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[Home](#) > Certification Update

**contents**

- [3rd Strategic Plan](#)
- [Message from the President](#)
- [Change in Curriculum Route Requirements](#)
- [Continuing Education and Audit](#)
- [Requirements to Maintain Certification](#)
- [Continuing Education Opportunities for ATCs](#)
- [New Approved Home Study Programs\\*\\*](#)
- [New Approved Providers of Continuing Education](#)
- [Back Issues Summer 2000](#)

# Board Completes 3rd Strategic Plan

## NATABOC STRATEGIC PLANNING - 2000

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification (NATABOC) was incorporated in 1989 to provide a certification program for entry-level athletic trainers and recertification standards for certified athletic trainers. The purpose of this entry-level certification program is to establish standards for entry into the profession of athletic training. Additionally, the NATABOC has established the continuing education requirements that a certified athletic trainer must satisfy in order to maintain current status as a NATABOC certified athletic trainer.

Since its incorporation in 1989, the Board of Directors of the NATABOC has committed to strategic planning. The Board recognizes that a clear picture of the future is necessary for effective leadership. As the NATABOC begins its second decade, the organization has the resources to embark on the strategic objectives outlined in this document. The Board of Directors is committed to taking the necessary steps to position the NATABOC to achieve its strategic objectives and fulfill its vision and mission.

In February 2000, the third strategic planning meeting of the NATABOC was convened. Current and previous board members, committee chairs, and representatives of organizations with similar objectives and activities to those of the NATABOC participated in the meeting.

The recent strategic planning process identified three strategic objectives. Subsequently, the Board of Directors, with input from its committees, strategic partners, staff, and certificants will expand on the strategy areas outlined and develop action plans and operational polices to enable the NATABOC to achieve the following objectives.

#### Strategic Objective 1

Create a national practice standard within all 50 states recognizing the ATC credential as the standard.

#### Strategic Objective 2

Create a diversified credential reflecting employment venues and practices.

#### Strategic Objective 3

Assure professional leadership and quality service to stakeholders.

### NATABOC Vision

Worldwide, all constituents recognize the ATC as a full and equal allied health

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professional and the NATABOC as the certifying body for all athletic trainers.

### **NATABOC Mission:**

The mission of the NATABOC is to certify athletic trainers and to identify for the public, quality healthcare professionals through a system of certification, adjudication, standards of practice and continuing competency programs.

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### **Strategic Objective 1**

Create a national practice standard within all 50 states recognizing the ATC credential as the standard.

Currently, 40 states have some form of registration, certification, exemption, or license related to the practice of athletic training. Achieving regulation in all 50 states is critical to achieving the strategic objective of a national practice standard that uses the ATC credential as the standard.

#### Strategy Areas

- 1.1 Develop communication pieces for use by the public, the board, and the certificant.
- 1.2 Identify the key groups to which the Board should create alliances.
  - 1.2.1 Consider liaisons to these groups and who the liaison should be (e.g., Directors, committee chairs).
  - 1.2.2 Communicate with the NATA on the alliances they already have with appropriate groups.
- 1.3 Propose a face to face meeting with all state regulatory agencies of athletic training, perhaps at the 2001 CLEAR conference.
  - 1.3.1 Consider hiring a lobbyist.
- 1.4 Protect the ATC credential internationally.

### **Strategic Objective 2**

Create a diversified credential reflecting employment venues and practices.

Over the past fifteen years, the practice of athletic training moved from traditional settings (colleges, universities and high schools) into hospitals, clinics, and industry. Healthcare, primarily because of the financial constraints brought on by managed care, is moving to the use of multi-skilled professionals. It is estimated that over 20% of ATCs hold another professional credential.

#### Strategy Areas

- 2.1 Create Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQs) meeting practice profiles.
- 2.2 Determine diversified models and benchmarks used by other certifying organizations.
- 2.3 Establish efficacy for continuing competency or recertification processes.

### **Strategic Objective 3**

Assure professional leadership and quality service to stakeholders

The long-term strength of any organization lies in its ability to sustain its vision, values and leadership. As the NATABOC has evolved, the Board has become more policy driven and less management oriented. Standing committees and task forces have been created to support the ongoing development and

management of Board activities. A full-time staff executive directs the day-to-day operations of the organization.

To successfully achieve its vision and mission, the development of future Board members is critical. The need to educate committee and task force chairs and members is crucial as these individuals form the pool of candidates from which the Nominating Committee recommends election/appointment to the Board of Directors.

#### Strategy Areas

- 3.1 Create a leadership development program.
- 3.2 Apply technology to certificant communication and testing.
- 3.3 Assure credential policing and disciplinary integrity.

 [Return to top](#)

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## Message from the President

### The strength and importance of the "C" in ATC

Certification or credentialing of athletic trainers is a voluntary process that recognizes individuals who have demonstrated competence in a subject or area, specifically the Role Delineation Study, which defines the profession's current standards of entry-level practice. Certification also implies title protection. This process is, currently recognized as a requirement for regulation by forty-one states. Certificate holders frequently modify the ATC suffix with ATC/R or ATC/L. These designations indicate that the athletic trainer is practicing within a regulated or licensing state and reflects a state's mandatory process to protect its citizens. Thus a state, by recognizing the ATC mark, is inherently acknowledging and accepting the NATABOC requirements. The NATABOC's prerogative to assign the mark is regulated by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies specific criteria, one of which is the following:

7. a) Responsibilities to the Public and to the Employees of Certified Practitioners - Shall demonstrate that any title or credential awarded for the certification program reflects the practitioner's daily occupational or professional duties and is not confusing to employees, consumers, regulators, related professions, and/or other interested parties.<sup>1</sup>

There is a distinctive difference between a certification and an educational suffix. Each of the following credentials indicates an educational achievement: B.S., M.S., or Ph.D., MD, DO, PA and PT. Once earned, an academic degree and its accompanying identifying mark (e.g., B.S., PT or MD) can only be withdrawn by the academic institution that granted the degree. Consumers must determine whether the physician or physical therapist has met their state's licensing requirements independent of the use of the academic mark. Conversely, a physician assistant's suffix (PA) that is modified with a "C" (PA-C) indicates that the individual has met certification requirements. This profession requires maintaining 100 hours of continuing education every two years and retesting every six years.

The 'C' in the ATC credential indicates that the individual displaying the ATC has met entry-level competency requirements and/or has continued to meet the NATABOC standards that assure professional competence. This is accomplished through continuing education requirements and discipline standards. In 1987 the ATC and "C.A.T." marks were registered as a trademark. Trademarking legally protects the mark and its use. It is important that all NATABOC certified athletic

trainers properly use the ATC mark. A certification mark is "used to identify a product or service that has been certified to conform to a particular set of standards"<sup>2</sup> or "maintains a document certifying that a person may officially practice in a certain profession"<sup>3</sup>.

The NATA (membership organization) has worked diligently on the "Call me ATC" campaign to identify the ATC to the public as "THE" mark of quality and competence in athletic training. This is the reason that the ATC suffix can only be used to identify an individual who has attained the credential and not on equipment, etc. We pack much into our kits, but I have yet to see competent knowledge and skills emerge from any kit I have used.

The NATABOC is responsible for protecting the credential, as are you, the certificate holder Use the privilege proudly and properly.

*The mission of the NATABOC is to certify athletic trainers and to identify for the public, quality healthcare professionals through a system of certification, adjudication, standards of practice, and continuing competency programs.*

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1. National Commission for Certifying Agencies. 1996. Standards for Accreditation of National Certification Organizations. Washington, DC. Author.
2. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Tenth Edition. 1998. Springfield, MA. Author
3. American Heritage Dictionary. Third Edition. 1996. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, MA.

 [Return to top](#)

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## Change in Curriculum Route Requirements

### **NATABOC Announces Change in Curriculum Route Requirements for 2002-2003**

Russ Cagle, Ph.D., ATC, President of the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification, Inc.(NATABOC) announced that effective with the 2002-2003 academic year, the NATABOC will no longer require athletic training experience hours for curriculum route candidates. The following article explains the Board of Certification's decision.

#### **Why will "hours" no longer be required?**

The accreditation process by CAAHEP and the JRC-AT has established that all Athletic Training Education Competencies and Clinical Proficiencies must be instructed within all curriculums. As a result, the clinical experiences are established to create learning over time for a minimum of two academic years. The clinical experiences must be attached to academic courses with measurable outcomes. In essence the change is from a quantitative experience to a qualitative experience.

The NATABOC has determined that the successful completion of this process by a candidate for certification will assure that this candidate has met the requirements needed to sit for the examination in lieu of the "hours" requirement.

#### **How will quality be maintained?**

The accreditation process requires every curriculum to develop and implement a clinical instruction plan to insure that all students enrolled meet the minimum competencies required. The curriculums undergo a rigorous self-study process that is verified by an on-site accreditation visit to confirm that the Standards for clinical education are being met. In addition, an annual report is required from the

program to insure on-going compliance between the accreditation visits.

### **What about the hours that are being obtained by current students?**

The 1999 Athletic Training Educational Competencies will be in effect for the 2002-03 academic year. Those students completing the accredited curriculum route and graduating before this date must complete the current 800-hour requirement. For those students graduating in 2003 and beyond, all requirements of the 1999 Competencies will be in effect. Any accrued "hours" will in essence be a part of the completed clinical experience.

### **Does this mean that accredited curriculums will not require any measure of time for their clinical experiences?**

The decision of how a curriculum program evaluates the clinical experience for academic credit is left up to the institution. Institutions may require a minimum and maximum number of weeks or time associated with the academic credit for the clinical courses. The accreditation process is concerned with the quality of the experiences and student outcomes and knowledge rather than the amount of hours accrued. Again, a minimum of two academic years of clinical experience is required for all students.

### **What about the internship route to certification?**

The internship route to certification is not affected by this change. All internship candidates must continue to meet the 1,500 clinical hour requirement to be eligible for the NATABOC examination. As there is no educational accreditation process for the internship route that controls the candidate's clinical experience, the requirement to sit for the certification examination remains as an hour requirement for internship candidates. The expiration of this route to NATABOC certification examination eligibility on January 1, 2004, will solve the difference fully as the accredited curriculum route will be the only means of eligibility for the examination.

### **What if our state requires "hours" as part of the state practice act?**

While some states may require documentation of clinical hours, it is up to the curriculum program directors to inform their students of this requirement and the states involved. The program director should then devise a tracking system for their students to fill this need. Individuals in states that require "hours" would be encouraged to amend their practice acts, as feasible, for the acceptance of NATABOC Certification or graduation from a CAAHEP accredited curriculum as eligibility for state credentials.

### **So, the NATABOC certification examination will continue to be required to become a certified athletic trainer?**

Yes. The elimination of the "hours" requirement for the accredited curriculum does not mean that the graduates will no longer be required to complete the examination to be a Certified Athletic Trainer. The NATABOC certification examination remains the benchmark that protects the public by only certifying candidates who have adequately demonstrated their professional skills and knowledge through the successful completion of a valid and reliable examination.

### **Who can answer my questions as they arise?**

Either the NATABOC for certification questions or the JRC-AT for accreditation matters. If you're not sure whom to contact, try the NATA Education Council who will route you towards the appropriate individual.



[Return to top](#)

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## CONTINUING EDUCATION

This issue of Certification Update marks the end of the first year of the 2000-2002 reporting period. Hopefully all ATCs have attained one-third of the required 80 hours of continuing education so far this year.

The table below describes the individuals who lost their certification this year and the reason for the revocation of the ATC credential. As a NATABOC certified athletic trainer, you must demonstrate compliance with the continuing education requirements on a timely basis or risk revocation of your credential. For those ATCs who are not members of NATA, an annual certification fee must be paid. The NATABOC bills non-NATA members in October of each year.

If an ATC is suspended for non-compliance with the continuing education requirements (including non-payment of certification fees), they have six months to remedy the deficiency. If left unresolved, certification will be revoked and state regulatory agencies are notified of your change in status. Once revoked, the individual must meet current eligibility requirements, including the accumulation of athletic training experience hours and successful completion of the NATABOC certification examination.

Effective January 1, 2004 an individual who applies to the NATABOC for examination eligibility must demonstrate successful completion of an accredited athletic training education program. Currently, only CAAHEP is recognized by the NATABOC.

Other articles in this issue highlight some of the changes in the CEU requirements for the 2000-2002 term. Also included are options for meeting your obligation and keeping your credential from being suspended or revoked. The option of inactive status listed in the "Requirements to Maintain Certification" may be important for some individuals. Contact the NATABOC offices with any questions or visit our web site [www.nataboc.org](http://www.nataboc.org). All NATABOC continuing education documents are available on the web page.

1999-2000 Timeline for Certification Suspension & Revocation		
December 31, 1999	Deadline for CEU submission	
February, 2000	6,000 individuals notified of delinquency in reporting their CEUs to the NATABOC	
March, 2000	2,478 individuals suspended	
September, 2000	1,430 individuals notified their certification has been revoked	
Reason for Revocation	1,314 for no CEUs reported	116 for non-payment of fees

## AUDIT

### NATABOC Audits Continuing Education Reports

The NATABOC Continuing Education Department recently completed a random audit of 2000 certified athletic trainer's continuing education report (CEU). The audit is an ongoing check of compliance with the CEUs. Individuals who received the audit letter had 45 days to submit their CEU file folder and original or notarized copies of their supporting documentation.

The most common errors discovered through the audit were:

1. lack of receipts, records of attendance, etc..
2. information in the folder did not match the reporting sheet.
3. old CPR cards were not kept in the file.

Individuals who neglected to comply with the audit or who failed the audit have been suspended. When suspended the individual is not considered an ATC and any person who requests to check the status of an individual will be notified of the suspension. To have their certification reinstated to good standing, the individual

must comply with the audit and/or provide proper documentation in the prescribed time limit. Failure to do so will result in revocation of certification. Once certification is revoked, the individual must meet all current eligibility requirements and successfully challenge the NATABOC certification examination.

 [Return to top](#)

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## **Actions from Recent NATABOC Board of Director Meetings**

- Bylaws were modified at the July meeting to add an additional Athletic Trainer Director to the Board.
- All certified athletic trainers in good standing will now elect the athletic trainer directors
- The Board approved its third strategic plan (see [Strategic](#))
- Board approved a change in the requirements for curriculum candidates effective with the 2002-2003 academic year (see [summary](#))

 [Return to top](#)

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## **Examiner Training Program**

The NATABOC needs additional qualified examiners. All ATCs in good standing, including newly certified ATCs, are eligible to participate in our Examiner Training Program. Upon successful completion of the program, your name will be added to our Qualified Examiner database and you will be eligible to assist with the practical examination by serving as an examiner or model.

### **Why would I want to become a qualified examiner?**

- Becoming involved in the examination process is a great way to support the profession of athletic training.
- NATABOC has a growing need for examiner and models due to the growing pool of certification candidates. Our pool of qualified examiners will not only help determine exam sites, but it will allow for the greatest number of candidates to be tested.
- Each time you assist with an examination you earn 5 CEUs. You will also receive a per diem and mileage reimbursement (\$.30 per mile, maximum 300 miles round trip).

### **How do I get involved?**

The examiner training program is a two-step process:

1. Interested ATCs must complete the home study workbook and test.
  - The home study test is a 50 question multiple choice test.
2. After successful completion of the home study test, ATCs register and attend a four-hour workshop.
  - Workshops will be held in and around the cities in which NATABOC examinations are administered. State, district and national meetings will also be targeted for workshop sessions.
  - ATCs must achieve a score of 85% in the workshop test. Their names are then added to the list of qualified examiners for the NATABOC exam sites.

### **How do I obtain examiner training information?**

Please visit our web site at [www.nataboc.org](http://www.nataboc.org) for:

- Home study workbook
- On-line home study test
- Current workshop sites and dates for 2000 and 2001
- On-line workshop registration

You may also contact the Exam Administration Manager at the BOC National Office toll-free at 877/262-3926 or via e-mail at [Exam Administration Manager](#) with any questions, requests for the home study materials, a current workshop schedule or to register for a workshop.

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**ATTENTION CURRENT QUALIFIED EXAMINERS:** If you have moved since the last time you served as an examiner or model, Please contact the BOC to update your address information and the exam sites that you are able to work. You may download an address correction form from our web page at [www.nataboc.org](http://www.nataboc.org) or contact Mike Doyle at 877/262-3926 or [sarrington@nataboc.org](mailto:sarrington@nataboc.org).

 **Return to top**

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