

JULY 2021

# CURING THE SUMMERTIME BLUES

Planning for Graduate School and maybe a career  
in Athletic Training



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## *Ahh it's Summer,*

a time to relax and unwind before the hustle and bustle of the Fall semester begins. Some of you may have Summer internships, jobs, or are taking a class or two to get ahead on graduate school prerequisites. Others, may be in the planning phase and are charting their plan of attack for the upcoming school year. Regardless of how you may be spending your Summer, each of these ways are great. For those of you thinking or contemplating a career in athletic training, this article is for you. Even if you aren't interested in athletic training, but rather a related field, this article will provide you with general guidance on things such as *how to explore educational and career paths, where to look for graduate programs, and general advice to assist you in succeeding.*

## 1. DETERMINING IF WHAT I THINK I WANT TO DO IS ACTUALLY WHAT I WANT TO DO

One of the best pieces of advice I ever got was from Dr. Elizabeth Brown back when I was a student here in the School of Public Health. She told my class that if we wanted a job shadow or intern experience that the best way to get it was by “knocking on doors” and asking if there were any opportunities available, both paid or unpaid. Back in the day, Xfinity Center was known as Comcast Center and that is exactly where I went prior to departing for home that Summer. I secured an unpaid job shadowing experience with the athletic department’s business office. Over the course of that Summer, both myself and my supervisor found that business was not my thing. Sometimes something may appear interesting or is something you simply want to learn more about, but it is that hands-on experience that helps you to determine if a path is the correct one for you. For me, Paciolan software data entry was not my path, but the more physical nature of athletic training and sports medicine was, so my supervisor got me in contact with the sports medicine department and I began working for them in the Fall of my sophomore year. The business office experience helped me to remove any doubt or fear of missing out on experiences within the sporting world and solidified my post-graduate plan of becoming an athletic trainer. For that I am grateful. Needless to say, don’t be afraid to give yourself the time and grace to explore and find the best fit for you.

If interested in a career in athletic training there is a wide array of experience and places to look into for shadowing and internships. Here on campus, intercollegiate athletics (ICA), campus recreation and wellness athletic training, and the health center may be good places to start. Close to campus there are local urgent care facilities, physicians offices, physical therapy clinics, and high schools. Though all experiences may not have certified athletic trainers on staff, seeing work that is similar in nature is a valuable thing. Don’t forget to explore other non-traditional athletic training settings such as the performing arts, industrial setting, with companies like Amazon, Bose, etc. and law enforcement. These emerging settings will provide you with different insight and further allow you to explore what you may want to work towards in the future.



## 2. WHERE DO I GO AFTER I LEAVE MARYLAND?

For those of you wanting to become certified athletic trainers, the profession has moved to require that all athletic trainers obtain a master’s degree before professional certification will be granted. This requirement will take effect in 2022 and all previous undergraduate athletic training programs will need to either change the degree requirements at their institution or discontinue their program.

This means that while completing your undergraduate education, you will want to ensure you are taking the correct courses and getting good grades. Common prerequisite classes are human anatomy and physiology, biology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, nutrition, and sometimes physics and chemistry, depending on the program. Some institutions will require the GRE as well. To find a complete list of Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) programs you can visit: <https://caate.org>. This commission ensures that all athletic training programs within the United States comply with set educational standards in the clinical practice of athletic trainers.

Currently, there are over 200 master's programs listed that will provide you with the appropriate education to sit for the athletic training Board of Certification (BOC) exam. The Board of Certification provides the profession of athletic training with the only accredited certification program for athletic trainers within the United States as well as practice and continuing education standards.

One final and typical requirement for admittance into an athletic training program is clinical observation hours. These hours require that you visit and observe athletic training operations at multiple sites to afford you the opportunity to see different patient populations. Programs can ask for anywhere from 50-150 hours of observation.

### 3. THINGS TO REMEMBER

It's ok if you end up liking or choosing another path than the one you originally set out on. Change makes the world go around and it truly pays to be happy and feel fulfilled in your work. If athletic training isn't for you, then it isn't for you, no judgement here! Simply try to:

- **Be open**- make contact with as many applicable people you can and engage in meaningful conversation about their journey into the profession and any questions you may have. Utilize the many forms of communication we have available to us today. Try reaching out by email, phone, Zoom meeting, LinkedIn, and in-person through meetings or networking events. You have everything to gain when you put yourself out there and nothing to show if you are unwilling to. Yes, there may be times when you get no reply, but that is one more lead you can at least check off your list as an attempt you followed through with.
- **Do your best to present yourself professionally**- Dress for the job you want. Most athletic trainers have professional wardrobe staples and those are khakis and polos. When showing up for shadow or internship hours, be sure to ask your supervisor what the preferred attire is to avoid showing up in an inappropriate manner for the environment and working conditions. Ask lots of questions and don't be afraid to make mistakes.
- **Be punctual**- arriving on time and sticking to the commitments you make shows that you are responsible and take learning from others and experiences seriously.



## 4. WHERE TO TURN FOR MORE HELP OR INFORMATION

For more information on the athletic training sites mentioned within this article, please see the links below for CAATE and the BOC.

- Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE): <https://caate.net/search-for-accredited-program/>
- Board of Certification (BOC) for the Athletic Trainer: <https://bocatc.org/>

For more information on where to find general information on career development, resume, interview, and networking assistance, consider visiting The University of Maryland Career Center and President's Promise: <https://careers.umd.edu/>

For those interested in athletic training, healthcare, or public health industries, consider visiting The University of Maryland Career Center at the School of Public Health. This distributed Career Center office is able to provide advising and programming specifically for professions that fall under the public health umbrella. This office is located directly in The School of Public Health! <https://sph.umd.edu/student-opportunities/career-exploration/career-center>

If interested in applying to a program within The Graduate School at the University of Maryland, visit <https://www.gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/choose-maryland> for more information.

*Enjoy the remainder of your Summer!*



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Alysia became RecWell's head athletic trainer with the program's inception in the Fall of 2018. To contact her with your injury questions or get in touch with any of the other athletic training staff please visit <https://go.umd.edu/athletictrainers>



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