



Commission on Accreditation
of Athletic Training Education

Special Bulletin

Summer 2009 Update

Message from the CAATE President

Changes and Challenges

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.--John. F. Kennedy

Hang on to your hat, changes are coming! The CAATE has been working on a revised cycle for accreditation. When I say we are changing the cycle, I mean that we are changing the length of time that the program and institution have to prepare the Rejoinder for submission to the CAATE. In order to accomplish this change, we will need to move toward conducting one meeting a year when the CAATE makes accreditation decisions. Currently, accreditation decisions are made twice a year during the winter and the summer Commission meetings. Under the new system, accreditation decisions will be made once a year. In essence, a defined window of time for the site visit will be established, the site visit will be conducted; hence, providing more time for writing the Rejoinder. The details will be forthcoming and the changes will not go into effect until the academic year of 2010-2011.

The details are, of course, critical but I believe it's also important to share with you why we are making this change. During a strategic planning meeting in November 2008, the CAATE Review Committee was asked to identify areas for improvement in the Comprehensive Review Process. A fact that continued to come up during the strategic planning meeting, was the need to give programs more time to respond to the Site Visit Report and write the Rejoinder. The CAATE and the Review Committee believe that some Progress Reports may not have been necessary if more time had been allowed to write the Rejoinder. Finally, a longer cycle will give the Review Committee more time to examine the Site Visit Reports and in doing so, improve the Comprehensive Review Process.

Granted, change is difficult and should not to be taken lightly. This is especially true when dealing with accreditation issues. However, the CAATE truly believes this is a step that will improve the quality of accreditation services delivered by the CAATE. Continuous improvement of accreditation services is, and must continue to be, a driving force for the CAATE.

CAATE Standards J3.5 & J3.51 – Athletic Training Student Clinical Experiences (Hours)

How much time is enough for athletic training students to maximize learning and develop adequate clinical skills to become competent entry-level athletic training professionals? The requirements for clinical experiences and the associated number of hours have spawned healthy debate among members of the athletic training profession.

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The issues commonly discussed among athletic training educators are the number of clinical hours the student performs and the types of clinical experiences performed under the direct supervision of a certified athletic trainer. The clinical hours discussions must include conversations not just about the quantity of the experience, but must also include the quality. Therefore, considerable thought, input and discussion must go into any revisions of the clinical experience Standards.

The CAATE is committed to ensuring a quality educational and collegiate experience for the athletic training student. In keeping with that objective, the Standards (J3.5 and J3.51) addressing clinical hours are currently under review. The CAATE is currently working to develop language that clarifies the requirements outlined in J3.51. Until the time the clinical standards can be reviewed and revised, the CAATE is working to provide appropriate information to program directors and site visitors, so that compliance with the Standards are cited correctly.

In the meantime, Standard J3.51 does not restrict clinical hours to 20 hours per week. There has been considerable confusion among program directors concerning the interpretation of the Standard. The Standard states *“The length of clinical experiences should be consistent with other comparable academic programs requiring a clinical or supervised practice component. Such policies must be consistent with federal or state student work-study guidelines as applicable to the campus setting.”* Many educators (and site visitors) have taken the literal interpretation of this Standard and have created the perception that students must not exceed 20 hours during any week while in the clinical experience. This Standard does NOT restrict clinical experiences to a maximum of 20 hours per week. Rather, the Standard should be implemented so that students are not consistently spending inappropriate time in the clinical setting. Standard J3.5 requires that **“the students’ clinical experience requirements MUST BE CAREFULLY MONITORED.”**

Taken together, the intent of these Standards is to ensure that athletic training students have adequate supervision, are not required to do an unreasonable number of hours, and are receiving a quality educational experience. Essentially, the Standards are in place to ensure that the graduate emerges as a competent entry-level athletic training professional without compromising the athletic training students’ academic experience or causing undue stress. Our challenge is to achieve the right balance between these often conflicting factors.

The CAATE will be asking for input as these Standards are revised. Furthermore, we are open to suggestions on how to provide a quality educational experience that will foster clinical decision making skills, while protecting the student from logging an inappropriate number of less than quality hours.

General Medical Rotations

The CAATE would like to remind all CAATE accredited programs that a General Medical Rotation must be offered as part of the curriculum. A General Medical Rotation is defined as a clinical experience that involves observation and interaction with physicians, nurse practitioners, and/or physician assistants where the majority of the experience involves general medical topics as those defined by the Athletic Training Educational Competencies. If you have any questions regarding the General Medical Rotation please see Standard J3.3 in the CAATE Standards.

Clarification on GFIs

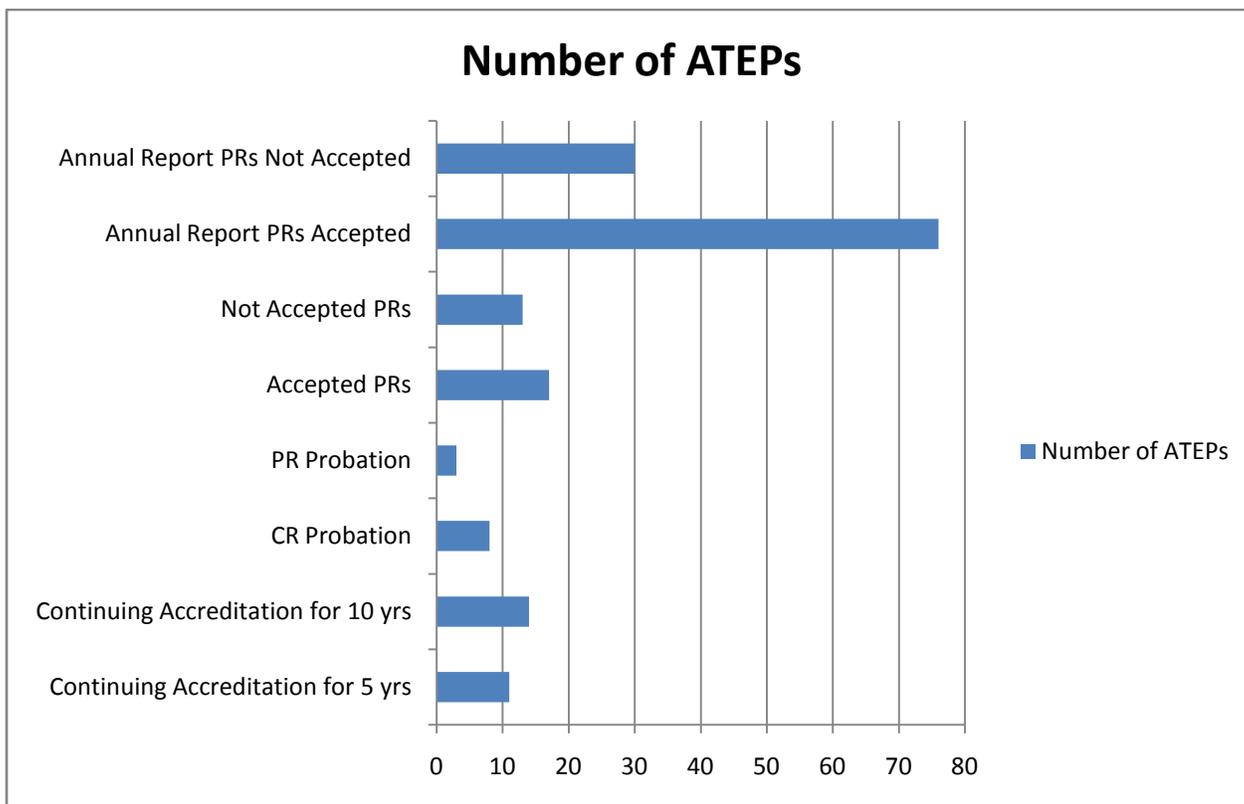
Standard F5 (GFIs) continues to be one of confusion to site visitors and program directors alike. While the CAATE does not profess to have expertise in the matter of electricity, the Standards do require electrical checks and safeguards to be in place for the students’ safety as well as the patients. Therefore, starting with the Spring 2009 site visits, the CAATE asked the site visitors to verify that all modalities connected to a water source or located immediately adjacent to an open sink are connected to a GFI. Hydrocollators are not required to be connected to a GFI.

Degree in Athletic Training

The CAATE reminds all CAATE accredited programs that by 2014-2015 academic year, individuals entering the profession must have a degree in athletic training. This means that, by 2014-2015, individuals completing entry-level programs in athletic training must be awarded a degree in athletic training. With regard to the type of degree required, as long as the degree is in Athletic Training and titled as such, each institution may determine the type of degree awarded (e.g. Bachelor of Arts in Athletic Training, Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training). However, the degree title may not be dually tagged with any other major unless this dual tagged degree option is consistent with institutional policy/procedure and with all other major degrees offered at the institution. Again, if there is precedence for single-titled degrees at the institution, then Athletic Training must also be a single-titled degree. With regard to the requirements for entry-level masters degrees in AT, the CAATE will be conducting a brief study of current entry-level masters programs to determine if there is already a trend that can be used as a model for these type of degree programs in the future. It was impossible to identify such a trend in traditional undergraduate degree programs in AT as there is such diversity of academic units in which AT programs are housed.

Overview of Accreditation Actions from March 2009 Meeting

During the March 2009 Commission meeting, 185 ATEPs were reviewed. The following chart depicts an overview of the actions decided during the meeting. Overall, a majority of the ATEPs received a positive recommendation. Only 6% of the ATEPs reviewed received a Probation recommendation.



Note: **PR** = Progress Report

CR = Comprehensive Review

REMINDER: All correspondence and mailings should be sent to the CAATE® Office.

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Official CAATE® Communication



Be On The Lookout

The CAATE continues to strive to improve processes and forms used by Program Directors, Site Visitors and CAATE Committee Members. Keep your eye on the lookout for:

- ❖ An updated and improved website
- ❖ A web-based Annual Report
- ❖ More User Friendly forms
- ❖ Updated Standards