

Career Connections

Athletic Training

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The American Medical Association recognizes athletic training as an allied health profession. As such, individuals wishing to pursue a career in athletic training must complete course work in an approved curriculum prior to taking a national certification exam. The Athletic Training Career Connections program is intended to help students investigate the profession to determine if it meets their expectations as a possible career path. Through a combination of exploration activities, course work, co-curricular involvement, and work experience students will prepare themselves for further study at the graduate level.

Certified athletic trainers, with the supervision of attending and/or consulting physicians, play an integral role in the health care system associated with physical activity and sports. Through extensive preparation in both academic and practical experience, the athletic trainer provides a variety of services, including injury prevention, recognition, immediate care, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical trauma. The athletic trainer functions as an integral member of the health care team in a variety of settings, including secondary schools, colleges and universities, Olympic centers and teams, international athletic organizations, sports medicine clinics, hospitals, physician offices, professional sports programs, fitness facilities, and industrial settings. Considering the various work settings, certified athletic trainers are often expected to work outside the traditional nine to five workday, often working more than an eight-hour day. Stamina, flexibility, intellectual curiosity, core ideology, and pragmatism are essential qualities for a successful athletic trainer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Exploring Options

In order to obtain additional information regarding the profession, visit the Career Center Resource Library to review some of the following resources: *Exploring Health Care Careers* by Ferguson, *Careers in Health Care* by VGM Career Horizons, *The Sports Internship Book* by Career Education Institutes.

Another way to further explore the profession is to talk to individuals actively involved in athletic training. The Career Center has a list of alumni actively involved in athletic training that are eager to talk to interested students from Hanover. Additionally, contacting someone in the Athletic Training Department here at the college or spending some time job shadowing is another way to actively explore the occupation. Some job shadowing opportunities may be available off-campus as well.

Academics

Choosing Your Major

Considering the entry-level Masters in Athletic Training is intended to prepare graduates to critically analyze and convey information to patients, colleagues and other health professionals, as well as to provide a broad range of patient care services and to perform research and administrative responsibilities, virtually any liberal art major will prepare a student for successful graduate work. There are a few majors that are natural complements including biology, psychology and sociology. Because the pre-requisites required by most entry-level Master's programs are broad based, it is more important to choose a major that is of interest to you. For example, foreign languages can be of tremendous value, including but not limited to a better cultural competency when relating to patients and considering treatment options.

Courses Required for Admission to Most Entry-level Programs

The following web site lists the entry-level graduate programs: <http://www.jrc-at.org/>. It is wise to explore these programs to ascertain what exactly is needed to gain admission into their specific programs. The following is a list of typical pre-requisites:

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution such as Hanover College
- An overall minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a four point scale
- Fifty to one hundred hours of clinical observation with a Certified Athletic Trainer

Completion of the following pre-requisite courses with a grade of "C" or better:

Anatomy and Physiology (one course each)

Cell Biology (one course)

English (one course)

Physics (one course)

Psychology (one course)

Sociology (one course)

Applied Statistics

Physiology of Exercise

Nutrition

Kinesiology/Biomechanics

Cultural diversity course

CPR and First aid

Co-Curricular Activities

It is helpful to get involved in activities that can broaden your level of experience while providing a service to the community. Considering athletic trainers deal with a wide age range of individuals, the possibilities are endless. Since interacting with people is central to what an athletic trainer does, activities such as peer advising and residence assistance present opportunities to develop listening skills. Groups such as BASIC and theme housing allow students to hone leadership skills while presenting an opportunity for peer education. In an effort to reach out to the greater community, students can get involved with organizations on campus such as LINK, College Mentors for Kids, and Best Buddies and off campus such as the Lide-White Boys and Girls Club, Girl's Inc., Big Brothers/Big Sisters, The American Red

Cross, Prevent Child Abuse, and CASA (Coalition Against Substance Abuse). Working with The King's Daughters' Hospital Community Wellness department and KDH Cardiac Rehabilitation departments present opportunities to work with the adult population. Pursuing certification as an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) or CSCS (Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist) can not only provide a service to the community but also serve as an advantage when applying to graduate school.

Work Experience

On Campus Jobs

In order to truly appreciate what an athletic trainer does, it is important to gain first-hand experience. The best way to accomplish this is by working in the athletic training room as a student assistant. You will gain first-hand experience with practice and game preparation. Additionally, you will be permitted to work directly with student athletes providing first aid care, taping, and preventative care, while observing and participating in the evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of injuries. You will have ample opportunities to interact with the staff athletic trainers as well as other health care providers rendering care to the athletes. This type of experience is a pre-requisite for virtually all graduate programs of study.

Related Summer Jobs

A summer job, not unlike a summer course, can afford you the opportunity to immerse yourself in a particular area. Working at summer sports camps is an excellent way to gain additional experience, whether that experience comes from coaching and understanding their perspective in regard to injury or providing first aid to participants. It may also be possible to work in a physical therapy setting to gain additional experience with rehabilitation or an urban primary care clinic or health department to work on cultural competency. Orthopedic offices often need people to gather data, do data entry, and/or research for a project, and this serves as a wonderful opportunity in preparation for graduate school and later as an intellectually curious professional. Athletic trainers deal with much more than just athletic injuries, however, and make referrals to specialties other than orthopedics. As there is a great deal of primary care triage done by athletic trainers through infection recognition and control, for example, medical mission trips may provide invaluable opportunities both personally and culturally that should not be overlooked. Working in a factory setting can expose you to the environment potential patients may work in as well as give you an understanding of the types of repetitive actions factory workers encounter on a daily basis.

Internships

Opportunities for internship can present themselves in many ways ranging from summer experiences to full-semester engagements, including such sites as Methodist Sports Medicine Center, the Florida Marlins, Central Indiana Orthopedics, and St. Vincent's Hospital Sports Medicine Center. The Internship Coordinator can provide information regarding internships as well as suggest possible ideas. Students have completed internships in physician offices, physical therapy clinics, local high schools, professional sports settings, and research departments.

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