

PRE-ATHLETIC TRAINING

Pathway Information

Preparation for a career as an Athletic Trainer (AT) should involve building your credentials in scholarship, leadership, and community involvement, as well as gaining internship/shadowing experience in various settings.

There is no single required major for pre-AT students, however some majors will better align with the prerequisites for AT schools than others. The recommended GSW major for those intending to pursue athletic training is exercise science.

ADMISSIONS: GPA, EXAMS, & REQUIRED COURSES

Typical PT Pre-Requisites:

- 2 semesters of anatomy and physiology
- 1 semester of chemistry
- 1 semesters of physics
- 1-2 semesters of biology
- 1-2 semesters of psychology
- 1 semester of statistics
- 1 research course
- 1 exercise physiology
- 1 kinesiology
- 1 nutrition

Note: This is not a definitive list of the classes you will need for every school. Always check with the individual schools to see their specific requirements.

You should maintain at least a B in all pre-requisite courses. Successful applicants are likely to maintain approximately a 3.2 GPA or higher overall. Admissions committees look not only at raw numbers, but also at grade trends on your transcript. All is not lost if you stumble in your first semester or two, but then show substantial improvement each subsequent year. However, they will also notice negative trends such as if you are consistently withdrawing from or performing poorly in hard sciences, or are completing courses away from your home institution.

Many AT schools will require that you take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE consists of three sections: Quantitative, Verbal, and Essay. While there are no specific courses that you need to take prior to the GRE, you should plan to spend a couple months working on exam preparation. Students usually sit for the exam in January-May as they head into the application cycle in June.

AVERAGE MATRICULANT NUMBERS

- **Overall GPA:** 3.0+
- **Sciences GPA:** 3.0+
- **GRE:** 280+ combined and 3.5+ writing

GENERAL INFORMATION

Masters or Doctoral degree (Bachelor's only permitted until 2026; most programs not admitting for bachelor's)

Institutions in Georgia:

- Georgia Southern University
- Georgia College & State University
- University of Georgia
- Mercer University
- University of North Georgia
- Piedmont College

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION/EVALUATION

Though requirements will vary between schools, most will require three letters of evaluation. Typically, programs expect students to provide one letter from an AT, one from a faculty member, and one other of the student's choosing. This last letter could come from another AT, a research mentor, volunteer coordinator, employer, etc.

SHADOWING

Many AT programs require that you have experience observing or shadowing physical therapists in the field. The hours requirements vary between schools, but it is recommended to gain at least 100 hours total of shadowing hours (though some schools may require more). You must record your hours in a log and have the AT that you are shadowing sign off on those hours. GSW programs such as Exercise Science have these requirements built into the degree curriculum.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT, VOLUNTEERING, AND RESEARCH

Extracurricular activities, such as club affiliations and volunteering, are a large portion of the application that should not be neglected. AT schools are looking for students who not only demonstrate that they can manage rigorous courses while staying busy, but also those who are compassionate, enjoy working with people and are dedicated to serving the community. You should keep in mind that depth of commitment and leadership experience are also considered. As a result, it is best to focus on strong engagement in few activities rather than to spread oneself too thin. Participation in extracurricular activities should not come at the expense of academic work.

Research, although it is not required by most AT schools, is the hallmark of a curious mind and may benefit you in many ways. If you have an interest in research it can be a helpful avenue to pursue.

ATHLETIC TRAINING CENTRALIZED APPLICATION SERVICE (ATCAS)

To apply to most AT programs, you will utilize the Athletic Training Centralized Application Service (ATCAS). If the school you're applying to uses this application, official transcripts, GRE scores, essays, and letters of recommendation are all submitted to ATCAS.

Different programs have different deadlines for their application cycles; you are responsible for checking the specific deadlines for the programs to which you hope to apply. Generally, you're encouraged to apply well before the deadline since many institutions participate in rolling admissions.