

# ATHLETIC TRAINING, MS

Athletic trainers (ATs) are highly qualified, multi-skilled health care professionals who provide preventive services, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention, and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions. The University of Alabama Athletic Training Program is a limited-selection, two-year professional master's degree program.

Our mission is to prepare students for the Board of Certification (BOC) examination and successful careers in athletic training. To this end, we will provide quality graduate coursework with innovative and hands-on learning experiences in didactic, laboratory, and clinical education that emphasizes evidence-based practice, interprofessional collaboration in health care, and equitable patient-centered care.

Our program is housed in Capital Hall, a new facility that delivers ingenuity in the use of classroom lecture and lab spaces. All classrooms, offices, and laboratories are located under the same roof, providing more engagement between faculty and students, further developing mentorship that lasts beyond graduation.

The Master of Science in Athletic Training is a 46-credit hour master's program that includes in-person, hybrid, and online classes paired with a clinical education and experience. Students that choose the thesis track will have an additional four hours of research coursework for a total of 50 credit hours. This program requires simultaneous didactic and clinical preparation.

Each semester of the program includes clinical education experiences that parallel the professional coursework. Students are assigned to a different preceptor each semester to strengthen weaknesses, develop confidence, and push boundaries.

On campus, students will work with athletes of the highest caliber through our partnership with Alabama Athletics. Each student will experience either pre-season or post-season in addition to two immersive experiences, complete with travel, as a part of a team's support system across 16 different clinical sites within UA's intercollegiate athletics.

Designed to ensure exposure to diverse educational experiences, clinical education continues off campus with rotations in local high schools, physical therapy clinics, colleges, physician offices, and the UA Student Recreation Center.

## Admissions

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission to the Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) program an application must include:

1. Have a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA), and a grade of C or better on all prerequisite courses. Students must complete all prerequisite courses listed prior to successfully matriculating to the MSAT program.
2. Have Basic Life Support and First Aid Certification from the American Heart Association or American Red Cross.
3. Have documentation of at least 60 hours of athletic training observation experience with a certified athletic trainer.

### *Prerequisite Courses*

Prerequisite courses include: 3 credit hours each of Psychology, Care and Prevention, Statistics, Kinesiology/Biomechanics, and Exercise Physiology; 4 credit hours of Biology with lab, Chemistry with lab, and

Physics with lab; and 8 credit hours of Anatomy and Physiology with lab (combined or separate).

### *Admissions Procedures*

- Apply to the MSAT Program through The University of Alabama Graduate School.
- Submit the following documents with your application:
  1. A resume or curriculum vitae.
  2. A personal statement of professional and education goals.
  3. Three letters of recommendation from educators, employers, or healthcare professionals.
  4. Evidence of 60 hours of observational experience with a certified athletic trainer using UA's Observational Experience Form.\*
- Participate in a virtual interview with the UA AT Program Selection Committee, if offered. An interview is not a guarantee of admission.

### *Written Technical Standards*

The Athletic Training Program (AT Program) at The University of Alabama is a rigorous and intense program that places specific requirements and demands on its enrolled students. An objective of this program is to prepare graduates to enter a variety of employment settings and to render care to a wide spectrum of physically active individuals. The technical standards set forth by the AT Program establish the essential qualifications considered necessary for admitted students to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies of an entry-level certified athletic trainer. These standards are also necessary for meeting the expectations of the program's accrediting agency, the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). All students admitted to the AT Program must meet the following abilities and expectations. In the event a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, the student will not be admitted into the professional program. Compliance with the program's technical standards does not guarantee a student's eligibility for the Board of Certification (BOC) examination.

Candidates for selection to the Athletic Training Program must demonstrate:

- 1) The ability to assimilate, analyze, synthesize, integrate concepts and problem solve to formulate assessment and therapeutic judgments and to be able to distinguish deviations from the norm.
- 2) The ability to perform appropriate physical examinations using accepted techniques; this includes, but is not limited to, the ability to observe, position, lift and carry or otherwise transport patients. Some tasks require the ability to lift the equivalent of an adult human's body weight and students must also possess sufficient physical stamina to complete long periods of standing, sitting and moving in a variety of clinical settings. Students must also be able to accurately, safely and efficiently use equipment and materials during the assessment and treatment of patients.
- 3) The ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and colleagues, including individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds; this includes, but is not limited to, the ability to establish rapport with patients and communicate judgments and treatment information effectively. Students must be able to understand and speak

the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice.

- 4) The ability to record physical examination results and a treatment plan clearly and accurately.
- 5) The ability to maintain composure and continue to exercise good judgment and to function appropriately during periods of high stress.
- 6) Flexibility and the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in clinical settings.
- 7) Affective skills and appropriate demeanor and rapport that relate to professional education and quality patient care.

Candidates for selection to the AT Program will be required to verify they understand and meet these technical standards or that they believe that, with certain accommodations, they can meet the standards. The Office of Disability Services will review the documentation of a student who states he/she could meet the program's technical standards with accommodation and confirm that the stated condition substantially limits the student. If a student states he/she can meet the technical standards with accommodation, then the University will determine whether it agrees that the student can meet the technical standards with reasonable accommodation. This includes a review of whether the accommodations requested are reasonable, taking into account whether accommodation would jeopardize clinician/patient safety, or the educational process of the student or the institution, including all coursework, clinical experiences and internships deemed essential to graduation.

Injury, illness or other situations may temporarily impact a student's ability to meet our Written Technical Standards. This, in turn, would impact a clinical placement and/or ability to participate in some lab activities. In the event of injury or illness, the Medical Director will work with the Office of Disability Services to determine the potential and appropriateness of any accommodations. The student will be required to complete an amended technical standards form for the duration of the accommodation period and a new document following full clearance for return.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

## Curricular Requirements

Capstone/Non-Thesis Option		Hours
ATR 500	Professional Practice	3
ATR 503	Patient-Centered Care	2
ATR 505	Examination and Diagnosis I	3
ATR 507	Examination and Diagnosis II	2
ATR 509	Examination and Diagnosis III	3
ATR 510	Clinical Skills I	1
ATR 511	Examination and Diagnosis IV	3
ATR 513	Therapeutic Intervention I	2
ATR 517	Therapeutic Intervention II	2
ATR 519	Advanced Trauma Management	1
ATR 520	Clinical Skills II	1
ATR 521	Therapeutic Intervention III	3
ATR 525	Research in Athletic Training	1
ATR 530	Clinical Immersion I	2
ATR 531	Therapeutic Intervention IV	3
ATR 533	Therapeutic Intervention V	2
ATR 535	Health Care Administration	3

ATR 540	Clinical Skills III	1
ATR 541	Therapeutic Intervention VI	2
ATR 545	Seminar in AT	2
ATR 550	Culminating Experience II	2
ATR 598	Non-Thesis Research	2

**Total Hours** **46**

**Thesis Option** **Hours**

ATR 500	Professional Practice	3
ATR 503	Patient-Centered Care	2
ATR 505	Examination and Diagnosis I	3
ATR 507	Examination and Diagnosis II	2
ATR 509	Examination and Diagnosis III	3
ATR 510	Clinical Skills I	1
ATR 511	Examination and Diagnosis IV	3
ATR 513	Therapeutic Intervention I	2
ATR 517	Therapeutic Intervention II	2
ATR 519	Advanced Trauma Management	1
ATR 520	Clinical Skills II	1
ATR 521	Therapeutic Intervention III	3
ATR 525	Research in Athletic Training	1
ATR 530	Clinical Immersion I	2
ATR 531	Therapeutic Intervention IV	3
ATR 533	Therapeutic Intervention V	2
ATR 535	Health Care Administration	3
ATR 540	Clinical Skills III	1
ATR 541	Therapeutic Intervention VI	2
ATR 545	Seminar in AT	2
ATR 550	Culminating Experience II	2
ATR 599	Thesis Research (Students will take ATR 599 in 2 semesters for 6 total hours)	6

**Total Hours** **50**

Students will take 3 clinical integration courses during which they will complete clinical experiences at affiliated clinical settings. In addition, the curriculum includes 2 immersive clinical experiences with one lasting a minimum of 4 weeks (ATR 530) & the other lasting 8 weeks (ATR 550). All of these courses have assigned academic credit and are included in the list above.

Students will complete a non-thesis capstone project (ATR 598) or a thesis (ATR 599). Both of these options have assigned academic credit and are included in the list above.

## Transfer Credit

Due to specialty accreditation standards, students cannot transfer any courses into the MSAT program.

## Capstone Requirement

Students will complete a culminating experience in ATR 550 Culminating Experience II to meet the Capstone Requirement.

## Clinical Requirements

Each semester of the program includes clinical education experiences linked directly to the professional coursework through the Clinical Skills courses. Students are assigned to a different preceptor each semester of program enrollment. In accordance with accreditation guidelines and program philosophy, students complete exposures to a variety of

patients. Each student will complete a clinical rotation requiring either pre-season or post-season experience and travel. Clinical education assignments are designed to ensure the student exposure to diverse educational experiences through work with a variety of Preceptors, patients and allied medical and medical professionals in many different settings. In addition to the 16 clinical sites within the UA Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, a range of local high schools, physical therapy clinics, colleges, physician offices and the UA Student Recreation Center serve as affiliated clinical settings within the AT Program.

While in clinical education experiences, students must be directly supervised by your preceptor. Students are expected to comply with all facility and organizational rules that are outlined by the assigned preceptor and all patient care decisions should be discussed with a preceptor prior to providing care.

In order to be allowed to participate in clinical education experiences through The University of Alabama Athletic Training Program, students must maintain clearance through Castlebranch. In order to receive and maintain clearance, students must submit the following requirements by the assigned dates (varies each year). Students that do not meet the requirements will not be allowed to begin his/her clinical experiences and students that fail to maintain clinical experience will be removed from his/her clinic site. Failure to participate in clinical experience will result in earning a grade of F in clinical courses and will delay progress through the AT Program.

- Background Check
- 10-panel Drug Screen
- CPR certification
- Physical Examination
- Influenza (vaccine or signed declination)
- Varicella (chicken pox) - 2 vaccinations or positive antibody titer
- Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR) - 2 vaccinations or positive antibody titer
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) - Tdap vaccination within the past 10 years
- Tuberculosis (TB) - 1 step TB skin test OR QuantiFERON-TB Gold Plus test
- Child Protection Training
- Confidentiality Statement

At the time of publishing, the COVID vaccine is not required for students at The University of Alabama or within the Athletic Training Program; however, some clinical sites have vaccine requirements and students that do not have the COVID vaccine will not be allowed to complete clinical experiences at sites that have site-specific vaccination requirements. Further, policies regarding COVID vaccination continue to evolve. University-wide requirements will be followed.

Students are required to pass a 10-panel drug screen for clinical clearance. Students are required to undergo additional screening for drugs, alcohol or other controlled substances if:

- injury occurs at clinical site.
- there is a medication or handling discrepancy at clinical site.
- medication may have been stolen or improperly used at clinical site (by anyone associated with site).
- the student appears unfit for duty as a result of use reasonable cause or suspicion to believe student is under the influence or is otherwise impaired & unable to perform 1 or more essential functions of the placement with or without reasonable accommodation.

- the student poses a direct threat to health or safety of self or others specifically because of use.

A positive result from a required additional screening will result in your removal from the clinical setting, which will impact your grade in the associated clinical class. You will undergo a 10-panel urinalysis on a weekly basis until your test is negative. You will be cleared to return to your clinical setting following that negative test. Athletic Training Students are responsible for all costs associated with drug testing. Repeated positive tests may result in your release from the AT Program.

#### *Confidentiality Requirements*

In collecting, maintaining, and disclosing personnel information, the University and the AT Program affiliated settings make every effort to protect employee and patient privacy rights and interests and prevent inappropriate or unnecessary disclosures of information from any patient's file or record.

While complying with governmental reporting and record keeping requirements, the clinical settings associated with the AT Program strive to ensure that it handles all personal and job-related information about patients in a secure, confidential, and appropriate fashion. Therefore, athletic training students should prevent and not participate in the unauthorized access, use, review, disclosure, dissemination, alteration, or destruction of confidential information regarding patients, students, or employees. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Information from student records in violation of the institution's policy on confidentiality of student records and/or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
- Information from employee records in violation of the institution's personnel privacy policy or state or federal laws;
- Information from internal discrimination/ harassment investigations when such information is required to be kept confidential and shared only on a need to know basis;
- Any personally identifiable health information relating to the past, present, or future physical or mental health condition of an individual, the provision of health care to an individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual, in violation of state or federal laws (including but not limited to: HIPAA, ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or FMLA)

Violation of the Confidentiality Policy will result in release from the AT Program.

#### *Professional Appearance and Relationships Guidelines*

There will be program-wide and site-specific professional appearance and relationship guidelines. Failure to comply with these guidelines may limit clinical access and result in dismissal from the MSAT Program. Students will be provided with these guidelines at the start of each academic year and will sign an attestation form to indicate their understanding and agreement to comply with the guidelines.

#### *Gambling*

Students enrolled in MSAT Program shall not knowingly:

- Provide information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities concerning intercollegiate athletics competition;
- Solicit a bet on any intercollegiate or professional team;
- Accept a bet on any team representing the institution;

- Solicit or accept a bet on any intercollegiate competition for any item (e.g. cash, shirt, dinner) that has tangible value; or
- Participate in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate athletics or professional athletics, through a bookmaker, a parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling.

Athletic training students shall not participate in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate or professional athletics, through a bookmaker, a parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling (e.g. sports "pools", internet gambling, "800" numbers, etc.). This includes other methods not run through organized gambling (e.g. pools, fantasy leagues, etc.), even if the bet or value of the prize is a "friendly" wager. Violation of the Gambling Policy will result in your release from the AT Program.

## Plan I - Thesis Process Requirements

The MSAT Program is a thesis-optional program. Students that are interested in the thesis option should discuss this with the AT Program Director as early as possible. There are specific deadlines that need to be met for the thesis process and failure to meet these deadlines may result in a delay in graduation and AT certification. A thesis evidencing research capacity, independent thought, and the ability to interpret materials is required of all master's degree candidates who pursue Plan I. The subject chosen must be directly related to Athletic Training and must be approved by the graduate committee of the major department or school and by the head of the student's major department or division.

A thesis committee must consist of at least three members appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. Students set up their committee through the Graduate Academic Activities portal on the Graduate School website. The request normally is made as soon as the successful defense of the thesis proposal has been completed. All members of a thesis committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty. The Committee Chair must be a full or associate member of the Graduate Faculty. One member must be from outside the student's major department. The majority of the thesis committee must be full-time regular University of Alabama faculty. If the outside member is not a full or associate member of the UA Graduate Faculty (e.g., a highly qualified person from another university, a business, or industry), the graduate dean needs to appoint that member by approving Affiliate Graduate Faculty status for the specific purpose of serving on the student's thesis committee. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances meriting approval by the graduate dean before the final oral defense of the thesis, all members of the thesis committee must attend the defense.

The candidate must give members of the examining committee a minimum of two weeks to read the thesis before the date of the final oral examination. All members must agree that the student is ready for the final oral thesis defense. A final oral thesis defense is required of all students completing a thesis. All members of the thesis committee must be members of the UA graduate faculty and must attend the final oral thesis defense unless there are extraordinary circumstances warranting the graduate dean's approval of the absence prior to the defense meeting.

The final oral thesis defense is the culminating experience in the master's program. As such, all members of the thesis committee are expected to attend and participate in real time. Virtual attendance via interactive video or teleconference is permitted for off-campus external committee members, but the student and Tuscaloosa campus faculty should attend in person unless extraordinary circumstances dictate the need for virtual attendance. In circumstances where virtual participation is necessary, all participants must follow the Virtual Participation guidelines found below.

## Plan II- Non-Thesis Process Requirements

The non-thesis option is the plan that best fits the professional goals of most MSAT students. In addition to the regular course examinations, a final comprehensive examination representing a "culminating" or "capstone" experience for a degree is required of all MSAT students. The comprehensive examination is a culminating experience in which the student is expected to integrate prior learning. The capstone experience will be completed as part of ATR 598 Non-Thesis Research in the final semester of the MSAT Program.

## Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. There is no provision for an extension of the time limit beyond six years for master's students. More information on the Graduate School policy on Time Limits for Degree completion can be found [here](#).

## Student Progress Requirement

Students admitted to the MSAT Program must meet the following criteria for retention:

- earn a grade of C or higher in all MSAT courses
- uphold The University of Alabama Code of Student Conduct and the NATA Code of Ethics
- meet all clinical clearance deadlines (through CastleBranch) without delay
- follow all AT Program policies and procedures
- comply with all clinical education site-specific policies and procedures during assignment to the corresponding clinical site
- show commitment to the AT Program through demonstration of academic, organizational and financial ability to participate in all program requirements

Students that do not earn a C or higher in their coursework will have to repeat the course in the next semester that it is offered before continuing on through the course sequence. This will delay graduation approximately 1 academic year.

## Academic Misconduct Information

According to the Code of Academic Conduct, academic misconduct by students includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Any suspected violation of the Academic Honor Code will be sent to the Academic Misconduct Monitor (in HES: Assistant Dean). Except in divisions that have alternate academic misconduct policies that have been approved by the academic vice president, academic misconduct cases shall be resolved by the divisional academic misconduct monitor or the academic dean of the division in which the alleged action took place after consultation with the academic dean or monitor in the division where the student is enrolled. However, with the concurrence of both deans, the responsibility for resolving an academic misconduct case can be transferred to the dean of the division in which the student is enrolled. Appeals from the monitor's decisions may be made to the academic

dean; appeals from the academic dean's decisions may be made to the Office for Academic Affairs.

The Graduate School Academic Misconduct policy can be found [here](#).

## **Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information**

All courses within the MSAT Program are in a required sequence and must be completed in this order. Withdrawing from an individual course cannot be done as each semester class is a co-requisite for each other.

A graduate student may withdraw from the university (i.e., withdraw from all courses in the semester), either for non-medical or medical reasons, in accordance with deadlines. The first thing a student considering withdrawal should do is to consult with his or her academic advisor.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate a withdrawal through myBama and provide the information necessary to complete the withdrawal process. Academic Bankruptcy (described in the Undergraduate Catalog) is not available to graduate students.

Withdrawing from a semester will delay graduation. MSAT students can re-take the course sequence in the next semester that the courses are offered. Students should contact student accounting for information about the financial effects of withdrawing, including information on how federal financial aid, loans, and scholarships may be affected.

Under compelling circumstances beyond the student's control, a graduate student may request that the department petition the Graduate School with the rationale for granting a leave of absence. If granted by the Graduate School, a leave of absence will cover one or more upcoming semesters rather than any prior semester(s). A leave of absence is not a method of avoiding continuous registration requirements, and it does not lengthen the time limit. When a student returns from a leave of absence, the Graduate School must be notified and will work with the department and student to determine the number of semesters remaining on the time limit and the degree requirements that remain.

The Graduate School Withdrawals and Leave of Absence information can be found [here](#).

## **Academic Grievances Information**

Students should attempt to resolve academic grievances with the course instructor. If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should contact the AT Program Director and/or Health Science Department Chair. If the grievance still cannot be resolved, the Internal Complaint Process for Students can be found [here](#).

The Graduate School Academic Grievances information can be found [here](#).

## **Grades and Academic Standing**

In addition to the requirements for MSAT Program Retention, The Graduate School scholastic requirements will have to be met. The Graduate School scholastic requirements can be found [here](#).

## **Graduate School Deadlines Information**

Graduate School deadlines can be found [here](#).

## **Application for Graduation Information**

Application for Graduation information can be found [here](#).