers obtained through the American Heart Association. Verification must be submitted as directed by the Clinical Education Coordinator.

NATA Membership

Students are required to become members of the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) when they begin the Athletic Training Program and maintain membership throughout the program. Students need to provide proof of initial NATA membership within their first semester and proof of renewal by February 1 of each subsequent year.

Confidentiality

Students are expected to follow Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines and protect the privacy of patient information at all times. HIPAA protects security of health records and assures health insurance portability. FERPA provides students with rights in relation to their educational records. Students are expected to complete HIPAA and FERPA training provided by the Athletic Training Program training prior to attending clinical experiences.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class sessions. Any absence is incurred at the student's own risk and may impact course grades. Absences must be communicated with faculty prior to the absence. Refer to course syllabi and Graduate School Catalog for specific information.

Outside Employment

Students are discouraged from seeking outside employment due to the extensive time commitment of the program. Students who choose to work must complete all athletic training assignments and duties completely and within the expected time frame. Classes and clinical education experiences are the first priority. Students are not allowed to arrive to class or clinical experiences late, leave clinical experiences early, or request specific days off due to outside work obligations.

Technology

It is expected that students have a personal laptop or tablet that can be used throughout the program. There may be expectations for students to print hard copies of materials such as homework or laboratory assignments. Students have access to printers on campus or can utilize personal devices, but it is expected students print assignments or handouts prior to the due date or the start of class. All printing is done at the student's expense.

Graduate School Policies

Students are expected to adhere to the Western Carolina University Graduate School Academic Regulations. These include Class Attendance, Technology use in Classroom, Course and Grade Policies, Academic Integrity, Academic Dismissal, Withdrawals and Refund of Tuition and Fees, Academic Action Appeal, Code of Student Conduct, and Code of Ethics among others. Refer to the Graduate School Catalog for Academic Regulations (catalog.wcu.edu).

Terminology

Students are expected to use proper terminology in accordance with the National Athletic Trainers' Association. See Appendix A for accepted terminology.

Professionalism

Athletic Training students must maintain a high level of professionalism at all times. This includes but is not limited to attitude, confidentiality, attire, punctuality, professional relationships, and sensitivity. Athletic Training Students are expected to follow the NATA Code of Ethics (<https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/nata-code-of-ethics.pdf>), BOC Practice Standards and BOC Code of Professional Practice (https://www.bocatc.org/system/document_versions/versions/154/original/boc-standards-of-professional-practice-2018-20180619.pdf?1529433022).

Professional Differences of Opinion

Professional differences of opinion often arise in clinical and academic settings. Differences of opinion can occur between students, preceptors, and faculty. In the case where a difference of opinion arises, involved parties should discuss the matter in a professional, respectful, and ethical manner. The conversation should take place behind closed doors where voices are not raised and with respect for the opinions of the other party. Discussions should not attempt to discredit or ridicule the opposite party but instead focus on objective information related to the situation. Differences of opinions should not be discussed in front of patients or other students, unless the patient is in immediate danger.

If a difference of opinion arises, the individual who has the concern should first discuss the issue with the opposite party (student, faculty, preceptor) and attempt to resolve the matter. If the disagreement occurs in the clinical setting and an agreement cannot be reached, the student should discuss the difference of opinion with their clinical course professor and/or clinical education coordinator. If the disagreement occurs in the academic setting and an agreement cannot be reached, the student should discuss the difference of opinion with the program director or another faculty member. Students should not let professional differences of opinion impact the learning environment, both in class and clinical settings.

Professional Attitude

A professional attitude is essential in all aspects of the profession of athletic training. Professional attitude includes, but is not limited to:

- Being engaged
- Receptive to feedback
- Teachable
- Showing interest
- Eagerness
- Taking initiative
- Taking advantage of opportunities
- Work ethic
- Integrity
- Self-motivation
- Respect for others
- Courtesy
- Contribute to group and team
- Timeliness
- Admit mistakes and fix them
- Display leadership
- Show tenacity and determination
- Propose solutions to challenges
- Appreciate diversity
- Think critically and creatively
- Display emotional intelligence
- Accept and learn from criticism
- Be prepared
- Show gratitude
- Communicate appropriately
- Respect time and energy of others
- Respect other students' learning styles and opportunities

Professional Communication

Communication is an extremely important skill to have as a health professional. Therefore, it is very important that students communicate appropriately at all times. All physicians and faculty, until otherwise indicated, should be addressed as Dr. XXX in all written and verbal communications. Students should remember that all communication (email, phone, and in-person) with faculty and staff within and outside the Athletic Training Program should be handled professionally. It is not appropriate to send a professional email message that does not use appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation. Text messaging, instant messaging, and the use of social media are appropriate methods of communication between student groups; however, these tools should not be used for professional communication with faculty or staff within or outside the Athletic Training Program unless initiated by a faculty or staff member.

Students are required to check their WCU email accounts on a daily basis (including vacations and holidays during clinicals). All class and program information is sent via email to WCU accounts only. Students are responsible for all communication sent via email. Failure to check email is not an acceptable excuse for failure to meet/complete class or program assignments. Discussion regarding attendance, illness, and schedule conflicts should be handled in person or by phone.

Students are expected to maintain communication with faculty members during all clinical experiences. Students should first attempt contact via email unless there is an emergency situation.

Professional Relationships

Athletic Training Students are healthcare providers and must act professionally at all times. It is recognized that athletic trainers develop trust and rapport with athletes, patients, coaches, and other stakeholders; however, a professional demeanor should be exercised at all times. Students must maintain a professional relationship with all patients, preceptors, additional health professionals, athletes, peers, parents, coaches, and all individuals associated with the clinical education assignment at all times. Students who are involved in an unprofessional relationship (see details below) may face disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Athletic training students should avoid situations which could place them in compromising situations.

Relationships with Athletes/Patients: A student that has a preexisting relationship with a potential patient should discuss this with the faculty with significant time prior to the clinical experience to determine a course of action. During clinical education experiences, athletic training students must maintain a professional relationship with patients. At no time, throughout a clinical rotation, should a student engage in conduct that could undermine their patients' confidence or cause a conflict of interest in their patients' care. Additionally, relationships with minors may result in legal ramifications and an inability to obtain athletic training licensure or certification. The Athletic Training Program recommends that students do not develop relationships with athletes and patients, specifically minors, upon leaving the clinical education site.

Relationships with Coaches and Preceptors: Students must adhere to the relationship policies of the clinical placement site. A student that has a preexisting relationship with a potential coach or preceptor should discuss this with the faculty with significant time prior to the clinical experience to determine a course of action.

Unwanted Attention during Clinical Education: If at any point a student feels uncomfortable at their clinical site based on inappropriate actions or verbal communication from any individual, they should immediately communicate with their preceptor and course instructor and/or Clinical Education Coordinator. If advances come from the preceptor, the student needs to immediately communicate with their course instructor and/or Clinical Education Coordinator. If at any point the student feels unsafe, they can remove themselves from the situation without consequences as long as it is reported immediately.

Professional Judgment

Athletic Training students must maintain a high level of professionalism at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, attitude, confidentiality, attire, punctuality, professional relationships, and sensitivity. Students are expected to exercise good professional judgment at all times. Each clinical education course will have professional judgment points, in which points will be lost if a student does not exercise good professional judgment. See clinical course syllabi for further details on professional judgment.

WCU Sexual Harassment and Other Unlawful Discrimination Policies

Policy Statement on Title IX Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment under Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title IX) constitutes unlawful discrimination based on gender and threatens the University's culture of civility and mutual respect. Western Carolina University (University or WCU) is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is free of Title IX Sexual Harassment and that promotes a healthy spirit of responsibility, dignity, and respect in matters of sexual conduct and interpersonal relationships. It is the policy of the University that its employees, visitors, and students should be free from Title IX Sexual Harassment within any education program or activity. See [University Policy 129 – Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](#).

Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity: Western Carolina University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment and does not discriminate, or treat people differently on the basis of race; color; religion; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; national origin; age; disability; genetic information; political affiliation; and National Guard or veteran status. This includes a prohibition on sexual violence and sexual exploitation, which by definition involve conduct of a sexual nature and are prohibited forms of sexual harassment. The University also prohibits stalking and interpersonal violence, which need not be based on an individual's protected status. Western Carolina University provides aids and services to people with disabilities as required by law and policy.

If you believe that Western Carolina University has discriminated against you or a third party on the basis of race; color; religion; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; national origin; age; disability; genetic information; political affiliation or veteran status, or has failed to provide aids or services to persons with disabilities as required by law and policy, you may file a grievance pursuant to [University Policy 53 – Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Other Unlawful Discrimination](#).

Athletic Training Program Policy on Sexual Harassment

During the Athletic Training Program and throughout the student's professional career, numerous hands-on techniques with patients are utilized. Students are reminded to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times during these activities. Additionally, students are reminded to protect themselves from potential complaints against themselves during clinical experiences, patient evaluations, and treatments. It is recommended that students with sensitive

evaluations or treatments have an individual of the same gender as the patient (if possible) in the area during these procedures.

If a student feels that there is any inappropriate or unwelcome behavior that is of a sexual nature on the part of the course professor, program faculty, another student, or other individual, the student should notify the course professor or Athletic Training Program Director immediately. If the complaint is in regards to the Program Director, the issue should be addressed to the Director of the School of Health Sciences. If inappropriate behavior occurs at the clinical site from the physicians, coach, officials, athletes, or anyone else, then students should notify the preceptor and Clinical Education Coordinator immediately. If the preceptor displays inappropriate behaviors, students should notify the Clinical Education Coordinator. If the student does not feel comfortable approaching the designated person, they should notify another faculty member, the Director of the School of Health Sciences, or the University Title IX Coordinator.

All complaints made to faculty and staff will be reported to the University Title IX Coordinator, who will ensure the student receives information about available supportive measures and the procedures for addressing such conduct.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached at 828-227-7116

Athletic Training Program Non-Discrimination Policy

Students must comply with the University Policy on Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity at all times including while providing care to their patients, in the classroom, and in general as a representative of this program. Students must follow the BOC Standards of Professional Practice and NATA Code of Ethics and “render quality patient care regardless of the patient’s race, religion, age, sex, ethnic or national origin, disability, health status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or gender identity” (BOC Standards of Professional Practice 1.1; NATA Code of Ethics 1.1). Students are expected to serve as advocates for patient welfare and always act in the best interest of the patient. Discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated.

Social Networking Policy

The Western Carolina University Athletic Training Program promotes professional interactions between clinicians and patients. In maintaining this professional interaction, the program discourages athletic training students from interacting with current patients or student-athletes, coaches, preceptors, physicians, other healthcare providers, or faculty members using social networking websites. Students must adhere to the social networking policies of the clinical placement sites. The clinical sites may remove students from their rotation if they interact with patients on social media, text message, or email in violation of the site’s policies.

Students should not take any pictures or post anything about patients on any social media. Do NOT share any information regarding patient diagnosis, diagnostic imaging, injury-related information, or suggestions for injury care, etc. to any form of social media or through unsecured electronic forms of communication. This is unprofessional and violates HIPAA and FERPA guidelines.

Dress Code Policy

Required attire will be listed under each individual clinical education site; however, the following do apply in all situations.

1. Professionalism is of utmost importance in an athletic training student. In order to promote professionalism, the following dress code will be strictly enforced by the faculty

and preceptors at all times. Students who do not abide by the required dress code will be sent home, professional judgment points will be deducted, and disciplinary action may ensue.

2. The dress code may vary from clinical site to site; however, the students must minimally follow the dress code guidelines established below during each clinical education experience.

Basic Requirements

1. All students are required to wear a WCU Athletic Training Program nametag at all times (exceptions will be noted by the faculty).
2. All students must be in closed toe/closed heel shoes and adhere to all other OSHA guidelines for all clinical activities.
3. All students are required to carry a pen with them at all times
4. All students are required to wear a wristwatch, preferably with a second demarcation during all athletic training duties.

Grooming

1. Students should practice appropriate personal hygiene (bathing).
2. Students should practice appropriate oral hygiene.
3. Nails must be kept clean and at a functional length.
4. Hair (including facial hair) should be professionally groomed at all times and of a natural color.
5. Students should appropriately use deodorant / antiperspirant on a regular basis.
6. Perfume, Cologne and other fragrances can be offensive and cause allergic reactions in patients and colleagues; therefore, such items should be avoided or worn in moderation.

Jewelry

1. Large or dangling earrings are prohibited for hygienic and safety reasons.
2. Earrings should be discreet and are limited to two earrings per ear.
3. Non-traditional piercings, including, but not limited to: noses, eyebrows, tongues, lips, cheeks and chins are prohibited while completing clinical education experiences.
4. Ear gauging and spacers are prohibited.
5. Body piercings (beyond ears) should not be visible.
6. Rings shall be limited to two per hand.
7. Necklaces should be kept to a minimum and professional and should be placed inside the shirt / blouse when possible.

Tattoos and Body Art

Tattoos and body art may be required to be covered during clinical education experiences. Specific policies will be determined by the clinical education site. If a site prohibits tattoos, students are expected to cover all body art in a professional manner.

Hats

1. Hats may be worn for outdoor events only and should be removed when entering a building.
2. Only WCU hats, hats of the current clinical education site, or plain hats may be worn.
3. Hats must be worn in a traditional manner.

Attire

Code Green

1. There are no restrictions in the attire the student is wearing, as long as it is appropriate and functional for the situation at hand.
2. Please remember that appearance does represent the student, program and profession!

Code Yellow

1. Collared shirt or dress shirt. This can be a WCU shirt, a shirt with logo from the student's current clinical site, or a plain colored collar shirt.
2. "Khaki" pants or shorts (mid-thigh/5" inseam or longer- "short shorts" are unacceptable)
 - a. Pants/Shorts must be a neutral color: khaki, black, navy, beige, etc.
 - b. Pants/shorts must be functional for modesty with movement and appropriate care.
 - c. Skinny pants, leggings, and capris are not acceptable.
3. All shirts must be tucked in
4. Belt must be worn if shorts/pants have belt loops
5. Tennis shoes and visible socks or dress shoes
6. Name tags must be worn

Code Red (professional attire) – must be functional to perform any/all clinical skills

1. Dress pants or skirt of a modest design
 - a. Leggings are not appropriate as pants, but non-patterned leggings may be worn as tights with dresses/skirts
 - b. Professional capris are permitted with appropriate dress shoes
2. Shirt / Tie, blouse
 - a. Top must provide full coverage of chest, shoulders, back, and abdomen
3. Possible Jacket
4. Dress shoes
 - a. No open toed or open heeled shoe if clinically related
 - b. High-heeled shoes are discouraged during a clinical activity
 - c. No tennis shoes, canvas, mesh, or shoes with thick rubber soles
5. Appropriate socks/stockings/hose and belt
6. If clinically related, it is important that the athletic training student selects attire that will allow them to assist patients who are injured on the field or court, including rendering life-saving techniques, without compromising themselves professionally or personally. This is particularly important when selecting skirts and dresses that allow for appropriate mobility and flexibility during on-field assessment, care and transport.

Attire suggested for different events

1. Outdoor practices/ games: Code Yellow
2. Indoor Practices/games: Code Yellow or Code Red (depending on requirement of preceptor and clinical site)
3. Conference/Professional Meeting: Code Red
 - a. Jackets are highly recommended, especially if you are presenting

Attire for Inclement weather

1. Although the athletic training student must comply with the above dress code, the health and safety of the student are of the highest priority.
2. Jackets, fleeces, sweatshirts may be worn outside for warmth/protection against the weather.
 - a. WCU gear or clinical site colors should be worn whenever possible
 - b. If that is not possible, then neutral color, plain attire should be worn

- c. Logoed jackets, fleeces, or sweatshirts from other schools are not permitted unless from the student's clinical site
- 3. Rain pants may be worn of a neutral color.
- 4. Students completing clinical experiences at affiliate sites may wear outerwear of that institution.

Attire for Clinics / Hospital/ Physician's office

- 1. Appropriate attire may be a code yellow or red, depending upon the clinical site and dictated by the preceptor
- 2. No shorts
- 3. Name tag must be worn

Travel Attire

- 1. Students must remember they are representing the Athletic Training Program, their clinical education site, and Western Carolina University during all travel opportunities
- 2. Minimally, students must follow Code Yellow requirements
- 3. Students must minimally abide by the above dress code requirements; however, higher attire standards set by the coach/preceptor must be adhered to
- 4. If the site requires deviations from Code Yellow (e.g., assigned travel gear) this must be approved by the Clinical Education Coordinator prior to travel

Inappropriate attire at all times

- 1. Denim pants of any kind or color
- 2. Sweatpants
- 3. Mesh shorts
- 4. Windpants (except in the case of inclement weather)
- 5. Tee-shirts
- 6. Pants or clothing with fraying, holes, or not of "clean-cut appearance"
- 7. Cargo pants, unless an outdoor practice
- 8. Skintight pants and leggings as pants
- 9. Any item of clothing that displays content other than WCU or clinical site branding.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Healthcare providers have a responsibility to protect the patient from undue harm and always act in the patient's best interest. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs impairs clinical judgment, creates an unsafe environment, and risks patient safety. Professionally, students may not be allowed to complete the BOC examination or become licensed as an athletic trainer in many states secondary to a history of substance abuse or legal issues. Students enrolled in the Athletic Training Program may be suspended or dismissed from the program for the use of illegal substances or inappropriate use/abuse of alcohol or legal drugs.

Alcohol Use and Abuse: It is illegal to consume alcohol under the age of 21. No student should consume alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol during any academic or clinical education experience. Noncompliance will result in disciplinary action within the Program and referral to the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE). Additionally, students who appear to be under the influence of alcohol during any clinical education experience will be immediately removed from the clinical education site.

Students who are perceived by the faculty or preceptors to exhibit signs of potential alcohol abuse will be referred to Athletic Training Program Medical Director and/or University Health

Services for appropriate intervention and referral. In accordance with University and College policies, additional disciplinary actions may occur.

Drug Use and Abuse: The Athletic Training Program follows a “No Tolerance” policy regarding drug use or abuse by athletic training students. This includes illegal drugs, marijuana, abuse of prescription drugs, or other substances that impair cognition, impact ability to provide appropriate patient care, or maintain professionalism.

Drug Testing Policy: Drug tests are conducted before each clinical education experience. Students are responsible for all costs of drug testing. The Athletic Training Program will follow the [College of Health and Human Sciences Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy for Students](#).

A student who receives a positive drug test, or a positive repeat drug test, will be subject to disciplinary action. The student will be suspended from all clinical education experiences and, per the [CHHS Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy](#) (IV.C.2), program faculty will determine disciplinary action, up to program dismissal.

Reasonable suspicion drug testing may be conducted when individualized and objective evidence exists to support the reasonable suspicion that a student (1) has engaged in the use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in violation of applicable policies, laws, and regulations; or (2) appears to be impaired. The Athletic Training Program will follow the CHHS Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy for reasonable suspicion.

Criminal Background Checks

All students are required to undergo a Criminal background check prior to beginning their first clinical education experience. Background checks will be evaluated by a designee in the College of Health and Human Sciences and concerns will be evaluated by a College wide committee that provides a recommendation for the Dean. The Dean will make the final decision regarding the ability to progress through the program. Occasionally, clinical sites may require a recent criminal background check and therefore an additional one may be required. The student is responsible for all associated costs of criminal background checks and sanction checks.

Following the initial background check, the student is required to disclose any allegations of misconduct, which fall under any governmental jurisdiction (including, but not limited to: local, state, and federal authorities). This disclosure must occur in writing to the Program Director within 48 hours of the incident. A student is required to complete a new background check after the student is reinstated after program dismissal. For additional details, see the CHHS Policy on Criminal Background Screening Policy for Students on EXXAT.

Liability Insurance

All students must be covered under personal liability insurance prior to beginning any clinical education experience. Minimum coverage limits are determined by the College of Health and Human Science policy. Coverage may change based on changes in the University policy. Student accounts will be charged for this insurance by the University. The Clinical Education Coordinator can provide verification of coverage as requested by the clinical education sites.

Policies for Clinical Site Assignments

Students will be assigned to a site by the Clinical Education Coordinator. The decisions will be based upon the best interest of the student and the availability of clinical sites for the Athletic Training Program. Students may request a meeting with the Clinical Education Coordinator to

discuss the rationale for such decisions. Students will not be placed at a clinical site where there may be a conflict of interest. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

For Clinical Education II and Clinical Education IV, students will request their top five clinical sites based on instructions provided by the Clinical Education Coordinator. Students are encouraged to meet individually with members of the faculty prior to the due date in order to discuss clinical sites that may be appropriate for them.

Prior to looking at the students' requests, faculty will meet to create a ranking for each student. Criteria for ranking may include but is not limited to academic performance, clinical skills, maturity, initiative, interpersonal communication, professionalism, dependability, and work ethic. The student that earns the highest ranking will have the first choice of available clinical sites. This process will continue until all students have received clinical assignments. Students should consider more than five choices, in case their top selections are no longer available. Faculty will contact students for additional choices if this should occur. To ensure the best opportunity for student success, faculty have final approval regarding all decisions and ability to veto a site.

Requesting a New Clinical Education Site

Students are allowed to request one new clinical site for an immersive clinical experience in either Clinical Education II or Clinical Education IV. Students may complete an individual request through the Clinical Education Coordinator or the NATA Database. Students may also request new clinical sites for Clinical Education III and Clinical Education V. Specific instructions will be provided by the Clinical Education Coordinator.

New clinical sites will only be considered if the potential site is in a state currently approved for WCU students based upon federal laws. An updated list of approved states can be found in the Clinical Education blackboard organization. Typically, a request for a college or university will only be considered if the school does not have an accredited athletic training program.

New clinical site requests will be considered by the Clinical Education Coordinator and faculty. A new request does not guarantee that the site will be an option for the students the following year.

If the new site signs a clinical affiliation agreement prior to the program deadline and is ultimately approved by the WCU faculty, the student that requested the clinical site will have the right of first refusal. If the student that requested the site is no longer interested in completing their clinical rotations at that facility, or if the new site agrees to take more than one student, then other students in the program may be considered for that site as well. In the case that two students request the same new clinical site, right of first refusal will initially go to the student that is ranked higher (see policies for clinical site assignments for ranking information).

Clinical Education During University Breaks

Any athletic training student in the Athletic Training Program may be required to return for a clinical education experience during university breaks. These requirements are based upon the activities of the clinical education site and preceptor to which they are assigned. The return time and date shall be agreed upon with the preceptor and Clinical Education Coordinator and shared with the student, who will discuss the situation with the other faculty members. University breaks include, but are not limited to, summer, Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, and Late Spring Break. Students may also be required to attend clinical orientation sessions or in-services during weekends, prior to the beginning of any semester, or

over University breaks. In general, athletic training students should be prepared to be with their respective clinical assignments during all pre-season, post-season, and break periods.

Absence from Clinical Education Experiences

Students are expected to arrive on time to clinicals and/or in-service events for every scheduled session. Students unable to attend a clinical requirement due to an emergency situation should contact the preceptor and course instructor immediately. Examples of an emergency situation may include a car accident or significant illness. Students are not allowed to be absent for non-emergency situations, such as needing time to finish homework, work, athletics, club or organization activities, or attending a social event. Absences without approval from the course professor and preceptor will result in loss of professional judgement points and additional required days at the clinical site. Additionally, unexcused absences will result in disciplinary action. Students that are not attending clinicals because of a situation at the clinical site (e.g., team traveling or school cancelled) must notify the course professor.

Any planned absence from clinicals must be requested and approved by the Clinical Education Coordinator as soon as the student knows of a conflict, but a minimum of one month prior to the potential conflict. All requested absences will be heavily scrutinized by program faculty and preceptors on a case-by-case basis. If approved by the Clinical Education Coordinator, then the student needs to seek approval from the preceptor.

Attendance During Inclement Weather

In the case that Western Carolina University is closed or delayed due to inclement weather, athletic training students assigned to clinical education sites in the immediate area are not required to attend their clinical education assignment. In the case of inclement weather at a distant clinical education site, if the host institution is closed, students are not required to attend any scheduled activities. Ultimately, students should use their best judgment in determining if travel to the University or clinical education site is safe. In the event the student determines that it is unsafe to travel to the clinical education site, they should contact the preceptor and the course instructor. Students will not be penalized in any manner for failure to attend clinical experiences under these circumstances. No student should risk his or her safety in order to attend an athletic training meeting, clinical experience, class, or event.

Supervision of the Athletic Training Student

Students participating in the clinical education experience must be supervised by a BOC Certified Athletic Trainer or appropriate allied health care professional at all times. This preceptor must be on-site at all times when the student is performing their duties as an athletic training student. **“Supervision occurs along a developmental continuum that allows a student to move from interdependence to independence based on the student’s knowledge and skills as well as the context of care. Preceptors must be on-site and have the ability to intervene on behalf of the athletic training student and the patient. Supervision also must occur in compliance with the state practice act of the state in which the student is engaging in client/patient care” (CAATE 2020 Standards).** Supervision includes all aspects of evaluation, rehabilitation, patient care, athletic practice, and event coverage. Students will not perform any clinical skills if the preceptor is not present.

In the event the preceptor is not present for any reason (e.g., sickness, travel with another team, meeting), then a suitable replacement must be present and willing to supervise the student. Suitable replacements for the preceptors include any person holding BOC Certification as an athletic trainer or other allied health professional. In the case of a planned absence, the replacement must be pre-approved by the Clinical Education Coordinator or Program Director

and the clinical education site. In the case of an emergency, if a suitable replacement is available, the student may remain at the clinical site; however, the Clinical Education Coordinator must be notified as soon as possible.

If at any time an athletic training student feels the supervision they are receiving is inappropriate all patient care must be ceased. If inappropriate supervision is consistent, the course professor or clinical education coordinator must be notified immediately.

In emergency situations, the student may provide first aid and emergency care without direct supervision, within the realm of first aid (e.g., basic wound care) and CPR.

The student should not perform any athletic training skills, and it must be made clear that they are not performing these duties as an athletic training student. Examples of this might include an emergency at an intramural event, the scene of a car accident, or situation within the community. The student is permitted (but not required) to respond as a first aid provider; however, the student would not be covered under the professional liability insurance for these activities. These events are not recognized by the Western Carolina University Athletic Training Program and no credit toward completion of the student's clinical requirements will be awarded for these activities.

Clinical Education Experience Expectations

Students are expected to be involved in all appropriate aspects of patient care under the supervision and in collaboration with the preceptor(s) and other healthcare professionals. Students should assist in the daily duties at the clinical education site. Duties may include but are not limited to: pre-participation screenings of student-athletes, hydration, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, event preparation, record keeping, inventory, budgeting, facility upkeep (e.g., cleaning, restocking), and any other duty as designated by the preceptor.

Students should be actively engaged in the clinical education experience and seek learning opportunities. Examples of this include but are not limited to: observing and appropriately asking questions when the preceptor is performing skills, using "down time" effectively by asking questions, going over cases with the preceptor, and reflection and debriefing with the preceptor.

Clinical Education Onboarding and Orientation

All students are required to complete all onboarding materials prior to beginning at each site. Failure to complete onboarding by their scheduled start date may delay their ability to begin on time at a site or impact their ability to complete the clinical education experience. Students are required to complete an orientation checklist with their preceptor at each clinical education site. Prior to interacting with patients, students must complete specific requirements as indicated on the form.

Attentiveness During Clinicals

Students are to be actively engaged in the educational process while completing clinical education experiences. In order to be actively involved, the student should not be sitting down when patients are present. Rather, the student should be interacting with healthcare professionals, coaches, and patients during the experience. Students should also seek out learning opportunities by actively engaging preceptors, peers, or other available resources. Students may only sit during clinical education experiences when being seated is required to complete an educational objective (e.g., evaluating a patient or reviewing lower extremity palpations with a preceptor), the clinical site warrants sitting during an event (e.g., sitting on the bench during a basketball game or volleyball match), or in the case of a "break" during the clinical experience (when no patients are present). At no time should students be utilizing notes

or books to study for academic courses during their clinical experiences except during a true “break.”

Travel Policy

Travel to away contests at the students’ clinical education sites is highly encouraged; however, travel is at the discretion of the preceptor and not guaranteed. Travel experiences will be determined by the clinical education site travel policies, students’ academic schedules, budgetary restraints, ability of the preceptor to travel, and length of the trip. At no time will WCU athletic training students travel to away sites without the direct supervision of a preceptor.

Cellular Phones and Other Devices

Cellular phones or other technological gadgets (e.g., smart watch) are not to be used by students while they are at their clinical education experiences. Cellular phones may be taken to the clinical education site to be used ONLY in the case of a medical emergency or as dictated by the preceptor. At no time will the student be allowed personal calls, text messages, social media, or emails during clinical education on any device. Notifications should be turned off while at their clinical education experience. The phone should not be utilized as a watch. If a preceptor requests the student has access to a phone during clinical education, phones should only be used to access the internet if their clinical site uses an on-line documentation system or athletic training application that is pertinent for patient care and safety.

Clinical Hours and Patient Tracking

Students are expected to document time spent in clinical education as instructed by the clinical course syllabi. Students should ONLY document time that they are directly involved with clinical education experiences. Travel hours, meals, or “breaks” should not be counted towards their clinical hours. Students should critically look at the time they have documented to ensure they are only counting appropriate times.

Students are expected to track encounters with patients at their clinical education experience via an online tracking system. Further instruction will be provided in the clinical course syllabi.

Proficiencies

Throughout the Athletic Training Program, students will learn many hands-on skills. Proficiencies are evaluations by the preceptors on skills learned in previous courses. Students are expected to complete proficiencies throughout the Athletic Training Program. Initial assignments and due dates will be outlined in course syllabi. Requirements in each semester must be met to progress through the Athletic Training Program. Remediation will be implemented as needed. All proficiencies must be successfully completed in order to graduate.

In order to appropriately complete proficiencies, students are expected to notify their preceptors early on regarding upcoming proficiencies. It is recommended the student provides the schedule at the beginning of the semester, but it is the student’s responsibility to collaborate with the preceptor when each will be completed. The student should respect the preceptor and understand that they have other responsibilities they need to take care of as well. If a student waits until the last minute to reach out to their preceptor and the preceptor cannot complete the proficiency before the due date, the fault falls on the student. If a proficiency is turned in late because the student did not leave the preceptor sufficient time to complete it, the student will receive a “0” on that proficiency within the course; however, students are still expected to successfully complete the proficiency to graduate. If a student does notify the preceptor with sufficient time, and it is the preceptor’s schedule that affects completion of the proficiency, the preceptor can notify the course instructor, and a new due date may be established.

Clinical Education Evaluations

Evaluations are utilized to provide formative feedback to students, preceptors, clinical sites, and to the program regarding quality of clinical education experiences. Formal evaluations will be completed at designated times throughout the clinical experience. The student is responsible for ensuring all the evaluations are completed in their entirety. Clinical education course grades may be affected for documents not completed correctly. Preceptors and students should also meet informally to discuss the student's performance on a regular basis.

Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance: Students will be evaluated formally during each clinical experience. Evaluation forms will be provided in advance with required dates of completion. Preceptors are required to review this evaluation with the students. Students are required to follow submission guidelines on the course syllabi.

Preceptor Evaluations: Students are required to evaluate preceptors and are required to formally meet with preceptors to discuss this evaluation. During the preceptor evaluations, students will be encouraged to discuss positive and negative experiences and provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. Feedback will be provided to preceptors; all feedback will be aggregated to maintain student confidentiality. Students are required to follow submission guidelines on the course syllabi.

Clinical Site Evaluations: Students must formally evaluate each clinical education site at the end of each experience. The clinical education site will be evaluated independently of the preceptor. Students are required to follow submission guidelines on the course syllabi.

SECTION V: HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Athletic Training Faculty and preceptors have the health and safety of the students as a top priority. The following health and safety requirements have been implemented to protect the student, peers, and patients. The Athletic Training Program Medical Director, in consultation with appropriate university officials, has the final ruling regarding student participation when the health and safety of the student, peers or patients may be in question.

Based on the health and safety standards of our clinical sites, our accrediting body, university, and program requirements, students will be expected to submit proof of testing and training in several areas in order to attend clinical experiences.

Requirements

Prior to starting at any clinical site, students will be required to complete and submit documentation of the following, as directed by the Clinical Education Coordinator:

- Immunizations
 - Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) series or positive titer
 - Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap)
 - Tdap booster (within last 10 years)
 - Varicella vaccinations (2 vaccination series) or positive titer
 - Hepatitis B vaccinations (3 vaccination series)
 - Hepatitis B titer
 - Negative two-step tuberculin (TB) Skin Test

In addition, there are several yearly requirements that are required by clinical education sites. These include but are not limited to:

- Influenza Vaccine
- Tuberculin (TB) Skin Test
- Covid-19 vaccination –The majority of clinical sites require students to have the Covid-19 vaccination/booster. Students may apply for exemptions, but it is not guaranteed. Clinical experiences may be impacted if the student does not have the Covid-19 vaccine, which can affect progression through the MSAT Program.

Additional requirements may be determined by clinical sites. In order to complete a clinical education experience, students will be expected to complete all requirements prior to starting rotation. Delayed completion may impact a student's ability to complete a rotation, which may impact their grades. Due dates and clear instructions for all requirements will be provided by the Clinical Education Coordinator.

Injury / Illness in Didactic Education

Students who are injured during a classroom or laboratory related activity are responsible for all incurred medical costs. If an injury does occur, the student must immediately notify the course professor who will administer initial care. The WCU Health and Human Sciences Emergency Action Plan will be followed. In the event a student is referred for medical care, the Program Director and Director of the School of Health Sciences will be notified immediately and the college's incident/accident report form will be completed. No injury information will be given to parents or outside individuals unless specifically requested by the student in writing, or approved by legal counsel.

Injury / Illness in Clinical Education

Students who are injured during clinical education experiences are responsible for all incurred medical costs. If an injury does occur, the student must notify the preceptor immediately. Once immediate care has been administered, the student or preceptor must notify the Clinical Education Coordinator, who will notify the Program Director and Director of the School of Health Sciences and complete the college's incident/accident report form. No injury information will be given to parents or outside individuals unless specifically requested by the student in writing, or approved by legal counsel.

If the student develops an injury or illness (e.g., flu) during their clinical education experience, the student must contact the preceptor and the Clinical Education Coordinator immediately. If appropriate, the student will be referred to the WCU Health Services, ATP Medical Director, or comparable facility at an affiliate clinical education site, who will determine the necessary course of action for the student. Students who have been diagnosed with a potentially transmittable disease will not be permitted to complete clinical education experiences until cleared by an appropriate physician, but the preceptor has final say when they return to clinical education. If a student has been excused from clinical experiences by a physician, it is the student's responsibility to contact the preceptor and the Clinical Education Coordinator immediately.

Students who are ill should not report to the clinical education site. The student is responsible to contact the preceptor and Clinical Education Coordinator prior to missing any clinical education experiences due to sickness. The student is responsible for making up any clinical education time missed. In the case a student has been restricted by a physician, official documentation must be submitted to the Clinical Education Coordinator. Once cleared, the student must also submit official medical clearance to the Clinical Education Coordinator.

All communication regarding student absences from clinical education experiences must occur via direct communication (phone or in person). Email, text messaging, and secondary sources are not acceptable unless previously approved by the preceptor. Initial day of illness must be discussed via direct communication.

Existing Conditions

A student with a disability may participate in the program so long as the student satisfies program requirements, including these Technical Standards, with or without reasonable accommodation. It is the responsibility of a student with a disability (or a student who develops a disability) and who needs an accommodation to request such accommodation by contacting the Office of Accessibility Resources at 828.227.3886.

Health Insurance

As per WCU requirements, all students must be covered under a personal health insurance policy during the duration of their enrollment at WCU. Students must submit verification of personal health insurance prior to each academic year as directed by the Clinical Education Coordinator.

Pregnancy

If a student becomes pregnant while matriculating through the Athletic Training Program, they may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Office of Accessibility Resources.

Blood Borne Pathogens Policy

Due to the scope of practice of athletic trainers, students are at a high risk of coming in contact with blood-borne pathogens (BBP). All students must complete an initial BBP training through

the Athletic Training Program prior to beginning their first clinical education experience. Students will then complete an annual training thereafter. The primary goal is to prevent exposure. However, an accidental exposure could occur. If a student has a BBP exposure at their clinical site, the student should ultimately follow the BBP exposure control plan specific to their site but at minimum use the policy below. Clinical education sites are required to provide adequate BBP barriers and control measures that are immediately accessible. If appropriate personal protective equipment items are not available, students should communicate with the coordinator of clinical education to obtain these items.

Exposure Control Plan

- Students involved in an exposure must notify the preceptor immediately.
- The preceptor is responsible for identifying if an exposure has occurred.
- The student must immediately wash the affected body part with warm, soapy water.
- The preceptor will refer the student to appropriate medical care as soon as possible. It is expected the student will seek care immediately.
- Follow-up care is available via WCU Health Services. If a student is at a distance clinical site, they should use the closest available medical facility.
 - All costs related to post-exposure care is the responsibility of the student.
- The student or preceptor will notify the Clinical Education Coordinator.
- Students and preceptors must document the route of exposure and how the exposure occurred and provide that information to the Clinical Education Coordinator.

*If exposure occurs during class, follow the plan above and communicate with the course professor instead of the preceptor.

Communicable and Infectious Disease Policy

During clinical education experiences, students may be at risk for contracting a communicable disease. Students must follow the communicable and infectious disease policy at their clinical education site. Prior to beginning each clinical education experience, the student is required to discuss the specific site policy with their preceptor as a part of the clinical orientation. If the student has an exposure, they must report the exposure to the preceptor and coordinator of clinical education or clinical class instructor immediately. Specific steps after exposure will be determined by the clinical education site policy.

OSHA Regulations

Students are expected to follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations that were developed for employees whose jobs may put them at risk to blood-borne pathogens. All of these guidelines must be followed at all times when treating patients in the health care setting. Students are required to complete OSHA training through the Athletic Training Program annually prior to beginning any clinical education experiences. OSHA regulations can be found on EXXAT.

Emergency Action Plans

Students are expected to review venue specific critical incident response procedures at each clinical education site prior to patient interactions.

Calibration and Maintenance of Equipment

All equipment used by the students will be maintained per the manufacturer's guidelines and calibrated on an annual basis.

SECTION VI: CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND GRIEVANCES

Corrective Action Procedures

The following procedures have been established to ensure the smooth operation of the Western Carolina University Athletic Training Program. Offenses of the rules and regulations of the University or the Athletic Training Program shall be deemed as either *minor offenses*, *moderate offenses*, or *disciplinary offenses*. Repeated minor may be considered moderate offense, and repeated moderate offenses shall be the equivalent of a severe offense. The level of offense will be determined by the severity of the infraction. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Each offense may require the student to appear before the Athletic Training Program Faculty for corrective action or dismissal from the Athletic Training Program. The following five steps indicate formal procedures to implement corrective action. All corrective actions by the Athletic Training Faculty shall be entered into the athletic training student's permanent file. The actions do not supersede university actions and policies.

Step I: The initial minor offense may result in a verbal warning and/or loss of professional judgement points. Minor offense(s) by the student may result in a meeting with the Athletic Training Program Faculty. This meeting will serve as a warning that any further offenses of the Athletic Training Program rules and regulations may result in formal action against the athletic training student.

Step II: A moderate offense may result in a meeting with the Athletic Training Program Faculty and a letter in the student's permanent file. During this meeting, expectations and plans for improvement will be discussed. Any additional offenses of the Athletic Training Program rules and regulations may result in further action against the athletic training student.

Step III: The initial severe offense shall result in a formal meeting with the Athletic Training Faculty. All paperwork such as meeting minutes, written response, official corrective action, etc. will be filed in the student's permanent file. A copy of the written response will be sent to the athletic training student's catamount email address within ten (10) days. Corrective action may include, but is not limited to, loss of professional judgment points, failure of assignment or course, probation, or dismissal from the Athletic Training Program.

Step IV: A second severe offense will result in a meeting with the Athletic Training Faculty and will minimally result in a probationary period of one semester. If the faculty determine that program suspension is appropriate, the student will be unable to progress didactically or clinically until the suspension is lifted. If the student is in the middle of a semester when the suspension occurs, the student may be able to complete the didactic courses; however, they will be unable to complete any clinical education requirements. Inability to complete clinical experiences may result in the withdrawal from a clinical course or course failure.

Step V: The third severe offense may result in immediate dismissal from the Western Carolina University Athletic Training Program.

Minor Offenses: Minor offenses include, but are not limited to dress code violation during practical exams, failure to follow directions, tardiness to class, cell phone use during class.

Moderate Offenses: Moderate offenses include, but are not limited to, repeated minor offenses, dress code violations, tardiness to assigned clinical education experiences, failure to

attend mandatory athletic training student meetings, or failure to complete required documentation.

Severe Offenses: Severe offenses include, but are not limited to, failure to complete athletic training tasks as assigned by the preceptor or faculty, failure to attend assigned clinical education experiences, insubordination, legal infractions, failure to perform duties in a professional manner or failure to act in a manner consistent with the standards of Western Carolina University, the Athletic Training Program and the National Athletic Trainers' Association Code of Ethics.

Corrective Action Appeals Policy: Any athletic training student has the right to appeal all corrective action decisions made by the Athletic Training Faculty. All appeals must be typed and submitted to the Program Director within ten working days of receiving the Athletic Training Faculty's written response. Within 10 working days of receiving the appeal, the Program Director will review the materials with the Athletic Training Faculty and will attempt to resolve the appeal. The Program Director will provide a written response detailing whether the appeal is approved or denied.

If the student wants to appeal further, they will submit their appeal to the Director of the School of Health Sciences within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal written response from the Program Director. Students appealing to the Director of the School of Health Sciences assume the burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal must include:

- a) a statement of the reason(s) the student believes the corrective action decision was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned;
- b) the steps taken to resolve the disagreement over the corrective action decision; and
- c) the resolution sought.

Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the Director of the School of Health Sciences will attempt to resolve the appeal. If the Director of the School of Health Sciences is unable to resolve the appeal within ten working days, the Director of the School of Health Sciences will notify the student of the decision, and the student has 10 days to appeal to the associate dean of the academic college.

Refer to the Graduate Catalog for Graduate School information regarding Academic Action Appeal Policy and Academic Action Appeal Overview (catalog.wcu.edu).

Grievances

Any grievances within the Athletic Training Program, besides academic dishonesty, a grade appeal, program dismissal, or complaints or discrimination or unlawful harassment, should follow the chain below. At no time should a student jump a level in the chain! Students who jump a level in the chain may be subject to corrective action.

1. Student discusses the concern with the faculty member directly responsible for the Athletic Training Program course (academic concern) or with the Preceptor (clinical concern).
2. If the student does not feel the problem has been addressed, the student should then discuss the concern with the Athletic Training Program Director.
3. If continued concerns, the student should discuss the concern with the Director of the School of Health Sciences.

4. If the student continues to feel that their concerns have not been addressed, the final level is with the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences

Grade Appeal and Program Dismissal

Any athletic training student has the right to appeal grades and program dismissal decisions. Refer to the Graduate Catalog for information and details regarding Academic Action Appeal Policy and Academic Action Appeal Overview (catalog.wcu.edu).

SECTION VII: APPENDICES

Appendix A: Definition of Terms

Appendix B: Technical Standards

Appendix A: Definition of Terms

Athletic Trainer (AT): Individual who has passed the Board of Certification exam and maintains state regulation (e.g., licensure). NEVER use “trainer” or “certified trainer”. NOTE: ATC is a credential and should not be used as an abbreviation.

Athletic Training Program (ATP): Two-year post-baccalaureate degree housed within the School of Health Sciences at Western Carolina University.

Athletic Training Students (ATS): Students enrolled in an accredited athletic training program. Note: ATS is not a credential and should not be used as such.

Blood Borne Pathogens: Pathogens found in blood and blood products. These include but are not limited to: HIV and Hepatitis B.

Board of Certification (BOC): Governing body for professional certification of Athletic Trainers.

Clinical Education: These are the formalized clinical experiences allowing students to apply didactic knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors in the clinical environment. Athletic Training Students will complete their clinical education experiences during their enrollment in the ATP. *Clinical Education* is the broad term that includes athletic training clinical experiences, simulation, and supplemental clinical experiences.

Immersive Clinical Education: Clinical education experience designed to engage students in a comprehensive athletic training setting, allowing students to experience the totality of care provided by athletic trainers.

Clinical Site: A healthcare setting that has been approved by Western Carolina University to serve as a site for completion of Clinical Education.

Clinical Education Hours: Hours obtained by an athletic training student for the completion of the requirements for graduation from the Athletic Training Program. Hours must be completed under the supervision of a preceptor. All clinical experiences must be approved by the Athletic Training faculty.

Clinical Proficiencies / Proficiencies: These are a list of psychomotor skills that must be mastered by each athletic training student during their progression through the ATP. Clinical Proficiencies are taught in academic courses and reinforced during laboratory courses and clinical experiences throughout the program.

Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE): Commission responsible for Accreditation of Athletic Training Curriculums since July 2006. Western Carolina University obtained its initial CAATE Accreditation in 2007. All athletic training students must graduate from a CAATE accredited athletic training program in order to be eligible to sit for the BOC examination.

Competencies in Athletic Training: The Competencies in Athletic Training define the educational domains used in preparing entry-level athletic trainers, serving as a guide in the development of educational programs and learning experiences leading to BOC certification.

Competencies include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Competencies are taught and evaluated in academic courses throughout the program.

Clinical Education Coordinator (CEC): Faculty member who directs the clinical education of athletic training students at all clinical sites associated with the Athletic Training Program. This individual is responsible for maintaining clinical site contracts, scheduling clinical education experiences, ensuring students are progressing through clinical education, preceptor evaluation, preceptor development, clinical site evaluation, and seeking out new opportunities for clinical education opportunities for athletic training students at Western Carolina University.

Disciplinary Procedures: Procedure for formal review of disciplinary actions in the Athletic Training Program. This procedure also allows for appropriate appeals of action taken by the Athletic Training Program faculty.

Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT): Degree program that prepares graduate to be professionally engaged while delivering high quality patient-centered care as athletic trainers. The MSAT is a 2-year, 6-semester program that combines didactic education with diverse clinical experiences.

Medical Director: North Carolina Licensed Physician who oversees the Athletic Training Program. The Medical Director provides recommendations regarding academic program content, as well as the safety and welfare of students enrolled in the program.

Mid-Atlantic Athletic Trainers' Association (MAATA): Organization of athletic trainers from NATA District III who promote the field of athletic training in the Mid-Atlantic portion of the United States. States comprising the MAATA include: the District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.

National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA): National professional membership association for athletic trainers and those who support the profession of athletic training.

National Athletic Trainers' Association Code of Ethics: The National Athletic Trainers' Association Code of Ethics states the principles of ethical behavior that should be followed in the practice of athletic training. It is intended to establish and maintain high standards and professionalism for the athletic training profession. (NATA)

North Carolina Athletic Trainers' Association (NCATA): Organization of athletic trainers who promote the profession of athletic training in the state of North Carolina.

North Carolina Board of Athletic Trainer Examiners (NCBATE): Governing board responsible for overseeing the licensure of athletic trainers and professional practice of athletic training in the state of North Carolina.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Guidelines: Federal safety regulations for employees whose jobs may put them at risk for injury or illness.

Practice Analysis: Study conducted by the Board of Certification designed to develop the Competencies necessary for the effective practice of an entry-level athletic trainer.

Preceptor: Athletic Trainer or physician who supervises, instructs, and evaluates athletic training students during their clinical experiences.

Program Director: Faculty member of the School of Health Science who has been designated to oversee the Athletic Training Program.

Supervision: This is the constant and direct supervision of the athletic training student during completion of clinical education experiences. According to the 2020 *Standards*, "Supervision occurs along a developmental continuum that allows a student to move from interdependence to independence based on the student's knowledge and skills as well as the context of care. Preceptors must be on-site and have the ability to intervene on behalf of the athletic training student and the patient. Supervision also must occur in compliance with the state practice act of the state in which the student is engaging in client/patient care."

APPENDIX B: Technical Standards

Technical Standards Athletic Training Program Western Carolina University

The Athletic Training Program at Western Carolina University is a rigorous and intense program that places specific requirements and demands on the students enrolled in the program. Athletic Trainers and Athletic Training Students must possess mental, physical, and behavioral abilities that are essential in providing patient care to a wide variety of patients/clients. The technical standards set forth by the Athletic Training Program establish the essential physical and mental skills and abilities a student needs to fulfill the academic and clinical requirements of the program. In the event a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, the student will not be able to begin the program or may be dismissed from the program. Compliance with the program's technical standards does not guarantee a student's eligibility for the BOC certification exam.

Students in the Athletic Training Program must demonstrate the ability to:

Cognitive learning skills

1. recall, collect, assimilate, analyze, synthesize, and integrate concepts, in order to problem solve, formulate assessment, make judgments, and develop a plan of care
2. establish rapport with patients and communicate judgments and treatment information effectively
3. the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and colleagues, including:
 - a. individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds
 - b. individuals with different knowledge levels and cognitive abilities
 - c. in high stress and emergency situations
4. understand and relay information in oral and written form effectively, accurately, reliably, and intelligibly to individuals and groups.

Physical Abilities

1. maintain sufficient postural, neuromuscular control, sensory function, and coordination of fine and gross motor movements to perform appropriate athletic training skills including but not limited to:
 - a. tactile dexterity to elicit information through palpation, muscle testing, joint motion testing, and special tests and be able to distinguish from the norm
 - b. provide immediate care in emergent situations, maintain inline stabilization of cervical spine, maintain direct pressure, provide wound care, perform CPR
 - c. demonstrate therapeutic exercises, administer therapeutic modalities, implement manual therapy techniques
 - d. legibly and accurately record/document evaluations, patient care notes, treatment plans, referrals
2. execute movements to provide physical care to patients, including but not limited to therapeutic exercise, manual therapy, wound care, maintaining inline stabilization of the cervical spine

3. lift and/or maneuver an individual effectively to perform evaluation and treatment techniques, to manipulate common tools used for screening tests and therapeutic interventions while maintaining a safe and effective environment
4. Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment

Behavioral/Affective Learning Skills

1. maintain composure and continue to function during periods of high stress, including demonstrating appropriate coping mechanisms that allow for adequate emotional and mental stability to provide care to others
2. sustain the mental and emotional rigors of a demanding educational program in athletic training that includes academic and clinical components that occur within set time constraints, and often concurrently
3. adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in clinical situations
4. maintain appropriate demeanor and rapport that relate to professional education and quality patient care
5. emotional health required for full use of intellectual abilities, to exercise good judgement, to make clinical judgments, to function effectively in stressful and emergent situations, and examine and modify one's own behavior when it interferes with others or the learning environment
6. create a safe and inclusive environment

Prior to beginning the Athletic Training Program, students are required to verify they understand and meet these technical standards. A student with a disability may participate in the program so long as the student satisfies program requirements, including these Technical Standards, with or without reasonable accommodation. It is the responsibility of a student with a disability (or a student who develops a disability) and who needs an accommodation to request such accommodation by contacting the Office of Accessibility Resources at 828.227.3886.

My signature confirms the following:

1. I have been provided with a copy of the Athletic Training Program Technical Standards and have read and understand the content.
2. I certify that I am able to meet all of the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations.
3. If I should require accommodations to meet the technical standards, I will contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, 828-227-3886, to determine what accommodations may be available.
4. I will immediately report to my advisor any change in my ability to perform the technical standards.
5. I understand that failure to meet the technical standards will result in a review of my progression in the Athletic Training Program and may result in dismissal from the program as determined by Athletic Training faculty, Medical Director, Director of the School of Health Sciences, and appropriate College Administration representatives.
6. I understand that the signed Technical Standards will be placed in my student file and that I am to retain a copy of the Technical Standards for my personal files.

Date

Student Printed Name

Student Signature