

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Master of Science in Athletic Training
(M.S., CIP 51.0913) at
University of North Carolina Wilmington**

I. Program Highlights

- The MS Athletic Training program will prepare competent entry-level athletic trainers capable of addressing the healthcare needs of an active population in many different healthcare settings.
- This is an on-campus program.
- The UNCW MSAT program will require a total of 59 hours of graduate didactic and clinical coursework, and clinical practica, to be completed over 5 semesters (Summer, Fall/Spring, Fall/Spring). Each semester students will complete didactic and clinical coursework designed to instruct students in knowledge and skills required by the CAATE competencies, followed by a clinical practicum where students apply new and prior knowledge and skills in practice.
- 12 full-time students are projected in the first year, while 24 full-time students are projected by the fourth year.
- One new faculty member will be needed, based on enrollment projections.
- UNC Wilmington anticipates providing academic scholarships and student assistantships in order to increase its competitive advantage in student recruitment. Funding for these forms of support will come from the Graduate School and the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) advancement initiatives.

II. BOG Academic Program Planning Criteria (UNC Policy 400.1)

1. **Existing Programs (Number, Location, Mode of Delivery).** Three institutions in North Carolina currently offer the MS in Athletic Training (University of North Carolina at Greensboro, High Point University, and Lenoir-Rhyne University).

There are five UNC institutions ((Appalachian State University, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, University of North Carolina Wilmington, and Western Carolina University) requesting to plan an on-campus Athletic Training Professional Master's Program. They are positioned to meet the needs and demands of their respective regions, the state of North Carolina, and surrounding states, without unnecessary duplication. The requests extend from a change in Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) policies that require students to graduate from a Master's program to be eligible to sit for the Board of Certification (BoC) Exam. Successful completion of the BoC is required for Athletic Trainer Certification, which makes graduates eligible for licensure by the North Carolina Board of Athletic Trainer Examiners.

2. **Relation to Campus Distinctiveness and Mission.** The proposed MS in Athletic Training aligns with the UNC Wilmington mission and Strategic Plan by advancing academic programming and applied learning, while supporting a mutually beneficial relationship between the university and the community it serves. The missions of both the School of Health and Applied Human Sciences (SHAHS) and the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) emphasize promotion of the health and well-being of all persons through preparation of essential healthcare professionals and engagement with our communities.

3. **Demand (local, regional, state).** Societal demand for Athletic Trainers is substantial and growing. During the 2013-2014 academic year, 7.8 million student-athletes participated in sports. Athletic Trainers are identified in state laws as key healthcare providers in the recognition, evaluation, and treatment of injuries, including concussions, which occur during sports participation. Having appropriate medical coverage in the middle school and high school setting is essential to prevent injuries and sudden death among student-athletes. A recent study on athletic training availability in North Carolina public high schools found that only 62percent of the 394 public high schools have full-time Athletic Trainers. Some North Carolina counties currently have no Athletic Trainers serving their high schools. As the state works to expand athletic training services to all high schools, graduates from Athletic Training Professional Master's programs will be prepared to fill those positions.
4. **Potential for Unnecessary Duplication.** Twenty-one institutions offer Athletic Training Professional Programs in North Carolina; three programs offer a Master's degree and eighteen programs offer a Bachelor's degree. Athletic Training Program Directors were contacted and asked to provide these data from their respective CAATE Annual Report; these data provided were self-reported. Five programs did not provide data. Overall, the total number of Athletic Training Professional Programs in North Carolina and the United States is expected to decrease as a result of the CAATE decision to require a Master's degree. Furthermore, each UNC Institution planning for the degree change is proposing to offer distinct areas of interest in their Athletic Training Professional Master's Programs. Therefore, the establishment of these programs would not create unnecessary duplication.
5. **Employment Opportunities for Graduates.** Labor market information indicates strong projections for athletic training employment. The NC Works data projects a 1.8percent annual percentage growth between 2012 and 2022. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics projects a 21percent growth between 2014 and 2024. A 2011 article in the New York Times listed Athletic Trainers as one of the top ten fastest growing occupations, projecting 6,000 new jobs by 2018. In 2014, Business Insider identified Athletic Training as number five on their list of *The 20 College Majors That Lead To The Most Satisfying Careers*.
6. **Faculty Quality and Number.** One new faculty member will be needed, based on enrollment projections.
7. **Availability of Campus Resources (library, space, etc.).** The UNC Wilmington Randall Library is well positioned to support a MS degree in Athletic Training. It already supports an undergraduate degree in Athletic Training through a strong collection of electronic resources, including books, videos, journals, and databases. Areas for further eBook collection development include kinesiology, pharmacology, orthopedics and sports medicine. Current and future instructional facilities available to the program will sufficiently meet its requirements. UNC Wilmington is currently in the design phase of a new Allied Health Sciences building, projected for completion by 2020, concurrent with the MSAT implementation.
8. **Relevant Lower-level and Cognate Programs.** The majority of prerequisite undergraduate foundational courses, required for admission to the program, are offered in the School of Health and Human Sciences (Human Anatomy, Exercise Physiology, Kinesiology/Biomechanics, Nutrition,

Medical Terminology) by the Exercise Science and Public Health programs. Physics, Chemistry and Statistics are offered in respective departments in the College of Art and Sciences and are readily available to non-majors. These courses are offered by highly qualified faculty and require no improvements.

9. **Impact on Access and Affordability.** Both a differential tuition (\$3,125 per FTE per year) and program specific fee (\$2,000 per FTE per year) will be requested. Revenues generated will support remuneration of clinical site preceptors and travel costs associated with faculty supervision of students at internship sites. Additional costs include maintenance contracts for program equipment, as well as repair and calibration of equipment.
10. **Expected Quality.** Assessment of the MSAT program will follow a comprehensive continuous improvement process with annual analysis of program outcome and student learning outcome data and reporting as part of the UNCW institutional assessment system maintained in UNCW's online Taskstream Accountability Management System and also for CAATE-required annual reporting through CAATE's e-Accred online system. In addition, metrics to evaluate program effectiveness will include enrollments, graduate placement, first-time Board of Certification (BoC) exam pass rate, and surveys of alumni and employers.
11. **Feasibility of Collaborative Program.** Although accreditation requirements can create challenges that limit the level of practical partnerships, the 5 universities identified in this document (Appalachian State University, UNC Charlotte, UNC Pembroke, UNC Wilmington, and Western Carolina University) have discussed opportunities for collaboration. UNC Online course exchange could be a possible avenue for online courses such as pharmacology, organization and administration, psychosocial issues and behavioral health, and nutritional concepts. Guest lecturing across programs in our respective areas of expertise is another low-cost opportunity. Course sequencing could be developed appropriate to the respective institutions and faculty with content expertise could be scheduled to appear via distance learning technologies.
12. **Other Considerations.** None.

III. Summary of Review Processes

Campus Review Process and Feedback. The proposal was reviewed by the UNC Wilmington faculty, department and university curriculum committees, the provost, and chancellor. Approval was obtained at all levels.

UNC General Administration Review Process and Feedback. Throughout the review process, UNC Wilmington provided relevant information pertaining to program requirements and resources. The UNC General Administration reviewers requested clarity regarding projected enrollments. The institution submitted appropriate documentation and research to support its statements. Reviewers evaluated the requests and did not require further responses.

IV. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve UNC Wilmington's request to establish a Master's of Science (B.S.) in Athletic Training degree program (CIP 51.0913) to enroll students starting Summer 2020.