Section I: Purpose

The purpose of this document is to inform students who are interested in applying to the South Dakota State University (SDSU) Athletic Training (AT) Program about the technical standards set forth by the program. Technical standards are a requirement set by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). CAATE accredits the SDSU AT Program and describes the essential skills considered necessary for admitted students to possess in order to complete the responsibilities associated with being an athletic training student and subsequently, a practicing certified athletic trainer. Technical standards are assessed at the time of application as well as during progress and at completion of the program. Upon successful completion of the SDSU AT Program, the student is eligible to write the national certification examination for athletic trainers provided by the Board of Certification (BOC). The SDSU AT Program has designed an application process as well as criteria for progress and program completion, which help the faculty and staff to assess the various aspects of the technical standards. Students should read this document thoroughly. At the end, the student will be asked for his/her signature to verify that he/she has been informed of the technical standards and understand the expectations set forth.

Section II: Introduction

The AT Program at South Dakota State University (SDSU) is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to:

1. Successfully meet certification requirements as established by the BOC. A graduate of the program is eligible to write the BOC National Certification Examination. The examination is provided via computer based delivery and is designed to assess cognitive knowledge, skill application and decision-making skills according to the domains of practice for an Athletic Trainer.

2. Meet the expectations and outcomes of the SDSU AT Program’s accrediting agency, which is the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE).

3. Competently and confidently enter a variety of employment settings as a certified athletic trainer and therefore render care to a wide spectrum of individuals engaged in physical activity. After certification, a graduate is qualified for entry-level positions in high schools, colleges or universities, clinics, professional sports teams, and other health agencies that employ certified athletic trainers.

The SDSU AT Program is therefore a rigorous and intense educational program that combines academic requirements from a variety of disciplines in conjunction with specific athletic training education course material, clinical education and clinical experiences. Students must perform well not only in the classroom, but also in their ability to perform a variety of skills (i.e. to evaluate, to assist with rehabilitation, to provide emergency care, etc) and complete an outcome based intensive clinical experience. Athletic training students will not only be working in the classroom with faculty, but will also be participating in the health care of physically active individuals. These requirements place specific cognitive, psychomotor, affective, interpersonal and professional awareness demands on the students enrolled in the program. (See specifics in Section III: Technical Standards)

In accordance with the SDSU admission requirements stated in the SDSU Bulletin, the AT program is “offered to all people without discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, gender, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran status.” Qualified applicants, including those with disabilities or those who utilize English as a second language, will be considered individually in relation to the guidelines stated below. However, all students admitted to the AT Program must meet the abilities and expectations described in Section III: Technical Standards. Compliance with these technical standards does not guarantee a student’s admission into the SDSU AT Program or her/his eligibility for the BOC certification exam.

Special Note for Students Requiring Accommodation

In an effort to assist students with success in the AT Program, the faculty and staff will work with students requiring accommodation(s) on an individual basis in order to assess and determine if the student can meet the program’s technical standards with accommodation and confirm that the stated condition qualifies as a handicap under applicable laws. The SDSU AT Program will work with the Office of Disability Services located in USU 065 phone 605-688-4504 or TDD:605-688-4394 and/or the International Student Affairs Office, Briggs Library 119, phone 605-688-4507 to evaluate a student who states he/she could meet the program’s technical standards with accommodation.
If a student states he/she can meet the technical standards with accommodation, then the University will determine whether it agrees that the student can meet the technical standards with reasonable accommodation; this includes a review of whether the accommodations requested are reasonable, taking into account whether accommodation would jeopardize clinician/patient safety, or the educational process of the student or the institution, including all coursework, clinical experiences and internships deemed essential to graduation.

The SDSU AT Program faculty encourages students to request accommodations as early as possible so appropriate measures may be taken. Requests can be made through the Office of Disability Services located in University Student Union 065 (605-688-4504).

If a student has any questions regarding the material, our expectations or their abilities to complete any of the requirements, the student is encouraged to meet with one of the Athletic Training Faculty Members listed below:

- Trevor Roiger 688-5824
- Bernadette Olson 688-5022
- Mary Beth Zwart 688-5325

Section III: Technical Standards

I. Cognitive Ability: Description
Athletic trainers possess fundamental knowledge in a variety of disciplines that relate to assisting individuals who participate in physically activity as well as the ability to utilize this knowledge to solve problems associated with the domains of the profession. The domains of the profession as described by the BOC are:

- I. Injury/Illness Prevention and Wellness Protection
- II. Clinical Evaluation and Diagnosis
- III. Immediate and Emergency Care
- IV. Treatment and Rehabilitation
- V. Organization and Professional Health and Well-being

Therefore, students of athletic training will demonstrate the mental capacity to (1) learn fundamental concepts in the disciplines supporting athletic training and (2) assimilate, analyze, integrate concepts and problem solve to formulate assessment and therapeutic judgments. Students should also be able to distinguish deviations from the norm and develop the best means of care for the individual involved.

How Cognitive Ability is Assessed for Admission to AT Program
The SDSU AT Program utilizes a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 established at least over the student’s first (2) years (minimum of 64 credits) of undergraduate academic career, successful completion (C or better) in AT 164, PE 354, BIO 221, and BIO 325, and letters of recommendation regarding the student’s intellectual capacity as measures of cognitive ability.

II. Psychomotor Skills: Description
Athletic trainers perform a variety of psychomotor skills on a daily basis and along a continuum of criticality. Psychomotor skills help the athletic trainer collect information in regards to the patient and patient care as well as execute techniques necessary to carry out a management plan. Examples of such skills include performing physical assessments in the athletic training room as well as during emergencies, assist patients from the site of injury, teach rehabilitation exercises through demonstration, and tape/brace body areas for protection. Therefore, students should display sufficient postural and neuromuscular control, sensory function (including sight, hearing, smell and touch) and coordination to perform appropriate techniques. This includes the ability to display both fine motor skills (needed for techniques such as palpation, massage, taping, etc.) as well as gross motor skills (needed for responding quickly to emergencies on the fields, assisting patients, etc.) Students should demonstrate that they can accurately, safely and efficiently utilize equipment and materials necessary to assist physically active individuals.

How Psychomotor Skills are Assessed for Admission to AT Program
The SDSU AT Program utilizes a health assessment and a practical testing packet to assess psychomotor skills. Students will receive a health assessment form as apart of the application process and will be asked to have it completed and signed by an appropriate medical profession. For the practical testing packets, students will receive and complete the skills in PE 354: Prevention and Care of Athletic Injuries prior to the interview.
III. Affective Behaviors: Description
As allied health professionals, athletic trainers assist physically active individuals in reaching their personal goals related to exercise and/or athletic performance. This includes not only treating the injury and/or illness, but also remembering to treat the “whole” person. Also, athletic trainers work in a very demanding environment, often asked to complete multiple tasks at the same time. Therefore, athletic trainers must display a healthy mental capacity and possess certain affectual behaviors to promote positive patient care. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

1. Empathy for individual to whom they offering health care.
2. The capacity to maintain composure and continue to function well during periods of high stress.
3. Flexibility and the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in clinical situations.
4. Appropriate demeanor and rapport that relate to professional education and quality patient care.
5. Adoption of ethical standards and moral values reflective of a health care provider.

How Affective Behaviors are Assessed for Admission to AT Program
The SDSU AT Program evaluates these behaviors according to information obtained from the student's health assessment, from evaluation sheets completed after each applicant's observations, outside letters of recommendation, and the personal interview.

IV. Interpersonal Skills: Description
Athletic trainers interact daily with people including physically active patients, among a team of health care professionals as well as with those associated with the physically active individual. Athletic trainers also have the ability to discuss and document injuries and illnesses utilizing medical nomenclature. The primary goal of the athletic trainer in working among these individuals is to assist in preventing, assessing and managing injuries and conditions associated with the physically active participation. In order to perform these tasks most efficiently, an athletic trainer must not only be able to collect and synthesize information and design a plan of action, but more importantly, they must be able to listen and relay their thoughts and actions clearly and confidently. Therefore, the ability to effectively communicate verbally, non-verbally and through written documentation is essential for an athletic trainer to perform his/her duties towards a successful outcome. Students of athletic training will demonstrate their ability to communicate successfully and sensitively with patients and colleagues, including individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds; this includes, but is not limited to, the ability to establish rapport with patients and communicate judgments and treatment information effectively. Students must be able to understand, speak, and write the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice.

How Interpersonal Skills are Assessed for Admission to AT Program
The SDSU AT Program evaluates a student’s ability to communicate verbally, non-verbally and through written word by assessing the student's written letter of interest, personal interview, the observation evaluation sheets and personal letters of recommendation. Students should also have successfully completed (C or better) English 101, Speech 101 and Nursing 201: Medical Terminology. Additional requirements will be requested from those students who are non-native speakers of English. For English as a Second Language Requirements, please see Section V: “English as a Second Language” Requirements.

V. Knowledge of and Interest in the Profession of Athletic Training: Description
As stated in the introduction, students entering the AT Program are selecting a rigorous academic program specific to the profession of athletic training. It is therefore essential for an applicant to demonstrate his/her understanding, perseverance, diligence and commitment to completing the AT program as outlined and sequenced. In addition, students should demonstrate a desire to enter the field of athletic training and/or to utilize their knowledge and skills of athletic training in their future goals.

How Knowledge of and Interest in the Profession is Assessed for Admission to AT Program
The SDSU AT Program evaluates the student’s knowledge of and interest in the profession of athletic training by assessing the student’s written letter of interest, personal interview, student observation evaluation sheets and personal letters of recommendation.

Assessment of Technical Standards during student progress/Minimum Progression Requirements: Cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and interpersonal skills as well as continued interest in the program and profession of Athletic Training are assessed at the end of each semester. These criteria are assessed through inspection of semester grade reports for successful completion of required courses as well as maintenance of semester and cumulative GPA, performance evaluations provided through preceptors, and a semester meeting to discuss progress, goals, etc. Also, although students will not be asked to complete a health assessment each semester, they have signed an informed clause stating that they understand it is their responsibility to update the AT Program faculty on any changes in health.
status that may affect patient or personal safety. This item will be addressed in the semester meeting. Students are expected to maintain the following criteria to continue into the next semester:

1. **Academic Progression Requirements**
   - Students maintain a minimum semester GPA > 2.75/4.0
   - Cumulative GPA > 2.75/4.0
   - C or better in any Athletic Training Program Course (AT Prefixed or other)

2. **Clinical Education Progression Requirements**
   - Successful completion of initial and mastery proficiencies as described by faculty and preceptors. Passing requirements for each proficiency are set at 70% and more specific passing criteria are posted in the syllabus of each class.

3. **Clinical Experience Progression Requirements**
   - Positive personal performance evaluation by preceptor, which includes an assessment of clinical skills as well as characteristics of professionalism (i.e. dependability, reliability, etc.).
     - A copy of this instrument as well as a thorough explanation is presented to students during orientation. The instrument describes expectations for both professionalism and patient care skills.

**Retention Policy:**

I. **Statement of Minimum Progression Requirements:** The South Dakota State University AT Program is committed to helping students who have been selected for the AT Program become competent and confident practitioners in Athletic Training. We are equally as committed to identifying competent and confident practitioners to the public. To this end, the following criteria represent the minimum expectation of students in the areas of academics, clinical education and clinical experience in order for a student to progress from semester to semester, and year to year. Decision related to this policy will take into consideration SDSU undergraduate progression requirements, as well as NATA Code of Ethics and BOC Standards of Practice.

Students are informed of this policy through an orientation to the program at the beginning of the first year, and a review of the policy prior to their second year. Progress is reviewed minimally at the end of the semester, but can be reviewed at mid-semester if a concern is brought to the attention of the faculty.

II. **Minimum Progression Requirements:** Cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and interpersonal skills as well as continued interest in the program and profession of Athletic Training are assessed at the end of each semester. These criteria are assessed through inspection of semester grade reports for successful completion of required courses as well as maintenance of semester and cumulative GPA, performance evaluations provided through preceptors, and a semester meeting to discuss progress, goals, etc. Also, although students will not be asked to complete a health assessment each semester, they have signed an informed clause stating that they understand it is their responsibility to update the ATEP faculty on any changes in health status that may affect patient or personal safety. This item will be addressed in the semester meeting. Students are expected to maintain the following criteria to continue into the next semester:

A. **Academic Progression Requirements**
   - Students maintain a minimum semester GPA > 2.75/4.0
   - Cumulative GPA > 2.75/4.0
   - C or better in any Athletic Training Program Course Requirements (AT Prefixed or other)

B. **Clinical Education Progression Requirements**
   - Successful completion of initial and mastery proficiencies as described by faculty and preceptors. Passing requirements for each proficiency are set at a 70% and more specific passing criteria are posted in the syllabus of each class.

C. **Clinical Experience Progression Requirements**
   - Positive personal performance evaluation by preceptor, which includes an assessment of clinical skills as well as characteristics of professionalism (i.e. dependability, reliability, etc.).
     - A copy of this instrument as well as a thorough explanation is presented to students during orientation. The instrument describes expectations for both professionalism and patient care skills.
III. **Definitions of Progress Status**

A. In an effort to clarify progression requirements, and/or open dialogue pertaining to student concerns, students will have an opportunity to visit with a faculty member at the beginning of each semester to review this policy and ask questions. Students will sign a form at the beginning of each professional year verifying that they understand the policy.

B. Faculty will monitor student progress throughout the semester. Faculty will meet at the end of the semester to determine the progress status of each student relative to the areas of academics, clinical education and clinical experience. Situations may arise during the semester that would require immediate action. There are three progress status levels: normal progress, probation and dismissal.

C. **Normal Progression:**
   - **Purpose of normal progression status:** This status identifies students who meet at least the minimum standards set by the program.
   - Normal progress is awarded to students who **MEET** all academic, clinical education and clinical experience requirements as outlined in Part II: Minimum Progression Requirements. These students are permitted to continue into the next semester without restrictions.

D. **Probationary Status (PS):** Students who fail to meet any portion of the academic, clinical education and/or clinical experience requirements as outlined in Part II: Minimum Progression Requirements, will first be placed on Probationary Status. Probationary status allows the faculty and student an opportunity to address deficiencies and decide if continuation in the program is appropriate. The most common reason for probationary status is failure to meet an academic standard (i.e. receiving a passing grade); however, deficiencies may be identified in any area. Some are more easily addressed (i.e. improving ability to complete proficiency testing) or some may be egregious (causing patient harm). All factors will be taken into consideration in applying this status as well as the terms of the remediation plan.
   - **Purpose of probationary status:** The purpose of this status is to identify and document the area of deficiency, determine the cause of the deficiency, and develop a remediation plan in order to help the student return to normal progress (or determine reason and plan for dismissal).
   - **When is PS designated:** Probationary status is usually designated at the end of the semester, however, if a deficiency needs to be addressed during the semester, the status may be imposed earlier.
   - **Length of time for PS:** For most situations, length of probationary status is one semester, although it could be shorter (i.e. if the deficiency can be addressed before the end of the semester) or longer (i.e. if a student received a D or F in a course that is only offered once a year).
   - **Remediation Plan as part of PS:** Plans will vary depending upon the student’s needs and are determined after discussion among faculty and with the student; however, faculty reserve the right to remove a student from the clinical experience or not allow academic progress until the terms of the plan is met. A student will need to recognize that probationary status may lead to an extension of their plan of study (i.e. longer than 2 years).
   - **Review and Reinstatement:** At the end of the probationary period, the student’s progress will be reviewed to determine if they will be reinstated to normal progress, continue on probation again or dismissed from the program. This decision will be largely dependent on the terms of the remediation plan and whether the student is acting in good faith to return to full status.
   - **Continuation of Probationary Status:** Students who have not met the requirements of their remediation plan after (2) probationary periods may:
     - Be removed from the athletic training coursework and clinical experiences until such time as the student is again in good academic standing (if the student is working in good faith) – OR-
     - Be dismissed from the program.

E. **Dismissal**
   - **Purpose of dismissal:** The purpose of this status it to formally discontinue a student’s progress in the AT Program. The AT Program faculty realizes the implications of dismissal on a student’s career path, and therefore will thoroughly review the situation before making this decision. The primary reasons for dismissal include:
• Student fails to meet the terms of the remediation plan probationary status, particularly after completing (2) probationary statuses and does not appear to be acting in good faith.
• Student commits an egregious or unlawful act particularly those situations that have potential for harming other students and/or patients.

F. Reinstatement
• After probation: If a student meets the terms of the probationary remediation plan, he or she will receive a letter designating reinstatement to the program.
• After dismissal: If a student wishes to be reinstated after being dismissed from the program, he or she will need to complete the application process to be reconsidered for acceptance.

IV. Due Process – Notification of Progression Status
A. Student’s who meet minimum requirements will be notified at their semester meeting of normal progression status.
B. If a student is deficient in one or more areas (academics, clinical education and/or clinical experience):
   1. Faculty and staff will meet to clarify, articulate and document the concern.
   2. The program director will articulate, in writing, concerns related to progress deficiencies.
   3. The student will be notified by letter within 10 days following the end of the semester (defined by the date when grades are posted); the letter will:
      ▪ State the nature of the concern in objective terms;
      ▪ Request a face to face meeting to include the student and SDSU ATEP faculty;
      ▪ Provide potential options/recommendations for remediation.
   4. During the face to face meeting, the student will be able to discuss concerns directly with faculty as well as agreement with options, or suggestions of other options related to remediation.
   5. At the end of the meeting, either:
      ▪ A remediation plan/contract will be developed for next semester which will include specific benchmarks that the student will need to achieve, which will include consequences should they not be achieved; OR
      ▪ It will be determined the student will not progress either into the next semester or the next professional year.
   6. A letter stating the outcome of the meeting will be drafted and sent to the student. The letter will outline the plan and benchmarks that were mutually agreed upon. This letter/contract will contain signatures of the faculty member and the student.
   7. At minimum, the student’s progress will be re-evaluated at the end of the semester.
      ▪ If the student has met the appropriate benchmarks, he or she will be fully re-instated;
      ▪ If the student has substantially met the benchmarks, but for outstanding reasons could not achieve all expectations, a new remediation plan/contract can be developed, following the steps above;
      ▪ If the student has not adequately met the benchmarks, the student will be formally dismissed from the program.

V. Right of Appeal
Program: The faculty of the AT Program respect individual rights of the student to appeal the probationary or dismissal status. In cases that cannot be resolved at the program/department level, the student can appeal following guidelines established by the Student Affairs Committee and stated in the SDSU Student Policies Manual.

Assessment of Technical Standards at the completion of the AT Program:
The following criteria and assessment tools need to be completed in order to receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in Athletic Training from South Dakota State University. These are assessed during an athletic training student’s final semester of the AT Program:

1. The student has completed appropriate course work and testing as defined by Board of Regents, South Dakota State University, the College of Education and Human Sciences, and Athletic Training Program.
2. Successful completion of outcomes, which encompass the competencies and proficiencies as defined by the NATA Education Council and tracked by the Athletic Training Program faculty.
3. Successful completion of clinical experience requirements, as verified by the Athletic Training Program faculty.

4. Completion of the AT Program (1) Program Evaluation Survey, (2) Exit Interview and (3) Program Portfolio and Presentation.

5. Completed graduation application for the South Dakota State University.

Section IV: Eligibility to Write the Board of Certification National Certifying Examination

Successful completion of the SDSU AT Program allows students to write the National Certifying Examination designed by the BOC. The sole purpose of the BOC is to certify athletic trainers that are competent to enter an entry-level position in order to ensure public protection. This examination is considered the national standard for certifying athletic trainers and provides the practicing credential of ATC (Athletic Trainer, Certified). Students of athletic training should be aware of the following questions that are asked on the certification examination application. If the student were to answer “yes” to any of these questions, the BOC will need more information to assist them in determining whether the student is eligible to sit for the certification examination and potentially receive the ATC credential. If a student applying to the program has a concern about any of these questions, we advise the student to visit individually with one of the faculty members.

1. Have you ever been convicted of or currently under indictment for a felony or misdemeanor?
2. Have you been found by any court, administrative, or disciplinary proceeding to have committed negligence, malpractice, recklessness or willful or intentional misconduct which resulted in injury to another, or are you currently under investigation for such?
3. Have you ever been suspended or expelled from an academic institution?

Section V: “English as a Second Language” Requirements

A. Purpose of Policy

Athletic Training requires daily interaction and coordination with other people in various contexts and degree of criticality (i.e. clinic/non-life threatening to life threatening emergencies). Clear and confident communication (verbal, non-verbal and written) is essential for the Athletic Trainer, and therefore the Athletic Training Student, to complete his or her tasks efficiently and in the best interest of the patient. The SDSU AT Program is conducted in a community within the USA whose primary conversational and written language is English. Therefore, a student entering this program should be able to demonstrate a high level of English fluency in order to ensure the safety of clients as well as of the student.

B. South Dakota State University – “Non-Native Speakers of English” Requirements

From the South Dakota State University Bulletin:

“The Michigan Test of English Proficiency will be administered to non-native speakers of English. Testing may be waived with a score of 600 or higher on the TOEFL. Testing will be conducted prior to enrollment. Results will be used to determine whether a student needs to complete on or more support courses in English as a Second Language in addition to regular academic classes. The courses are designed to better prepare students for their academic program in general as well as for the English core curricula required for all entering students.”

Further information regarding admission and English proficiency requirements may be obtained from the International Student Affairs, Briggs Library #119, SDSU, Brookings, SD 57007, Phone: 605-688-4122. E-mail: sdsu.intstud@sdstate.edu or fax 605-588-6540.

C. Athletic Training – “English as a Second Language” Requirements

Primarily, the SDSU AT Program requests that students who are non-native speakers of English, successfully complete English 101 and Speech 101 requirements within the core. A student’s ability to speak clearly is also assessed during the application process as a part of the observation blocks and interview. If the SDSU AT Program has a concern that any individual would have difficulty with speaking English proficiently, the faculty will meet with the student, express their concerns and work with the student and the International Student Affairs Office to determine if any additional testing or support would be necessary to assist the student in improving their communication skills.
Section VI: Candidate Acknowledgement of the Technical Standards

Prior to beginning the application process:

To the student: Please sign the following statement below to acknowledge that you have read and understand the technical standards as stated above.

I, ________________________________, as a candidate for selection into the Athletic Training Program at South Dakota State University, verify that I have read and understand the technical standards for selection as listed above. I believe to the best of my knowledge that I meet each of these standards with or without accommodation.

I understand that if I am unable to meet these standards I will not be admitted into the program.

I understand that is my responsibility to request accommodations needed and provide verification of disability through the office of Office of Disability Services located in USU 065, Phone: 605-688-4504.

Signature ______________________________ Date: _________________