



CAATE Update: CAATE Accreditation of Athletic Training Residency and Fellowship Programs

The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) is dedicated to growth and development of accredited residency programs in specialty areas of athletic training practice. The CAATE first started accrediting residency programs in 2013. There are currently ten accredited residency programs and another 8 programs actively seeking CAATE accreditation. In 2017, the Commission identified eight specialty areas of clinical practice in an effort to help guide the development of specialty training in the athletic training profession. The eight specialty areas include: Prevention & Wellness, Urgent & Emergent Care, Primary Care, Orthopaedics, Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health, Pediatrics, and Performance Enhancement. These 8 specialty areas identified by the Commission represent areas of specialty clinical practice in which athletic trainers clearly demonstrate advanced patient-care knowledge and skills.

The CAATE established the Residency & Fellowship Committee in 2018 (Table 1) and was charged with the identification, recommendation, and support of residency and fellowship activities. The Committee was also charged with exploring the accreditation and development of Standards for fellowship programs. The primary work of the group includes the evaluation, development, and progression of the *Standards for Accreditation of Residency & Fellowship Programs (Residency & Fellowship Standards)* to assure appropriate quality in residency and fellowship training programs.

Table 1: CAATE Residency & Fellowship Committee Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>University or Organization Affiliation</u>
Hollie Walusz, MA, ATC, PES (Committee Chair)	Boston University Program Director Residency Program in Orthopedics & Diagnosis; Neurotrauma & Spine
Sean Burfeind, MHA, ATC	Inova Health System Clinical Athletic Trainer
Jim Reidy, MS, ATC, CSCS	St. Luke's University Health Network Program Director Residency Program in Orthopaedics
Rebecca Bedard, MEd, ATC	Orthopedic Care Physician Network, LLC Clinical Manager
Amy Valasek, MD, MS	Nationwide Children's Hospital Physician
Bonnie Van Lunen, PhD, ATC, FNATA	CAATE Commissioner Liaison

A residency is advanced education and programming beyond a professional program for athletic trainers who desire to complete training within an area of specialty in clinical practice. Athletic training residency education occurs in clinical settings that establish the foundation for practice-based and lifelong learning. Athletic trainers learn to provide optimal patient care under the structured mentorship of faculty members who not only instruct, but serve as role models of excellence, compassion, professionalism, and scholarship. The care of patients is undertaken with appropriate faculty supervision and conditional independence, allowing residents to attain the deep medical knowledge, patient care skills, and expertise applicable to the specialty. Formal clinical development, structured didactic curricula, and scholarship within the specialty are pillars of residency programs to expand upon the foundational knowledge and experience athletic trainers have acquired during professional education.

Fellowship is advanced education and intensive programming beyond a residency program for athletic trainers who desire to enter more subspecialized practice. A subspecialty is a narrow field within a specialization. For example, manual therapy may be a subspecialty of rehabilitation, and neurotrauma may be a subspecialty of primary care. Specialization and subspecialization can be nested within larger frameworks. Fellowship-trained athletic trainers serve the public by providing subspecialty care, which may also include core medical care. Formal clinical development, structured didactic curricula, and scholarship within the subspecialty area are pillars of athletic training fellowship programs that expand upon specialty knowledge and training athletic trainers have acquired during successful completion of residency programs or similar clinical experience routes.

The language and global framework of these new Residency & Fellowship Standards may look different from both the 2014 Residency Standards and the 2020 Professional Standards. This was an intentional change as we purposely highlight the differences and uniqueness of residency and fellowship programs in athletic training. Residency and fellowship positions are full time clinical positions with an academic role (didactic and scholarship) that are designed to build upon and expand the athletic trainer's depth and breadth of knowledge and experience acquired during professional education in a specialty or subspecialty area, respectively. As such, the program delivery for residency and fellowship programs have a different intention. Athletic training residents and fellows are already credentialed decision makers who have been practicing within the healthcare system, so the outcomes and assessments within these programs target healthcare providers advancing clinical practice and content expertise. The committee reviewed similarly aligned programs across other healthcare professions to determine minimum programmatic requirements as it relates to program delivery.

We are excited to share with our stakeholders that a new set of residency and fellowship standards will be distributed for open comment in the near future. Public feedback on the proposed standards is a planned and essential part of the open comment period and is vital to Standard development. The Commission will be disseminating the draft *Residency & Fellowship Standards* with details regarding how to provide comments and suggestions for improvement and encourages everyone to participate in this process.

If you have any questions or comments regarding CAATE Accreditation of Athletic Training Residency and Fellowship Programs, please contact the CAATE Office (512-733-9700 or support@caate.net).