



# Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

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ATHLETIC TRAINING

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**Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT)**  
**Student Policy & Procedure Manual**  
**2025-2026**

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## Introduction

### Purpose of the MSAT Student Policy & Procedure Manual

The MSAT Student Policy & Procedure Manual contains policies and procedures designed to promote understanding and mutual respect among faculty, staff and students enrolled in the MSAT Program. This manual is also aimed to help guide students through successful completion of the MSAT Program. The policies and procedures described in this manual are in addition to the policies, procedures, and standards outlined in the Sacred Heart University Graduate Catalog. Additionally, MSAT Program policies supersede general university policies. Faculty, staff, and students are required to adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in this manual.

### Updating the MSAT Student Policy & Procedure Manual

The MSAT Faculty reserves the right to make revisions, as necessary, to the MSAT Student Policy & Procedure Manual at any time. Electronic notifications of any changes will be provided whenever a policy or procedure is modified. Updates, as appropriate, will also be reflected on the program's webpage where necessary.

### Program Directory

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# **I. Overview of the Master of Science in Athletic Training Program**

## **Mission**

The Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) Program, rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition, integrates liberal arts and sciences to develop skilled, ethical, and service-oriented professionals. Through rigorous academics and engaging clinical experiences, students cultivate critical thinking, effective communication, and a commitment to compassionate care. The program prepares graduates for professional excellence, personal growth, and lifelong dedication to the well-being of others.

## **Program Overview**

The Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) Program is a full-time, five semester graduate program beginning during the Summer II term immediately following acceptance. The curriculum consists of traditional didactic coursework, problem-based learning practicums, and clinical education that aims to develop students into high-quality entry-level clinicians. Exciting clinical experiences with various patient populations enable students to gain hands-on learning opportunities and reinforce the knowledge and skills necessary to work as an athletic trainer (AT). Upon successful completion of the MSAT program, students are eligible to sit for the national Board of Certification (BOC) examination and obtain licensure as a healthcare provider in their respective state of practice.

## **Admission Requirements**

Students must meet following criteria for consideration for admission into the MSAT Program:

- Completion of the program's online application by the application deadline
  - Including submission of all final transcripts from institutions attended
- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
  - Prerequisite GPA of 3.0 or higher preferred
- Completion of the following prerequisite courses with a grade of "C" or better:
  - Anatomy & Physiology I with Lab
  - Anatomy & Physiology II with Lab
  - General Biology with Lab
  - Physics with Lab
  - Chemistry
  - Kinesiology or Biomechanics
  - Exercise Physiology
  - Nutrition

- Statistics
- General Psychology
- Personal statement (1-2 pages) on why the applicant is pursuing the field of athletic training
- Two letters of recommendation that speak to the applicant's readiness for graduate study and/or potential as a healthcare professional
- Documentation of a minimum of 10-15 hours of observation under direct supervision of an Athletic Trainer
- Attestation of the ability to meet the MSAT Program's [Technical Standards](#)

*Acceptance to the MSAT Program is based on a holistic review of the applicant at the discretion of the program's Application Review Committee.*

### **MSAT Program Student Learning Outcomes**

- Understand the interrelationships among the various components of athletic training within a comprehensive health and wellness team.
- Communicate effectively and professionally through both oral and written modalities.
- Interpret and apply clinical data to inform evidence-based practice and enhance patient care.
- Integrate critical analysis of research and current best practices into clinical decision-making.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills in patient assessment and treatment.
- Achieve proficiency in athletic training competencies and skills.
- Provide safe, effective, and compassionate patient care with respect for diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Apply evidence-based practice, quality improvement principles, and patient-oriented outcomes to clinical practice.
- Contribute to the advancement of the profession through innovation, leadership, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

### **Curriculum Overview**

The MSAT Program is a 52-credit program spanning over 5 semesters. To complete the MSAT Program, students will complete both didactic course work and clinical education requirements. For full course descriptions please visit the [MSAT Program Curriculum](#) website.

#### **Summer I (9 Credits)**

- AT 500: Emergency Care (3 credits)
- AT 502: Gross & Functional Anatomy (3 credits)
- AT 552: Principles of Evaluation and Treatment (3 credits)

**Fall I** (11 credits)

- AT 532: Evidence Based Practicum I (3 credits)\*
- AT 554: Advanced LE Injury Management (6 credits)
- AT 576: Clinical Decision Neuro Pathologies (2 credits)

**Spring I** (11 Credits)

- AT 533: Evidence Based Practicum II (3 credits)\*
- AT 555: Advanced UE Injury Management (6 credits)
- AT 577: Social and Behavioral Health (2 credits)

**Fall II** (10 credits)

- AT 634: Evidence Based Practicum III (3 credits)\*
- AT 647: Management Strategies in Healthcare (2 credit)
- AT 657: Clinical Medicine Topics (3 credits)
- AT 698: Masters Capstone Preparation (2 credits)

**Spring II** (11 credits)

- AT 600: Clinical Practice in Athletic Training (2 credits)\*
- AT 622: Athletic Training Seminar: Leadership (2 credits)
- AT 635: Evidence Based Practicum IV (3 credits)\*
- AT 656: Clinical Decision Making in AT (2 credits)
- AT 699: Masters Capstone Completion (2 credits)

*\*Course includes a clinical education component*

## **Accreditation, Certification and Licensure**

### **Accreditation**

The Sacred Heart University MSAT Program is a professional level athletic training program accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education \(CAATE\)](#). The MSAT program is in good standing with the CAATE and holds a valid accreditation through 2027.

### **Certification Examination**



Completion of an accredited professional level athletic training program leads to the eligibility to sit for the national Board of Certification (BOC) examination and enter the profession of athletic training.

In order to qualify as a candidate for the [BOC Certification Examination](#), an individual must be confirmed by the recognized Program Director of the CAATE accredited athletic training program.

## **State Regulation**

Currently, 49 states and the District of Columbia regulate the practice of athletic training. Individuals must be legally recognized by the appropriate state regulatory agency prior to practicing as an AT. Providers practicing athletic training in Connecticut are required to obtain licensure from the [Connecticut State Department of Public Health](#). For information on Connecticut athletic training licensure requirements, please visit the CT Department of Public Health Athletic Training Licensure website. Information on regulation requirements for other states is available on the [Board of Certification, Inc.](#) website.

Students graduating from the Sacred Heart University MSAT Program are eligible for both National Certification and State Licensure.

## **II. Academic Policies**

### **Academic Progression**

To graduate with a Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) Degree from Sacred Heart University, students must meet the following criteria:

- Complete all required athletic training courses with a grade of “C” or better
  - Pass/fail grades will not be accepted
- Earn an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Satisfactorily complete all clinical education experiences
- Demonstrate professional behaviors that align with this manual and the NATA and BOC Code of Ethics.
- Apply for graduation in the fall semester of the final year in the program

Students must matriculate in accordance with the program requirements. Due to the “lock-step” nature of the MSAT curriculum, withdrawal from or failure to successfully complete a required course may impede the student’s ability to progress in and/or complete the MSAT Program.

### **Course Withdrawal Policy**

A student may withdraw from a course without penalty (grade of "W") if done by the withdrawal deadline for the semester (see the university Academic Calendars for withdrawal deadlines). The student is responsible for officially withdrawing from the course through the University Registrar. Please refer to Sacred Heart University's Graduate Catalog for the University's Course Withdrawal policy.

Nonattendance of a course does not constitute a withdrawal. Students who do not complete the official withdraw process in the specified time frame, fail to attend the course, and/or fail to complete required coursework will receive a grade of "F." Students will be responsible for all fees associated with withdrawing from or resuming a course.

*Note: Student financial assistance may be affected by the withdrawal from a course. Students should check the University policies regarding the credit hour requirement to continue receiving financial aid.*

### **Repeated Courses**

Students are permitted to retake a required course within the MSAT curriculum only once. Failure to achieve a grade of "C" or better in the repeated course will result in recommendation for dismissal from the MSAT Program.

### **Auditing a Course**

Students are not permitted to audit a required course within the MSAT curriculum.

### **Course Transfer or Substitution**

Graduate course credit transfer is subject to approval by the Director of the MSAT Program in compliance with the University's transfer credit policy. Please refer to Sacred Heart University's Graduate Catalog for the University's Graduate Credit Transfer policy.

### **Leave of Absence**

Students wishing to take a leave of absence must apply, in writing, to the Program Director using the procedures outlined in the University's Graduate Catalog. Students are highly encouraged to contact the Director of the MSAT Program prior to formal initiation of the leave of absence process to discuss personal and academic concerns that could result in the granting of a leave of absence.

## Student Assessment

### Student Assessment Format

Several assessment formats are used within the MSAT Program depending on the type and taxonomic levels of the learning objectives being assessed. Students should be aware that *examinations may be comprehensive over the entire semester and across the curriculum.*

**Written Examinations:** Written exams may consist of multiple choice, multi-select, matching, true/false, short answer, fill in the blank, and/or essay questions. Exams may be administered via a computer-based program or via a hard paper copy.

**Multiple Choice Questions:** Multiple choice examinations are used to familiarize students with the examination format used for the BOC examination, for their utility in measuring cognitive content, for their objectivity, and for the relative ease of automated scoring. These questions may be used to assess knowledge as well as higher levels of problem solving. Typical instruction for these types of questions is to "select the BEST answer." It is typical that some distractors (i.e. answer choices) may be correct, but are not the BEST answer option. Students are encouraged to read all answer choices before selecting a response as the BEST option for the question. This parallels instructions on the BOC examination.

**Practical Examinations:** Practical examinations consist of tactical, hands-on demonstration of skills. Students must demonstrate competence in the ability to apply clinical skills in order to ensure patient safety and effective clinical practice. Practical skills may be assessed using various methods including, but not limited to, station-based assessments, patient simulations, and mock scenarios.

All testing items for both written and practical exams will be extracted from the course lectures and learning materials, as well as textbook and other assigned readings, videos, and lesson presentations as applicable. The format and general content of exams will be detailed by the instructor at least 48 hours prior to the exam date. Exams may be administered during or outside of the regularly scheduled class meeting time per the instructor's discretion. Appropriate notice and instruction will be provided for all exams given outside of the traditional class meeting time.

### Demonstration of Competency

Students must earn a minimum of **80%** on both written and practical exams in order to demonstrate an appropriate level of competency. Competence for exams with multiple sections, such as practical exams, will be assessed via both the section score as appropriate, as well as the overall grade. In the event a student does not meet the competency score requirement on the first attempt of the exam the student will be allowed to remediate the exam, or respective failed section, one (1) time. The format of the remediation will be at the

instructor's discretion. The timeline of the completion of the remediation is at the discretion of the instructor with consideration to course content and scheduling. If remediation must occur, no adjustments to the original grade will be made.

If a student fails to demonstrate competency on a written or practical examination, it is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with the course instructor to discuss his/her performance within a timely manner. The intent of the appointment is to assist the student in identifying the problem(s) or deficiency(s) and, when possible, to identify remediation strategies prior to the next exam.

Students who fail to complete their remediation or demonstrate a continual pattern of remediation in one or more courses across the MSAT program will have action taken to resolve the concern, which may include enactment of the MSAT Program's Academic Assistance Policy and/or recommendation for academic probation to the Professional Performance Committee.

### **Missed Assessment Policy**

If a student is unable to complete an assessment during its scheduled time, the student must provide the instructor with a valid reason for the absence **prior** to the scheduled assessment date. Acceptable reasons for absence during an assessment include illness, religious holiday, death in the family, natural disaster, or previously approved travel associated with the student's clinical education assignment.

Special emergencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If a student has extenuating circumstances, they should communicate with the course instructor prior to the scheduled assessment when possible. If communication prior to the situation is not possible, the student must contact the instructor within 24 hours of the scheduled assessment to discuss the reason for the missed assessment. Opportunity to reschedule the assessment is per the discretion of the instructor.

Failure to follow this procedure will result in a grade of zero (0) for the missed assessment and opportunity to make up the assessment will not be provided.

## **Grading Policies**

### **Course Grading**

The MSAT program uses the [University grading policy](#) in determining course grades. Students will be awarded a letter grade for all courses in the MSAT program. The minimum passing grade for all MSAT courses is a C (73%). Pass/fail grades will not be accepted for completion of required athletic training courses.

## University Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage	GPA Points
<b>A</b>	93-100	4.0
<b>A-</b>	90-92	3.67
<b>B+</b>	87-89	3.33
<b>B</b>	83-86	3.00
<b>B-</b>	80-82	2.67
<b>C+</b>	77-79	2.33
<b>C</b>	73-76	2.00
<b>C-</b>	70-72	1.67
<b>D+</b>	67-69	1.33
<b>D</b>	60-66	1.00
<b>F</b>	0-59	0.00

### Grade Changes

Once officially recorded, grades may be changed only by the course instructor through the filing of an official grade change form to the University Registrar. Students should assume responsibility for checking with the instructor and with the University Registrar to be certain the grade change has been recorded.

### Grading Discrepancies

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their semester grades. If a grading discrepancy is suspected on a specific assessment the student must notify the instructor within one week of the assessment being returned to the student. If a discrepancy is found the instructor will complete a re-evaluation and grade adjustment of the assessment. During the re-evaluation, the instructor reserves the right to review the assessment in its entirety for additional discrepancies. This re-evaluation could result in the identification of additional grading errors that may or may not favor the student. Correction of these errors by the instructor could result in the student earning a lower grade on the assessment than originally awarded. Notification of an assessment grading discrepancy after the allotted time will not result in a grade change.

If a grading discrepancy is suspected on the final course grade the student must notify the instructor within one week after the final grade has been submitted to the University Registrar.

### **Incomplete Course Work**

Students who are awarded a grade of Incomplete in a required athletic training course, must complete the deficient course work **prior** to the start of the subsequent academic term. Athletic training courses are sequential in nature and one cannot matriculate to the next course without first successfully completing the prior course. Any incomplete grade not changed within this designated time period will revert to an "F".

In unusual circumstances, the time period to rectify the incomplete grade can be extended up to one (1) year with the approval of the MSAT Program Director and Dean of the College. Degree credit for incomplete courses will not be granted unless the work is completed by the date assigned, which must be no later than one calendar year of the date on which the incomplete date is reported.

Students who are granted a grade of Incomplete will not be endorsed for the Board of Certification exam until all requirements of the incomplete are met.

### **Academic Integrity**

All university programs and courses adhere fully to the University Policy on Academic Integrity, as stated in the [Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs](#) and on the [Academic Integrity Web Page](#). Any misconduct will be dealt with aggressively in accordance with the College and University guidelines. Ignorance of the policy will not be accepted as an excuse. The minimum penalty for academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, and other unethical behavior) is a grade of F for the respective assignment. The maximum penalty is expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism is using another's work, ideas, or passages and representing them as your own. The unethical practice of plagiarism on any assignment or assessment within the MSAT Program will not be tolerated. Students are encouraged to obtain the *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors 11th Ed.* (2020) and use it as your guide.

### **Academic Probation & Program Dismissal**

#### **Academic Probation**

Students enrolled in the MSAT Program with a semester GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation for the MSAT Program. To remove probationary status, students must achieve at least a 3.0 GPA in the following semester. Students placed on Academic Probation will receive notification in the form of a letter from the Professional Performance Committee and the Dean of the College of Health Professions. The letter will identify the criteria necessary to clear the probation status including the achievement of the minimum semester GPA or higher in the subsequent semester. Failure to meet the conditions of probation will result in recommendation for dismissal from the MSAT Program.

*Note: A student on probation may be ineligible to receive financial aid from the University, college scholarship, or loan funds.*

## **Program Dismissal**

A student may be recommended for dismissal from the MSAT Program if the student fails to sustain satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree or if any of the following occur:

- Failure to earn the minimum required semester GPA of 3.0 during two (2) semesters in the MSAP program
  - The semesters **do not** have to be consecutive
- Failure to achieve a grade of "C" or better in a repeated athletic training course
- Demonstration of insufficient progress in meeting the athletic training educational competencies
- Unprofessional, unethical, or illegal conduct
- Violation of academic dishonesty and integrity policies
- Inability to meet the Technical Standards of the MSAT Program
- Evidence of behavior that may hinder professional competence and interpersonal or professional relations
- Refusal for placement by two clinical sites due to the results of a criminal background check, drug, or fingerprint screening
- Failure to comply with College or University rules, policies, or procedures
- Suspension or dismissal from the University
- Failure to meet the criteria of an academic or clinical education learning contract
- Failure of remediation of professional behavior or conduct standards

Typically, a student will receive a verbal and/or written warning regarding concerns over their academic performance or behavior before dismissal is recommended. However, a student may, for adequate cause, be dismissed from the MSAT Program without previous warning. Per university policy, a student can appeal the decision.

## **Program Dismissal Appeal Process**

A student whose matriculation has been terminated has the right to petition the Dean of the College. Such a petition should carefully delineate any information or extenuating circumstances that are currently unknown to the Professional Performance Committee, but which may influence a decision. The petition must include a plan for remediating deficiencies and for avoiding further academic or professional behavior problems in the future. If the Dean of the College does not receive a petition by the deadline specified in the letter of termination, it will be assumed that the student has waived his or her right to such reconsideration. If a petition is received, the Dean of the College will then forward a student appeal to the Professional Performance Committee for review and a recommendation.

## **Academic Accommodations & the Office of Student Accessibility**

Sacred Heart University provides equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of disability status. Students requesting accommodations should contact the [Office of Student Accessibility \(OSA\)](#). Students must be registered with the Office of Student Accessibility and submit appropriate documentation to be granted accommodations. For further information, please contact Kathy Radziunas, Director of OSA, [radziunask@sacredheart.edu](mailto:radziunask@sacredheart.edu).

## **III. MSAT Program Policies**

### **Technical Standards**

Sacred Heart University's MSAT Program is committed to graduating competent, high quality athletic trainers who are safe and proficient healthcare providers. Athletic training education requires a variety of abilities and aptitudes needed to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies of an entry-level athletic trainer as expected by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) and Board of Certification (BOC), Inc. The [MSAT Program Technical Standards](#) outline essential functions within the areas of observation, communication, sensory and motor function, intellectual abilities and critical reasoning, and professional behaviors that are required for successful completion of the degree requirements and professional practice as an athletic trainer.

Students must attest that they meet the program's technical standards as part of the application process for the MSAT Program. In the event a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodations, the student will not be admitted into or permitted to progress in the MSAT Program. Compliance with the MSAT Program's technical standards does not guarantee a student program admission nor eligibility for the BOC, Inc. certification examination. If a student's physical, mental, or emotional health changes at any time during enrollment in the MSAT Program, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Program Director immediately, in writing, to recertify the ability to meet the technical standards.

Sacred Heart University provides equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of disability status. Students with disabilities (as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act) requesting accommodations must contact the Office of Student Accessibility (OSA) and submit appropriate documentation to be granted accommodations. Whether or not a request for accommodation is reasonable will be determined on an individual basis. Determining what is a reasonable accommodation is an interactive process which the student/applicant should initiate with the Office of Student Accessibility and the college and/or MSAT Program. Accommodations cannot eliminate essential program elements, fundamentally alter the athletic training curriculum, and/or compromise clinician/patient safety. The MSAT Program reserves the right to identify



situations or accommodations that compromise clinician/patient safety and/or fundamentally alter the nature of the program.

## **Professional Behavior**

Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, integrity, and respect in all academic and clinical settings. This includes interactions with faculty, staff, peers, and patients; adherence to course policies and expectations; academic honesty; and conduct aligned with the values of Sacred Heart University and the athletic training profession. Students must uphold the ethical standards outlined by Sacred Heart University, as well as the Code of Ethics and core values established by the [National Athletic Trainers' Association](#) (NATA) and [Board of Certification](#) (BOC), Inc.

## **Academic & Professional Misconduct Procedures**

Violations of professional behavior in the classroom, laboratory, or other didactic environments will be addressed promptly using the following procedure:

### **Step 1: Verbal Warning and Documentation**

If a student engages in unprofessional or inappropriate behavior (e.g., disruptive conduct, repeated tardiness, failure to follow classroom expectations, disrespectful communication), the faculty member will meet privately with the student to address the concern. The faculty member will outline the specific behavior(s) and provide guidance on how to correct them. The faculty member may also notify the Program Director to ensure that a record of the verbal warning is noted.

*Note: If the behavior is serious or poses an immediate concern to the academic environment, the process may proceed directly to Step 2 or higher.*

### **Step 2: Written Warning and Plan for Improvement**

If the behavior persists or the initial concern warrants formal documentation, the faculty member will issue a written warning. The student and faculty member will meet within seven (7) days to discuss the concern and begin developing a remediation plan.

The plan will include specific expectations for behavioral improvement, a timeline for resolution, and consequences for failing to meet expectations. This plan will be signed by both parties and filed in the student's academic record.

### **Step 3: Reassessment and Further Action**

The faculty member and student will reassess progress at appropriate intervals. If the student fails to meet the expectations outlined in the plan or the behavior continues, the issue may be escalated to the Program Director for further review. Disciplinary action may include academic probation, referral to the Dean of the College of Health Professions, or dismissal from the program, depending on the severity and persistence of the misconduct.

### **Serious Ethical or Academic Misconduct**

In cases involving academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating), harassment,

discrimination, or violations of the NATA Code of Ethics or BOC Standards of Professional Practice, the above procedures may be superseded. These cases may be referred directly to the Program Director and/or the Dean of the College of Health Professions for investigation and formal disciplinary action, per university policy.

## **Communication**

The primary form of communication expected by Sacred Heart University is via the school e-mail account. For the duration of the semester, faculty will customarily respond to receipt of student communication within 24-48 hours, during normal business hours and during business days (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm). If the faculty member will be away from email for an extended period of time, an automatic reply message will be used to indicate that response may be delayed.

**E-mail Formatting and Etiquette:** Proper e-mail etiquette is required when communicating with the course instructor. E-mails must include an appropriate greeting and signature, as well as demonstrate proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Students will receive an initial reminder from the instructor if their communication does not meet the aforementioned requirements. Students who continue to send unprofessional emails after receiving a warning from the instructor (i.e. use of "text messaging language," lack of appropriate greetings, etc.) will not receive a response until the email is corrected and meets professional standards.

Please use a clear subject line when sending e-mails. It is recommended to include the course number in the subject line to help the instructor recognize and prioritize your communications.

## **Attendance**

Per the University's Emergency Preparedness Plan, attendance will be taken. Students are expected to attend all classes and scheduled associated activities. The MSAT Program uses multiple active and engaged learning strategies in all courses that cannot be made up or replicated in the event of an absence. Clinical and professional behavior skills critical for practice are also learned during in-class experiences. Individual course requirements for attendance and participation may vary according to course syllabi, but missing class sessions will result in grade reductions. Generally, more than one unexcused absence will impact the student's grade in any course or clinical assignment.

At the instructor's discretion, excused absences will include an illness, family crisis, unforeseeable circumstance, or approved institutional activity. For a missed class to count as an excused absence for a scheduled institutional activity it must be communicated with the instructor ahead of time. Unforeseeable absences should be communicated with the instructor within 24 hours after the missed class to be considered excused. Students will be given one "free pass" for an absence per course per semester. For each subsequent unexcused absence a deduction of 2% will be taken from the overall course grade. **Three (3) unexcused absences will result in a reduction of one letter grade from the final overall course grade.**

In the case of a severe or chronic illness on the part of a student or their dependent over the course of a semester, the student must notify the Program Director as soon as possible, to determine if accommodations can be made or if a leave of absence from the program will be required.

Students are responsible for completing any assignments and/or course materials assigned during the missed class. Students are expected to make up excused exams or assignments missed within one week of returning to class at a time mutually agreed upon with the instructor.

**Tardiness:** Coming to class on time is also expected. For every three (3) times a student is late to class, it will count as one (1) unexcused absence. Students who are more than 30 minutes late to class will be considered absent from class for the day.

### **Technology Use**

The use of technology and electronics (laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.) will be required for successful completion of this program. Use of electronics and the internet in the classroom will be permitted for class related activities only. If technology is being used during class for unapproved, non-class related activities, the instructor reserves the right to dismiss the student from class for the day. Dismissal from class will be considered an unexcused absence.

All cell phones must be turned off and remain in the students' backpack for the entire class, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. If a cell phone is being used during class for unapproved, non-class related activities the instructor reserves the right to "hold on to the phone" for the remainder of the class.

Repetitive violation of inappropriate use of electronics during class is considered unprofessional behavior and will be managed according to the professional behavior standards identified in this manual.

### **Alcohol and Drug Use**

As a student in a professional healthcare program, you are expected to exercise sound judgment and uphold the ethical and legal standards of the athletic training profession. This includes responsible behavior regarding the use of alcohol and drugs.

Students in the MSAT Program are required to comply with all federal, state, and local laws, as well as Sacred Heart University policies regarding alcohol and drug use. Violations—whether on or off campus—may result in disciplinary action by the University and the program and may be considered professional misconduct. Consequences may include academic probation, removal from a clinical education experience, or dismissal from the program.

Some clinical education sites may require drug screening as a condition of placement. Students must comply with all requirements set forth by their assigned clinical site.

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during a clinical education experience, they will be immediately removed from the site and referred to the SHU Counseling Center for evaluation. Additional disciplinary action may be taken based on the outcome of the evaluation of the situation and in accordance with university policy.

Students are encouraged to seek support for substance-related concerns and can access confidential resources through Sacred Heart University's Counseling Center.

## **Social Media**

MSAT students are expected to demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of their conduct, including online and electronic communication. Social media use presents unique challenges for confidentiality, professional boundaries, and personal reputation. The following guidelines are intended to protect patient privacy, uphold ethical standards, and maintain the integrity of Sacred Heart University and the MSAT Program.

**Maintain professional boundaries:** Students should not engage in personal social media interactions (e.g., following, friending, messaging) with student-athletes or patients—especially minors—encountered during clinical education experiences. This applies to all platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat, and TikTok.

**Do not use social media for clinical communication:** Students should not use social media, text messaging, or other electronic platforms to discuss health-related issues with patients or student-athletes. Students should not provide unsupervised medical guidance to a student-athlete or patient. If medical concerns arise, individuals must be directed to contact their athletic trainer or appropriate healthcare provider.

**Protect patient privacy and comply with HIPAA:** Students may not take or share photos, videos, or any content that reveals patient identity, diagnosis, injury status, or treatment information—whether directly or indirectly. This includes written or visual content shared on social media, in group messages, or through any digital communication. Such actions are considered unprofessional and may constitute a HIPAA violation.

**Demonstrate professionalism in all online content:** Students must avoid posting content that reflects poorly on themselves, the MSAT Program, Sacred Heart University, or the athletic training profession. This includes posts containing offensive language, discriminatory remarks, or material that contradicts the values of healthcare professionalism.

**Appropriate program engagement:** Students are encouraged to follow official Sacred Heart University accounts, MSAT program-affiliated pages, and professional athletic training-related social media accounts for updates, educational content, and professional engagement. All public interaction on these platforms must adhere to professional standards and maintain patient confidentiality at all times.

## **Sports Betting**

As a student in the Sacred Heart University Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) Program, your role as an emerging healthcare professional includes upholding the highest

ethical standards—particularly during clinical education experiences. Participation in sports betting or gambling activities poses a significant risk to your professional integrity, especially when working with athletes, teams, and sports organizations.

In accordance with [NCAA guidelines](#) and expectations of professional conduct:

- Students should not engage in sports betting on NCAA, amateur, or professional sporting events while enrolled in the program.
- Students must not provide inside information (e.g., injury status, player participation, team strategy) to any individual involved in or associated with sports betting or gambling activities.

Some clinical sites, particularly NCAA institutions, may require students to complete formal sports wagering education and sign site-specific policies prior to starting clinical rotations. Students are expected to comply fully with all site-specific policies and institutional requirements.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the clinical site, failure of the clinical course, or dismissal from the program. In cases involving violations of NCAA or site policies, students may also be subject to further institutional or legal consequences.

If students have any questions about what constitutes a violation, or whether a particular activity may be considered sports betting, they are encouraged to consult the Clinical Education Coordinator or Program Director before engaging in the activity.

## **Assumed Risk**

Participation in the laboratory and clinical experiences expose MSAT students to potential risks from the skills being practiced and the nature of the athletic and healthcare environment. Students assume risk of injury when practicing clinical skills during designated laboratories or when completing educational experiences in the clinical environment. Students must be aware of the potential harmful situations to minimize injury. Students who sustain an injury must report the injury within 24 hours to the course instructor/Preceptor and the Program Director.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

### **Student Employment**

Students are permitted to work while enrolled in the program, however it is the responsibility of the student to properly manage the demands of such an endeavor in concert with their clinical and academic responsibilities. Work schedules must not conflict with the program curriculum (clinical and didactic requirements). Additionally, students are not permitted to

count their employment hours as clinical hours and are not to perform athletic training clinical duties or responsibilities while engaged in employment.

### **Varsity Student-Athletes**

Those students who are participating in varsity athletics and pursuing the MSAT Degree must be able to acquire clinical hours while their sport is in-season at their assigned clinical site. If a student-athlete foresees an issue with acquiring the required clinical hours, a hardship waiver can be completed and filed with the Clinical Education Coordinator at the start of the semester (within the first 2 weeks of the term). Student-athletes must identify their traditional season for each academic year. Student-athletes who participate in a sport that does not have a designated "competitive in-season" (i.e. track, rowing), must identify one semester (Fall or Spring) as their "competitive in-season;" student-athletes cannot declare both semesters as being in-season. If a hardship waiver has been approved, the student-athlete is required to maintain a minimum of 5 hours/week at their assigned clinical rotation during the competitive in-season semester. The student will be required to complete the remaining clinical hours outside of the traditional semester, which may result in an Incomplete in the associated practicum course until the clinical requirements are met. Student-athletes may participate in the non-traditional season only if it does not interfere with their clinical assignment. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to notify his or her coach that off-season sports participation must be worked around the clinical education assignment.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

The MSAT Program follows Sacred Heart University's inclement weather closings and delay procedures. If on-campus classes are canceled due to weather, students are expected to make up any missed work.

Course instructors will contact students in a timely manner regarding the continuation of instruction. Depending on the nature of the course and the content planned for that day, the instructor may choose to pivot to a virtual meeting format (e.g., Zoom, Teams) during the regularly scheduled class time or at an alternative time. In some cases, class sessions may need to be rescheduled outside of the regularly scheduled time in order to meet course objectives.

Online courses will proceed as scheduled unless significant internet or system outages occur. Instructors will notify students of any changes to due dates or expectations resulting from weather-related disruptions.

If a clinical education site is closed due to inclement weather, the student is not required to attend clinical. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their clinical Preceptor on days in question. Student safety is a priority, and we encourage students to consider all available weather information and warnings when making the decision to attend clinical. If a student does not feel that they can safely travel to and/or from clinical due to inclement weather, the student must communicate these concerns with the assigned Preceptor in a timely manner and discuss a plan to make up any hours postponed due to the weather.

## IV. Clinical Education

Clinical education occurs simultaneously with didactic course work beginning in the second term (Fall I) of the MSAT Program. Clinical education provides the opportunity for MSAT students to integrate and apply the didactic knowledge and skills gained through their academic coursework to the clinical environment through participation in the provision of direct patient care under the supervision of one or more competent clinical preceptors at an affiliated clinical site. Students may be assigned to work alone with a clinical preceptor or may be paired with other students from Sacred Heart University or another athletic training program for a collaborative clinical education experience. During the clinical education experience, students are given increased levels of responsibility based upon demonstrated knowledge, performance, and readiness.

### Requirements to Engage in Clinical Education

Clinical Education is a required component of the MSAT curriculum. Successful completion of clinical education experiences is a requirement for graduation from the MSAT program. The following are prerequisites for participation in full-time clinical education:

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0.
  - Students who do not meet the GPA requirement and are on academic probation must have the approval of the MSAT Program Director to participate in clinical education
- Successfully complete required program coursework
- Maintain current Emergency Cardiac Care (ECC) certification
  - ECC certification level must meet the requirements for athletic trainer professional certification per the [BOC, Inc.](#)
- Maintain current blood-borne pathogen training
- Complete Protection of Youth training
- Complete HIPAA compliance training
- Have a current physical examination and immunization record
- Meet the Technical Standards of the MSAT Program
- Meet any unique criteria of the assigned clinical facility. Common examples, in addition to a criminal background check, include fingerprinting and drug screening.

*Students who are not in compliance with the above requirements will be removed from clinical education immediately until the situation is resolved.*

### Clinical Placements

Clinical placements are determined by the MSAT Program Director and Clinical Education Coordinator based on course sequencing, site availability, student needs and goals. A student's preference may be considered but is not guaranteed. Students will be placed in a

variety of clinical settings throughout their enrollment in the MSAT program, including on-campus and off-campus sites such as high schools, colleges/universities, rehabilitation clinics, and physicians' offices. In addition to gaining exposure to a variety of clinical settings, students will gain experience providing care to a diverse population of patients and sport or activity requirements. All students will be exposed to contact sports. Additionally, students will be required to participate in an athletic preseason.

### **Transportation to Clinical Sites**

MSAT students will complete clinical education experiences at a variety of on- and off-campus locations. Students are responsible for providing their own transportation to and from assigned clinical sites and for all associated costs (e.g., fuel, parking, tolls). The University and MSAT Program do not provide transportation or housing for clinical placements.

Students are responsible for any tickets, accidents, or other issues incurred while traveling to or from clinical sites. Therefore, students are highly encouraged to maintain appropriate auto insurance and to drive responsibly.

In some cases, clinical assignments may require travel to alternate locations (e.g., athletic events or outreach settings). It is the student's responsibility to coordinate travel with their preceptor and ensure timely arrival for all clinical activities.

## **Professional Behavior in the Clinical Setting**

Students in the MSAT Program are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical, and respectful manner in all clinical settings. This includes, but is not limited to, adhering to dress code policies, demonstrating appropriate clinical decision-making under preceptor supervision, maintaining patient confidentiality, using respectful communication, and upholding the standards set forth by the MSAT Program, Sacred Heart University, and the ethical codes of the NATA and BOC, Inc.

### **Clinical Education Misconduct Procedures**

Violations of professional behavior will be addressed promptly using the following procedure:

#### **Step 1: Initial Verbal Warning and Documentation**

If a student engages in unprofessional behavior (e.g., inappropriate dress, poor communication, unsafe clinical practice, disruptive attitude, or other conduct unbecoming of a health care provider), the preceptor will meet privately with the student to address the behavior. The preceptor will outline the specific concern(s), including relevant dates, setting, individuals involved, and the nature of the behavior. The preceptor will provide guidance on how the behavior can be corrected. The preceptor will also notify the Clinical Education Coordinator to ensure that a record of the verbal warning is noted.



*Note: In cases where the behavior poses a serious concern to patient safety or violates core ethical standards, this step may be bypassed and proceed directly to Step 2 or higher.*

### **Step 2: Written Warning and Plan for Improvement**

If the behavior continues, fails to improve, or warrants immediate documentation, the preceptor will issue a written warning outlining the concern and previous corrective steps. The student and preceptor will both sign the document, acknowledging that the issue has been formally discussed. A copy will be sent to the Clinical Education Coordinator and placed in the student's academic file.

Within seven (7) days of the written warning, a formal meeting will be held with the student, preceptor, and Clinical Education Coordinator to review the concern and initiate a remediation plan. This plan will include specific expectations for behavior change, a proposed timeline, and clearly defined consequences for failure to meet expectations.

### **Step 3: Reassessment and Additional Disciplinary Action (If Needed)**

The student's progress will be monitored and reassessed at appropriate intervals by the preceptor and Clinical Education Coordinator. If the student fails to meet the terms of the remediation plan or the unprofessional behavior continues, further disciplinary action will be considered. This may include temporary removal from the clinical site, academic probation, failure of the clinical course, or dismissal from the program depending on the severity and persistence of the issue.

At this stage, a meeting will be held with the student, preceptor, Clinical Education Coordinator, and Program Director (as appropriate) to determine next steps.

### **Serious Ethical or Professional Misconduct**

In situations involving serious breaches of ethical or professional conduct—including violations of the [NATA Code of Ethics](#), [BOC Standards of Professional Practice](#), HIPAA regulations, or institutional policy—the above steps may be superseded. These cases may be referred immediately to the Dean of the College of Health Professions and handled according to University policies for professional misconduct.

## **Attendance of Clinical Education Experiences**

Students enrolled in the Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) Program are expected to prioritize both their didactic and clinical education responsibilities. Clinical education is an essential component of professional preparation and must be treated as such.

### **Class vs. Clinical Conflicts**

A student's primary academic obligation is to attend all scheduled coursework. Students may not voluntarily miss—or be required to miss—classes to attend clinical education or participate in other non-academic activities (e.g., employment, athletics, extracurricular activities, etc.). An excused absence from class may only be granted by the course instructor.

If a required athletic training course conflicts with a clinical assignment, the conflict must be addressed prior to the start of the clinical experience. Students must work with the Program Director and/or Clinical Education Coordinator, as well as the assigned preceptor, to resolve any such conflicts in advance. Preceptors do not have the authority to excuse students from classroom obligations.

### **Clinical Attendance Expectations**

The student's secondary—but equally important—academic responsibility is to attend all scheduled clinical education experiences. Clinical assignments may occur during mornings, afternoons, evenings, and weekends, and may be adjusted based on patient needs, preceptor availability, or other factors related to the clinical site. Students are required to engage in clinical education as assigned and meet the required number of hours as outlined in the course syllabus.

All efforts should be made to minimize conflicts. Outside responsibilities—such as part-time employment, extracurricular involvement, or other personal commitments—must not interfere with clinical education obligations. Students are expected to schedule these commitments around their clinical responsibilities.

Excused absences from clinical education may be granted at the discretion of the assigned preceptor and may include personal illness, family emergency, approved institutional activity, or unforeseeable circumstances. If an unforeseeable event arises within 24 hours of a scheduled clinical assignment, it is the student's responsibility to communicate (e.g., via phone call or text message) with the assigned preceptor as soon as possible.

For any foreseeable schedule conflict (e.g., planned family event, institutional activity), students must notify their preceptor within a professionally reasonable timeframe, appropriate to the nature of the event.

Failure to adhere to clinical attendance expectations—without proper communication and approval—may result in a grade reduction in the associated practicum course.

### **Clinical Hours Policy**

The clinical education program requires students to amass a minimum number of clinical hours per semester, as outlined below and in the syllabi of each practicum course. The number of hours a student can achieve is based on their respective practicum course. Additionally, students must complete their clinical hours over a minimum number of days per week in order to gain a full perspective of the clinical setting and ensure continuity of patient care. **Students are expected to attend clinical education throughout the duration of the clinical experience period, even if the hour minimum is achieved prior to the end of the clinical experience period** (i.e. students are not to “front-load” clinical hours).

**Clinical Hours Requirements:**

**MSAT Level 1**

**MSAT Level 2**

Average hours per week:	12-15	15-20
<b>Minimum hours per experience:</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>225</b>
Maximum hours per experience:	225	300
Minimum days per week:	3	4

The average number of hours is a guide for preceptors and students however, students should not be exceeding the average hours per week on a consistent basis. It is understood that during some weeks, student's clinical hours may be above or below the guidelines due to the nature of the clinical site, Preceptor schedule, weather, etc. Students are expected to adjust their clinical schedule in the following weeks to account for these discrepancies and ensure they meet the minimum number of hours required for the clinical education period.

**Students are required to have at least 1 day off in a 7-day period.** Students should receive reasonable time off from clinical, particularly in relation to observance of religious holidays and other family or personal commitments as appropriate. Days off should be communicated with the Preceptor when determining the clinical schedule.

Failure to meet the clinical requirements will result in penalties, including but not limited to, grade reduction for the associated practicum course or being withheld from attending clinical education. In extreme situations, and after discussion with the Program Director, a student may receive an incomplete for the associated course. The student will be required to achieve matriculating standards prior to the start of the next academic semester.

### **Scheduling of Clinical Hours**

Students should work with their Preceptors to develop a clinical education schedule that emphasizes quality clinical experiences and establishes an appropriate continuity of care for patients. This may include attending clinical on weekends, holidays, and school breaks. Clinical education is a required component of the MSAT curriculum and students are expected to prioritize the attendance of clinical education as they would the didactic portion of the program. Preceptors are expected to communicate schedule changes with the student within a timely manner to allow for reasonable scheduling adjustments to be made.

There are occasions where clinical education experiences to which students are assigned may fall outside of the traditional academic calendar or during times when classes are not in session. Examples of this include preseason, winter intersession, and spring break. **If the respective clinical rotation requirements align with a period when classes are not in session, the student is still expected to attend clinical education during that time.** For example, if a student has been assigned a fall sport clinical experience which entails a preseason, the student is required to make plans to attend preseason activities. During times when classes are not in session, students may exceed the weekly clinical hours requirements as appropriate, however students are still required to have at least 1 day off in a 7-day period.

## **Clinical Immersion Experience**

Students in the MSAT Program are required to participate in an immersive clinical experience which aligns with the AT 600 course. The intent of the immersive clinical experience is to replicate the “day-to-day and week-to-week role of an athletic trainer.” During the immersive clinical rotation, students should expect to replicate the schedule of their assigned preceptor and complete approximately 40-50 hours of clinical experience per week, with at least 1 day off per 7-day period. While students will be primarily focusing on the field work experience during the immersive clinical experience, the MSAT program may include online education during the immersive experience that does not detract from the nature of an immersive clinical experience.

## **Academic Assistance**

Students who demonstrate underperformance in the classroom may have temporary adjustments made to their clinical requirements on a case-by-case basis. These adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Modified weekly clinical hour maximum
- Increase in the required number of days off from clinical per week
- Travel restrictions/ limitations with the assigned team
- Other adjustments as deemed appropriate by the MSAT Program Director

All requirements of the associated clinical education experience must be met regardless of the modifications made as part of the academic assistance plan. Modifications that influence the completion of clinical hours may require the student to complete clinical hours outside of the traditional semester, which may result in an Incomplete in the associated practicum course until the clinical requirements are met.

## **Hardship Waiver**

This application is designed to allow a student who feels they have an extenuating circumstance and would be unable to complete the required clinical hours of a practicum course, an avenue to express their situation. To complete a hardship application, students must submit a typed statement, which supports the need for a hardship waiver. The Clinical Education Coordinator and Program Director will review the application and, if approved, will work with the student to develop an appropriate plan for the completion of the clinical education requirements. This application must be submitted as soon as the situation arises and is not retroactive. For further information please contact the Clinical Education Coordinator.

## Clinical Education Dress Code

To promote the professionalism expected of healthcare providers, MSAT students must adhere to the following dress code during all clinical education experiences. Unless otherwise specified by the clinical site, standard clinical attire includes:

- SHU Athletic Training polo shirt or collared shirt issued by the clinical site
- Professional pants or shorts of appropriate color and length
- Closed-toed footwear that is appropriate and functional for the clinical setting
- Belt
- Watch
- Appropriate outerwear as needed (e.g. jackets, gloves, etc.)
- Business casual attire when indicated by the Preceptor

Students will be issued a name tag, which must be worn during clinical education to ensure clear identification and to distinguish the student from the preceptor.

SHU Athletic Training apparel should only be worn during program-approved activities. Attire must reflect professionalism and ensure the safety of both clinician and patient.

The following items are **not** permitted during clinical education experiences:

- Athletic wear i.e. yoga pants, gym shorts, tank tops, etc.
- Jeans
- Open-toed shoes, sandals, or flip flops
- Apparel with logos from institutions that are not SHU or the assigned clinical site
- Excessive jewelry that interferes with safe and effective patient care

Students are also expected to exhibit the following general personal hygiene and grooming standards:

- Hair must be clean, unobtrusive, and kept out of the eyes; long hair should be tied back during patient care
- Hands and fingernails must be clean at all times; fingernails should be trimmed to a length that does not pose a safety risk to patients
- Facial hair (e.g., beards, mustaches, goatees) must be neatly trimmed and well maintained
- Discretion should be used regarding makeup, tattoos, jewelry, and piercings to maintain a professional appearance and ensure patient and clinician safety

*Preceptors reserve the right to dismiss a student from the clinical site for the day if attire is deemed inappropriate based on the site's dress code expectations.*

## Clinical Education Assessment

The final grade for practicum courses is comprised based on didactic course work (50% of total grade) and clinical education assessments (50% of total grade). Students MUST pass both aspects (didactic and clinical) with a "C" or better to matriculate.

During each clinical experience students will be evaluated on their clinical knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as their professional behaviors in the development of becoming an Athletic Trainer. Students are expected to be reflective learners who take an active part in their own education. At mid-rotation, students will complete a *Clinical Self-Evaluation* form, which students are required to review and discuss with their assigned Preceptor. The mid-rotation evaluation should be used to identify areas of strength and weakness as gleaned from the particular clinical experience. The final assessment occurs at the end of the clinical experience where the assigned Preceptor will complete a *Student Clinical Evaluation* form which will be used in the calculation of the final clinical grade. Students have full access to their completed assessments in ATrack and are required to meet with their Preceptors to discuss each assessment.

The rubric used for performance evaluation in the clinical setting is based on an adaptation of the Athletic Training Milestones Project. An example of the rubric scoring criteria is provided below in the Clinical Education Assessment Guide. Scoring of the final assessment is calculated using a GPA model where the grade is calculated by converting the average score per assessment criteria to a GPA score. The GPA score is then matched to a modified GPA scale based on the University grading scheme to identify the overall letter grade for the assessment. For example, a student scoring  $4+4+3+3 = 14$  total points/4 grading criteria = 3.5 point average;  $3.5 = 91\% = A-$ .

### Clinical Education Assessment Guide

Score	Criteria
<b>Aspirational (5 / A+)</b>	Performs duties and demonstrates skills, knowledge, and abilities at an advanced level well beyond the expectation of an AT student (i.e. equivalent to a newly certified AT).
<b>Advanced (4 / A)</b>	Performs duties and demonstrates skills, knowledge, and abilities at a level above the expectation for the current AT student level.
<b>Proficient (3 / B)</b>	Performs duties and demonstrates skills, knowledge, and abilities as expected for the current level of the AT student. Some discussion and prompting may be necessary, but student is able to appropriately demonstrate skills/abilities.
<b>Developing (2 / C)</b>	Performs duties and demonstrates skills, knowledge, and abilities below the level expected for the current level of the AT student. Requires considerable supervision and correction.
<b>Unsatisfactory (1 / D-F)</b>	Performs duties and demonstrates skills, knowledge, and abilities at an unacceptable level for the current level of the AT

	student. Demonstrates an inability to perform duties correctly even under constant supervision.
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While formal assessment occurs during two timepoints during the clinical education experience, students are encouraged to maintain an open dialogue with Preceptors throughout the experience to obtain informal feedback on their progress and development. Students should also develop appropriate goals for each clinical experience and discuss them with their Preceptor at the beginning of each placement in order to identify what the student aims to accomplish during the clinical experience, as well as practice self-reflection on perceived areas of strengths and weaknesses.

### Grade Scale for Clinical Education Evaluations

Grade	Percentage	GPA Points
A+	96-100	4.1 - 5.0
A	93-95*	3.8 - 4.0
A-	90-92	3.4 - 3.7
B+	87-89	3.1 - 3.3
B	83-86	2.8 - 3.0
B-	80-82	2.4 - 2.7
C+	77-79	2.1 - 2.3
C	73-76	1.8 - 2.0
C-	70-72	1.4 - 1.7
D+	67-69	1.2 - 1.3
D	60-66	1.0-1.1
F	0-59	0.00
*SHU Grading policy does not extend beyond the letter grade A (range 93-100). Minor modification to the SHU grading policy has been made to allow for an A+ assessment consistent with the Aspirational category of the Athletic Training Milestones.		

Students are also accountable for completing their associated documentation for the clinical education experience by the corresponding deadlines outlined in the respective course syllabi. These items include the *Clinical Onboarding Form*, *Clinical Self-Evaluation Form*, *Evaluation of Clinical Preceptor* form, submission of clinical hours log, and submission of

patient encounters log. All items will be completed in ATrack. Failure to complete each item by the designated due date will result in a deduction of 1% per item from the overall clinical grade.

### **Clinical Education Documentation**

The MSAT Program utilizes ATrack ([atrackonline.com](http://atrackonline.com)) for management of clinical education related materials and evaluations. Students are required to maintain their ATrack accounts. Inability to access this resource is not an excuse to miss assignments or not complete required documents. Students should contact the ATrack customer support team and notify the Clinical Education Coordinator if they experience technical difficulties.

### **Clinical Hours Log**

Documentation of the clinical hours accrued is necessary as part of each practicum course. Countable hours include those spent engaging in active athletic training services and patient care such as preparing a team for practice or competition, attending practice or competition, or post-practice or competition treatments. Time spent traveling with a team, social breaks, homework, and other miscellaneous instances should not be included as part of the clinical hours log. Each week clinical hours need to be approved by the Preceptor. If hours are not logged within 7 days of completion, the hours will be "lost." It is the student's responsibility to input clinical hours, not Preceptors. Clinical hours obtained while not enrolled in a Practicum course will not count towards the respective clinical hour requirement.

### **Patient Encounters Log**

Students will also be responsible for documenting their patient encounters throughout their time in the program. Tracking of patient encounters aids the Program and student in identifying the diversity of patient populations and pathologies experienced in the clinical setting. Documentation of patient encounters will occur using ATrack.

## **V. Additional Costs to MSAT Students**

The MSAT Program makes every attempt to minimize extraneous costs associated with the program. Students are, however, responsible for the following additional expenses:

- Textbooks and required learning materials for respective classes
- Registration with CastleBranch
- Criminal background check
- Physical health examinations
- Vaccinations, titers, and boosters



- Proof of immunization is required for the following:
  - Varicella
  - Measles
  - Mumps
  - Rubella
  - PPD (tuberculosis (TB))
  - Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis)
  - Hepatitis B
  - COVID-19
- Uniform for clinical experiences as required per the MSAT Program's guidelines
- Students assigned to an off-campus clinical experience must provide their own transportation to all off-campus sites and are responsible for the associated costs of travel.

### **Verification of Health Status**

All students entering the MSAT program are required to undergo a complete physical examination to verify physical, mental, and emotional readiness to perform the essential functions of a healthcare provider and to ensure the safety of the student and their patients. Physicals should be documented using the SHU Health Service's [New Student Health Form](#). The [Verification of Health Status Form](#) must also be completed by the evaluating healthcare provider and student. All portions of the exam must be completed prior to the beginning of the clinical experience. Yearly physicals are required to participate in practicum coursework and verification of the ability to meet the technical standards of the program. Each student assumes the cost of the physical exam. Students should submit their completed physical examination forms to CastleBranch before participating in practicum work. Students are responsible for maintaining proper health and ability to adhere to the program's Technical Standards.

## **VI. Criminal Background Check Policy**

Successful completion of the MSAT program includes satisfactory completion of the clinical education component of the curriculum. A majority of clinical sites now require students to complete a criminal background check prior to participating in clinical education placements. Some facilities may also require fingerprinting and/or drug screening. *State licensure laws may also restrict or prohibit those with criminal convictions from obtaining a professional license to practice following graduation. Additionally, national certification agencies may deem persons with criminal convictions as ineligible to sit for national certification examinations. Thus, students with criminal convictions or backgrounds may not be able to obtain required clinical education experience(s) thereby failing to meet the academic standards of the health profession's program.*

It is therefore the policy of the MSAT Program that all admitted students planning to enroll in the MSAT Program must consent, submit to, and satisfactorily complete a criminal background check (CBC) before registration for courses as a condition of matriculation. Matriculation will not be final until the completion of the criminal background check with results deemed acceptable to the Program Director or Clinical Education Coordinator. Students are permitted to register for classes if they have a flagged CBC, but must sign a waiver acknowledging the risks (see the CBC policy). The MSAT Program is aware that students cannot get financial aid until they are fully matriculated. Please note that a student may need to complete multiple criminal background checks throughout the program pending clinical affiliation site placements.

All expenses associated with the CBC, fingerprinting, and/or drug screening are the responsibility of the student. Students, who do not consent to the required background check, refuse to provide information necessary to conduct the background check, or provide false or misleading information in regards to the background check will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, refusal of matriculation or dismissal from the program.

Some health care and education facilities require students to obtain a background check in a certain period of time or use a specific company to obtain background checks, drug testing, or fingerprinting. Other facilities accept background checks from any company in any time frame. The Clinical Education Coordinator will advise students prior to their clinical placement if the site requires a specific company or timeframe for the CBC, drug screening, or fingerprinting. It will be the student's responsibility to complete the background check, drug screening, or fingerprinting with the required company at their own expense within the timeframe specified by the site. If a site requires CBCs be completed, background check results may be sent to the site. The policy regarding who receives the results is determined by the site, not the MSAT Program or Sacred Heart University.

The MSAT Program currently uses CastleBranch to obtain background checks prior to admission, which will include felonies, misdemeanors, and sex offender status at federal, state, and local levels from ten previous years of residence. Each student must contact [CastleBranch](#) via a secure internet site. The Clinical Education Coordinator will advise the student when the CastleBranch system will need to be utilized prior to a clinical affiliation, and if, when, and how other checks such as fingerprinting and drug testing must be obtained.

Because several clinical facilities require the university to provide students' CBC results, the Program Director and Clinical Education Coordinator will need to have access to CBC inquiry results during a student's active enrollment in the MSAT Program at Sacred Heart University. All students' CBC information will be sent to the designated SHU faculty/staff member and the Clinical Education Coordinator will be alerted of any adverse information; therefore, students using these services give permission for SHU to access their report upon signing the Applicant Statement of Understanding Regarding Background Checks and Professional Conduct.

In the case of adverse information in a CBC report, the Clinical Education Coordinator will proceed as follows:

- The Clinical Education Coordinator will review the student's University/Program application to determine whether the student reported the offense on his/her application.
- The Clinical Education Coordinator will contact the student to discuss the results and the student's perspective on the circumstances. The conversation will be documented in writing and included in the student's file. The student will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that s/he understands that a flagged background check may preclude the ability to be placed in clinical sites and therefore preclude completion of the MSAT program. Further, students will need to sign a statement attesting that they understand they will not be considered fully matriculated until they have a clear CBC, have completed all program entry requirements, and that they are aware that they will be unable to receive financial aid until they are fully matriculated.
- The student will also be asked to sign a waiver agreeing to give the Clinical Education Coordinator permission to disclose to the facility that there was a problem with the background check. Failure to sign this will seriously jeopardize the student's ability to complete the degree requirements and may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program, as the student would be ineligible for a required clinical placement. The University will have no obligation to refund tuition or otherwise accommodate students in the event that a CBC or drug screening renders the student ineligible to complete required courses or clinical placement(s).
- Should the student choose to continue in the program, the Clinical Education Coordinator will inform the site that there was a flag on a background check of a student; the Clinical Education Coordinator will not reveal the student's name to the site, rather, will identify the nature of the flag to the site and ask if such a student would be acceptable for placement at that site. The site will be asked to confirm acceptance in writing in a letter, fax, or email.
- If the student feels that an adverse CBC finding is in error, the student will be directed to speak with The State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Records Unit at 860-685-8480 to determine if further investigation is needed. Errors may occur in instances of:
  - CBC was completed on a different person with the same name.
  - CBC was completed on a similarly named person.
  - CBC returned information that was supposed to be sealed or expunged.

If the information is in error, the State of Connecticut will notify the student in writing of the results of the investigation and if the error has been fixed or removed. The student would need to provide proof of that documentation to Clinical Education Coordinator. If the adverse information is truly an error, no further action is taken.

If denied placement by the first clinical site as a result of a flagged CBC, drug screening, or fingerprinting, the Clinical Education Coordinator will attempt to find a second clinical placement and will follow the procedure outlined above. The student will be asked to sign a waiver agreeing to give the Clinical Education Coordinator permission to disclose to the facility that there was a problem with the background check. Failure to sign the waiver will seriously jeopardize the student's ability to complete the degree requirements. Students who are twice denied a clinical placement based on the results of a background check will be considered ineligible for placement and unable to complete the program and, therefore, will be recommended for dismissal from the program. The University and the MSAT Program have no obligation to refund tuition or otherwise accommodate students in the event that a CBC or drug screening renders the student ineligible to complete required courses or clinical placement(s).

Some clinical sites may require a clean report of a criminal background check within a specific time period prior to the start of the placement. Therefore, repeated or additional background checks prior to the start of a clinical education placement/rotation may be required at the student's own expense. Sites may also notify the MSAT Program by letter or electronically, or by noting the requirements on pre-placement confirmation forms as appropriate.

Criminal background information is strictly confidential, for use only by authorized MSAT Program faculty and/or administrative staff, and shall be retained only until the student graduates or is dismissed from the program.

## **VII. Support for MSAT Students**

### **Academic Advising**

MSAT Students are assigned to a faculty member within the MSAT program for assistance and advice throughout their academic careers. Any student may formally ask the MSAT Program Director for a change in adviser at any time if he or she feels such a change will improve their advising situation.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours are a dedicated time where faculty are available to meet with students to discuss course content, answer questions, and provide feedback on assignments. During each semester, faculty will maintain weekly time blocks designated for office hours. It is encouraged that you email the faculty member to reserve a time to meet with them. If reserving an appointment with the faculty member, please be on time to your meeting and come prepared with the specific topics you'd like to discuss. If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please notify the instructor at least 24 hours prior to the

appointment as a courtesy to other students who may also need to meet with the faculty member and can utilize that meeting time.

### **Center for Teaching and Learning**

The [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#) offers tutoring, writing, and learning support for all SHU undergraduate and graduate students. Visit the [PASS Portal](#) to sign up for tutoring, submit a paper for feedback through the Online Writing Lab (OWL), or look up peer-assisted learning opportunities for specific courses. Questions? Contact [CTLtutoring@sacredheart.edu](mailto:CTLtutoring@sacredheart.edu).

### **University Library**

The [University Library](#) offers research and information support, in person and online. To begin your research now, you can book a study room, schedule an appointment with a librarian, and explore online tutorials all through the [SHU Library website](#). Questions? Contact [reference@sacredheart.edu](mailto:reference@sacredheart.edu).

### **Graduate Student Life**

[Graduate Student Life](#) aims to support and encourage life on and off campus for Sacred Heart University graduate students. The Graduate Student Life staff serves as a liaison to make the transition and experience of graduate education easier, happier and more fulfilling. Additionally, students in the MSAT Program can nominate a fellow classmate to serve as a representative on the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC).

### **Counseling & Ministry Supports**

Students may experience a variety of challenges while enrolled at SHU. Information about [undergraduate counseling](#) and [graduate counseling](#) services are available via the [Counseling Center website](#). [Campus Ministry](#) also provides faith-based support for students.

### **Dean of Students**

If you are experiencing challenges with accessing food, housing, technology, or other resources that may affect your performance, I encourage you to contact the Dean of Students, Denise Tiberio, at [tiberiod@sacredheart.edu](mailto:tiberiod@sacredheart.edu). There are university resources available to support you.