

Miami University's Review of Youngstown State University's Master in Athletic Training Full Proposal

1. Academic Quality

-Is the program distinctly different, both conceptually and qualitatively, from the undergraduate degree programs in the same or related disciplines? If so, is there a detailed listing of the specific differences?

The proposed graduate program at Youngstown State University in Athletic Training does not pose any distinct differences, either conceptually or qualitatively, from other professional athletic training programs. However, this is not necessarily seen as a liability in the reviewer's eyes. Athletic training education is highly structured and strongly accredited. Similarity in form between YSU's program and other AT programs is a positive finding.

-Does the program emphasize the theoretical basis of the discipline as expressed in the methods of inquiry and ways of knowing in the discipline?

Athletic training education draws from many disciplines: anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, and pathology (to name a few). Foundational knowledge in those disciplines is required and does seem to be moderately addressed in the "4+1" program with students' completion of general education requirements. Those prerequisites are also addressed in the post-baccalaureate degree via the program prerequisites.

-Does the program place emphasis on professional decision making and teach the use of critical analysis in problem solving?

While course descriptions do hint at an emphasis on professional decision making, most student's enrolled in professional AT education programs are required to think critically and professionally during the clinical experience requirement. YSU proposes four such clinical experience courses (MAT 6910, 6930, 6960, and 6980).

-Is the program designed to educate students broadly so that they have an understanding of the major issues and concerns in the discipline or professional area?

YSU's proposed program does follow the typical AT education program model. Via the courses in the proposed curriculum, YSU's curriculum does seem to address the NATA Educational Competency Content Areas. It follows then that if YSU addresses the eight NATA Content Areas, then the program should be designed to educate students broadly.

-Is there an adequate description of the required culminating experience such as an exit project (which would not necessarily be a research experience)?

The proposed program does present MAT 6985 (Research Capstone I) and MAT 6990 (Research Capstone II). The course descriptions for these two courses does allude to "conducting and critically reviewing research", but does not elaborate on methods or course requirements/activities.

-Does the proposed program identify faculty resources appropriate for the research component of the program?

Those resources are not clearly identified (page 10 of the proposal).

-Does the program curriculum offer what students need to know for competence at the expected level of professional expertise?

As YSU's proposed curriculum does follow the typical athletic training education model, it is often more telling to consider the NATA Educational Competencies. While it is safe to assume that if all NATA Content Areas are addressed then all NATA Educational Competencies will be addressed, but that could only be said for certain by this reviewer if syllabi and course objectives were included in the proposal.

-What plans have been made to address standards and guidelines for professional accreditation, if applicable? What are the core courses required for the program?

Youngstown State would have to apply for accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). While the proposal does mention development of study and preparation of the self-study (program director's CV), there is no time line for application of CAATE accreditation in the proposal.

-What admission criteria, in addition to the traditionally required transcripts, standardized test scores, letter of recommendation, and personal statements of purpose, are relevant to assess the potential for academic and professional success of prospective students? Will there be special consideration of student experience and extant practical skills within the admission process? If so, please elaborate.

A number of basic foundational science courses along with General Psychology and Statistics are required as pre-requisites. One admission requirement that does address student experience and practical skills is the requirement of 50 hours of direct observation. While often prospective students are not directly practicing skills during observation hours, it is, nonetheless, a good opportunity for the prospective student to gain real time experience in the field, albeit "observed" experience.

-Is field/clinical experience subsumed within the academic experience? If so, how does that experience relate to the academic goals of the professional graduate degree program? Provide a description of the involvement of supervisory personnel. Describe the nature of the oversight of the field/clinical experience by the academic department. Provide an outline of the anticipated student activities as well as student requirements.

Yes, clinical experience requirements (four separate experiences) are required within the proposed curriculum. As well, along with YSU Athletics, two physical therapy clinics are proposed as clinical sites. YSU should establish clinical relationships with area high schools.

-Are the faculty qualifications associated with the professional graduate degree program appropriate for such faculty? Provide the specific qualifications for such faculty.

Yes, the program director is terminally degreed (PhD, ATC). YSU is in the process of hiring a second faculty member (Clinical Education Coordinator) for the program. This faculty member would also need to possess a terminal degree.

-How does accreditation by the appropriate professional organization relate to the academic curriculum and experience outlined in the program plan? Describe the specific aspects of the program plan, if any, that are

necessary to achieve professional accreditation. Is completion of the degree program required for professional accreditation in the field?

In order to maintain CAATE accreditation, YSU would need to adhere to the mandated Standards. Within these standards is the inclusion of the NATA Educational Competencies. As part of the accreditation process, YSU would need to show evidence of the inclusion of each NATA Educational Competency into the curriculum. This is beyond the scope of the proposal and would be contained with the program's application for accreditation.

-How are theory and practice integrated within the curriculum?

The translational of theory into practice typically takes place during the student's clinical experience. Skills learned in the classroom are applied in real time with real patients. YSU's proposal accounts for clinical field experiences.

-What is the national credit hour norm for this degree program in your field? How was this norm derived? Is the number of credit hours required for graduation influenced by mandated professional experiences? If so, how?

As entry-level Masters programs in AT are relatively young, a national standard for credit hours does not seem to exist. Though, YSU's proposal does seem to be on the high side with an average of 15 credits per semester. Full time for graduate work is set lower (9 credit hours for full time).

-Describe the required culminating academic experience and how it will contribute to the enhancement of the student's professional preparation.

The two Capstone requirements charge the student with conducting research and critically appraising existing research. While practicing Athletic Trainers do not have to conduct research, they certainly need to be critical consumers of the literature base. Athletic training is guided by evidence-based practice. A critical eye is necessary for proper evidence-based athletic training.

2. Need

-a) Student interest and demand

Potential enrollment;

Ability to maintain the critical mass of students.

Student needs/interest survey administered.

-c) Societal demand

Intellectual development;

Advancement of the discipline;

Employment opportunities.

An increase in opportunities and growth for Athletic Trainers has been predicted by the Department of Labor.

3. Access and Retention of Underrepresented Groups

-a) Plan to ensure recruitment, retention and graduation of underrepresented groups within the discipline.

b) Provide as background a general assessment of:

- i. Institution and departmental profiles of total enrollment and graduate student enrollment of underrepresented groups within the discipline; and
- ii. Compare underrepresented groups degree recipients from the department and university at all levels compared to national norms. Supply data by group where available.

No discernible info gleaned from the proposal. Though, this could be an institution-wide program.

4. Statewide Alternatives
 - a) Programs available in other institutions;
 - b) Appropriateness of specific locale for the program; and
 - c) Opportunities for inter-institutional collaboration.
- d) Institutional Priority and Costs
 - i. Support and commitment of the proposing institution's central administration.
 - ii. Adequacy of available resources committed for the initiation of the program.

Still not many entry-level Masters AT programs in Ohio. Though, with the move of AT education from the Bachelors level to the Masters level, this will change.

5. External Support
 - a) Community, foundation, governmental, and other resources.

Listed in the budget proposal, but not elaborated upon.