# Clinical Experience Expectations

## Clinical Experience Philosophy and Sequencing

The GAC ATP clinical experience sequence is based on the premise of exploring the many different aspects of athletic training as a profession and working towards autonomous practice upon graduation. In order to do this, the program utilizes three different emphases to each academic year.

EXPOSE – Sophomore year

Sophomores are exposed to the daily ins and outs of a collegiate athletic training clinic. Sophomore students complete clinicals with our on-campus preceptors only for the spring semester once accepted into the program. The emphasis of exposing the students to the workings of a facility, what athletic trainers do, patient interactions, and the beginnings of their clinical skills is important in forming a solid foundation for these students. By remining on campus, the situation is more comfortable for the students and easier to access. In addition, the opportunity to be surrounded by multiple preceptors and multiple of their older peers during every shift, allows them to learn from many perspectives and be exposed to many different patients and conditions. These experiences are tied to the HES 303 course.

Explore – Junior year

Junior students are ready to explore more variety in athletic training. Their sequence now takes them off campus for two experiences, a general medical experience, and a high school experience, and two on-campus experiences. These 7-8 week experiences are kept shorter to allow more exploration, as the student will get 4 different experiences at different locations along with, ideally, some different preceptors than they had for their two on campus experiences as a sophomore. This chance to explore new perspectives in the field is important as they gain the bulk of their patient-based knowledge, skills, and abilities during the junior year. The general medical experience is slated across the junior year due to the fact that the students completed HES 206 Medical Topics in Athletic Training during their sophomore year and, thus, can now apply those skills, as allowed in clinic. Due to the limited availability of general medical preceptors and the desire to keep the ratio 1:1 or 1:2 at most, the general medical experience can take place either fall or spring of the junior year. The high school experience and the two on campus experiences are tailored by the preceptor, with guidance from the program director and clinical education coordinator, to allow junior students to grow in their clinical practice with appropriate supervision, but also some increased opportunities for autonomy. Often these experiences also occur with an older student or a peer to allow more shared learning experiences as well. This opportunity to safely explore of their own knowledge, skills, and abilities is vital to set them up to go more in depth in their senior year prior to graduation and certification. Preceptors are trained by the clinical education coordinator to provide and facility learning opportunities that embody this “explore” premise. In the fall, these experiences are tied to HES 307. In the spring, they are tied to HES 311.

Expand and Examine – Senior year

By the end of their junior year students have been assessed on all of their patient-oriented competencies. The senior year is about taking the time to expand their knowledge, skills, and abilities, but most importantly their confidence in those knowledge, skills, and abilities. Senior year brings the opportunity to really dive into what it takes to be an athletic trainer, and specifically they type of athletic trainer the student eventually wants to become. Every senior participates in a pre-season experience, either at a high school or college. This chance to examine the particularly intense time for athletic trainers and student athletes helps seniors quickly get back into learning mode after the summer and apply their skills in bulk during this busy time. Seniors often get the chance to become immersed quickly in the athletic training environment in this intense 3-4 week experience. Every senior gets the chance to expand and examine their ability to take a patient population through a full season of collegiate play. This allows the student more access to the patients, a chance to build trust and relationships, and the chance to be more engaged with the preceptor in the running of the operation beyond just patient care (tied to their learning in HES 312 Leadership in Athletic Training). In addition, each student completes a 8-10 week high school experience at a different high school environment and with a different preceptor than they did during their junior year. This chance to examine and compare experiences in one of the largest hiring areas in our state, secondary schools, is important as the students consider their future options. The longer experience also helps students expand their patient interactions in a similar way that the season-long collegiate experience does. Preceptors at both the on campus and high school experiences are guided to help these senior students take ownership and responsibility for their educational experiences and to help the students work towards autonomous practice. The students are also usually paired with younger students, giving them opportunities to live out “see one, do one, teach one” by mentoring the younger students. Students also get the opportunity to expand their knowledge and interaction with a team physician. Students complete on-campus clinical visits with Gustavus’s team physician, leading the patient presentations when possible, and spend time with the physician at his clinic at TRIA Orthopaedic Center and in surgery. Many students go on to work in a clinic environment in the state, and this opportunity to examine that interprofessional relationship is helpful to their vocational discernment and clinical skills. Finally, they remainder to their academic year is spent in one or two smaller clinical experiences either on campus, at another high school, or at a unique experience. If utilizing a high school or on campus, students are placed with preceptors with whom they have not had experience prior, to continue to expand their opportunities to learn from new individuals and situations. Students have the opportunity to work with the clinical education coordinator to set up this “other” experience to tailor to what they still want to examine within the field of athletic training. Students have completed experiences with the performing arts, boarding schools, chiropractors, clinical athletic trainers, prosthetists, physical therapists, concussion clinicians, athletic training educators, and industrial athletic trainers, to name a few. This option for some choice, but also responsibility in helping conceive and set up the experience, gives the students the chance to take ownership over their education and examine further the areas of athletic training that might speak to them for the future. The preseason experience and fall semester are tied to HES 312. The January term is tied to HES 318 and the spring semester is tied to HES 353.

## Clinical Experience Hours

The GAC ATP is committed to creating productive educational experiences for the students enrolled in the program. The time spent under the supervision of the preceptors is to be the practical portion of the students’ education. In order to keep the experiences educationally focused, a policy is in place to regulate students’ time.

The students are to follow the Clinical Experience Expectations document (a copy is below as well as at <https://gustavus.edu/hes/atr/overview.php>).

The Athletic Training Program expects incremental increases in time spent in experiences in order to allow for continued development of skills and knowledge. This incremental plan allows for relief time that corresponds to the level in the program as well. The flexibility in the hours per week allows students to structure educational opportunities appropriate to themselves and their style of learning without creating a “workforce” mentality while allowing preceptors the ability to schedule their student experiences in a manner that is appropriate for their clinic any given week.

The ATP has a minimum of 5 hours per week and a maximum of 30 hours per week.  However, how those are distributed among the week is up to the partnership between the student and the preceptor.  The program does provide an ideal number of "shifts per week" to help students and preceptors plan, if desired.  Students and supervisors are encouraged to keep time commitments to around 10-15 hours per week for sophomore students, 15-20 hours per week for junior students and 20- 30 hours per week (depending on the experience) for senior students, but the ATP allows the students and preceptors to create the experiences that work for them and their style of learning.  In addition, non-traditional and off-campus experiences tend to be less time intensive than on campus experiences (usually between 5-10 hours per week), helping to balance the time spent on clinical experiences throughout the year.

The program is aware that any given week might look very different for a student and/or a preceptor or site, thus we hope to keep some flexibility in this hours policy. As long as the minimum and maximum are being maintained and the student is progressing in their knowledge, skills, and abilities appropriately (3,4,and/or 5s on their evaluations, comparable patient encounters to peers, passing all competencies and/or proficiencies, receiving positive qualitative feedback from preceptors, etc.), the student will be considered to be in compliance with the policy, even if the hours per week vary within an experience. The clinical education coordinator and/or program director will monitor these values as they are available (weekly for hours and patient encounters, as assigned for competencies, proficiencies, and evaluations) and provide feedback to the student and the preceptor about a need to increase or decrease or change the quality of the time in the clinical experience.

According to the CAATE Standards, **students must have at least 1 day off in a 7-day period.** Students who may feel that they are expected to be in attendance more hours than required or supervisors, who have concerns about a student’s time, are encouraged to report such grievances to the program officials.

Students must document their hours and the minimum and maximum per week is monitored by the clinical education coordinator who will inform the preceptor and student if the policy is not being followed. **Failure to follow the policy intentionally or repeatedly will be considered a violation of the rules and regulations of the program and could result in disciplinary action.**

## Clinical Experience COVID-19 Statement

The athletic training program will be following the policy of Gustavus Adolphus College, which requires a complete COVID-19 vaccine for all students. Quarantine and PPE requirements will be set based on the vaccination status of each student.

Below is the COVID-19 clinical education statement that has been in effect since August 2020. This policy may be adapted as the recommendations from the college and the Minnesota Department of Health changes.

As part of your athletic training courses and clinical experiences, you will sometimes need to be within 6 feet of another individual while wearing face coverings, at a minimum, or other personal protective equipment, as appropriate.  For class, and potentially for clinical experiences, this close contact may be longer than 15 minutes. The CAATE requires that “Clinical education must provide students with **authentic, real-time opportunities** **to practice and integrate athletic training knowledge, skills, and clinical abilities**, including decision-making and professional behaviors required of the profession in order to develop proficiency as an Athletic Trainer” (Standard 47). When possible, we will promote physical distancing, but during evaluation and treatment and skill practice, you will need to be in close contact for an extended period of time for patient care and for learning and practicing your skills in order to ensure “authentic, real—time opportunities to practice and integrate athletic training knowledge, skills, and clinical abilities.” If a person with whom you have had contact is diagnosed with COVID-19, you will be considered a “close contact” and may be asked to quarantine for 14 days from your last contact with the infected individual (depending on vaccination status). In reverse of this, if you are diagnosed with COVID-19, your classmates, instructor, some patients, preceptor, and others with whom you have come into contact with during class or clinical experience may be considered “close contacts” and would be requested to self-quarantine for 14 days.  Also remember, if you are diagnosed with COVID-19, you will be asked to self-isolate for a required amount of time from the onset of your symptoms.

The goal of the ATP is to produce qualified athletic trainers that can enter the field and contribute. Students should be aware that if clinical education is limited due to COVID-19 restrictions to the point that assurance of readiness for clinical practice cannot be assessed by the ATP faculty, the ATP will need to suspend student progress. This would result in an additional year of clinical experiences and/or coursework to be needed in order to graduate from the program. A single 14-day quarantine or isolation would not affect progression. However, longer isolation or quarantine needs, cancelation of in-person classes, or cancelation of clinical sites may have to result in pausing students’ progressions in the ATP. Each individual case will be decided with thorough consultation with college administrators, CAATE officials, the student, and ATP faculty and staff. Program-wide decisions will also be made with consultation from college administrators, CAATE officials, students, and ATP faculty and staff. Please know the decision to suspend progress for students in the ATP would not be made lightly but would be made in the best interest of the students and the future patient safety.

If, at this time, you make the choice that you are unable to complete clinical education and clinical experiences, as described in this handbook, due to being in a high-risk group or another reason, please contact the program director and clinical education coordinator immediately to discuss options on pausing your progression in the athletic training program but ensuring a spot in the next year’s cohort to allow your successful completion of the ATP’s expectations.

## Clinical Experience Expectations

All students majoring in Athletic Training will be required to fulfill the following clinical experience expectations as part of courses HES 303, 307, 311, 312, 318, and 353. **Inability to complete the clinical experience requirements may result in failure of the associated course.** The Clinical Education Coordinator will assign students to Preceptors for various clinical experiences of differing lengths. These experiences will be balanced based on students gaining experience with a variety of patient populations, including, but not limited to, patients throughout the lifespan, patients of different sexes, patients with different socioeconomic statuses, patients of varying levels of activity and athletic ability, and patients who participate in non-sport activities. Students MUST have at least 1 day off during each 7-day period. All other scheduling decisions are at the discretion of the preceptors for the site.

The following are the expectations which are expected during a normal academic year and will be resumed when it is safe to do so.

**Sophomore (Spring) “EXPOSE”**

All experiences are on campus under supervision of the preceptors

10-15 hours per week ideally split into 2-3 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)

~ 25% of home events

Able to apply skills from HES 203 and 200 (taping, bracing, wound care, stretching, crutch fitting, splinting, spine boarding, first aid/CPR); practicing and getting assessed on skills from HES 303 (lower extremity evaluation) and HES 206 (documentation, history taking, general medical skills – cardio, respiratory, GI, GU, Neurological, Endocrine, Environmental, EENT) – able to apply these once assessed and passed by a preceptor/faculty

**Junior (Fall and Spring) “EXAMINE”**

One ½ semester (7-8-week), general medical experience and experiential opportunity at Mankato Clinic under the supervision of appropriate preceptors. In addition, students will complete online clinical simulations through i-Human.

* 5-10 hours per week ideally split into 1-2 shifts/wk at Mankato Clinic (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
* Completion of all i-Human case simulations

One ½ semester (7-8 weeks), off-campus, high school experience obtaining clinical education in athletic training services at St. Peter, Shakopee, or Jordan High Schools under the supervision of appropriate preceptors.

* 10-15 hours per week ideally split into 3-4 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
* ~ 50% of home events
* Travel opportunities allowed/arranged by Preceptor and under the supervision of the Preceptor

Two experiences are on campus under supervision of the preceptors

* 10-15 hours per week ideally split into 4-5 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
  + ~ 50% of home events
  + Travel opportunities allowed/arranged by Preceptor and under the supervision of the Preceptor

Junior Fall - able to apply skills from HES 203, 200, 303, 206; practicing and getting assessed on skills from HES 320 (therapeutic modalities – heat/cold, e-stim, ultrasound, massage, diathermy, light therapy, cpm, traction, joint mobs) and HES 307 (upper extremity evaluation) – able to apply these once assessed and passed by a preceptor/faculty

Junior spring – able to apply skills from HES 203, 200, 303, 206, 320,307; practicing and getting assessed on skills from HES 311 ( (spine, head, thorax, abdomen, evaluation) – able to apply these once assessed and passed by a preceptor/faculty

**Other important information (Juniors)**

Experience required during Spring Break unless pre-approved by Preceptor

Observe Team physician during campus visits at least 3 times per year.

No requirement over Pre-Camp or January Term, but student can request an experience,

**Senior (Fall, Januay Term, and Spring) “Expand and Examine”**

Experience required during Pre-Camp (August prior to Senior year)

* 20-30 hours per week ideally split into 5-6 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
  + ~ 90% home events
  + ~ 50% of travel events arranged by Preceptor and under the supervision of the Preceptor. These travel experiences usually occur during the full-season experience.

One long DIII experience, usually at Gustavus under a preceptor

* 20-30 hours per week ideally split 5-6 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
  + ~ 90% home events
  + ~ 50% of travel events arranged by Preceptor and under the supervision of the Preceptor.

Students may have a short on-campus experience under a preceptor

* 20-30 hours per week ideally split into 4-5 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
  + ~ 50% of home events
  + Travel opportunities allowed/arranged by Preceptor and under the supervision of the Preceptor

One 8-10 week, off-campus, high school experience obtaining clinical education in athletic training services at St. Peter, Shakopee, or Jordan High Schools under the supervision of appropriate preceptors.

* 15-30 hours per week ideally split into 3-4 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
  + ~ 50% of home events
  + Travel opportunities allowed/arranged by Preceptor and under the supervision of the Preceptor

One 3-week, off-campus orthopedic focused experience observing at TRIA in clinic and in surgery under the supervision of appropriate preceptors (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week – this is time should be included in their season long experience expectations as they run together).

* Get as many hours as possible with the schedule.
* Student should be able to observe at least 1 surgery during the experience; however, this is up to the discretion of the preceptor and based upon student engagement during regular clinic times
* Student will present cases to preceptors during on-campus team physician visits.
* This will occur in addition to the student’s on-campus experience
* Typically this will be between 4-8 hours per session (clinic and surgery), but can depend on the student’s availability and the schedule for the day.
* On campus clinic typically will be between 3 and 4 hours.

Students may have an “other” experience. Students self-select a clinical experience based on their goals and interests. Options can include a physician clinic with which the program already has an affiliated agreement; boarding school experience; another high school experience with which the program already has an affiliated agreement; a specialty collegiate experience at a site with which the program already has an affiliated agreement, an education experience where students will gain experience in teaching and administration in an ATP; or an experience of the student’s creation that adheres to the CAATE guidelines (students should work with the CEC to contact and design this experience).

* 5-30 hours per week ideally split 2-4 shifts/wk (minimum 5 hours and maximum 30 hours per week)
* The hours can vary greatly in this experience depending on travel needs, preceptor/site availability, and student schedule and goals for the experience. Student will work with the clinical education coordinator to set a reasonable expectation for the experience.

Senior Fall - able to apply skills from HES 203, 200, 303, 206, 320,307, 311; implementing knowledge and skills in organization and administration from HES 312. Demonstrating knowledge and readiness for autonomous practice with completion of Proficiency Assessments.

Senior J term and Spring able to apply skills from HES 203, 200, 303, 206, 320,307, 311, 312, implementing any new knowledge and skills gained from position statements and guest speakers in HES 318 or HES 353. Demonstrating knowledge and readiness for autonomous practice with completion of Proficiency Assessments.

**Other Important Information (Seniors)**

Experience required over Fall Break.

Experience required during January term

Experience required during Touring break unless pre-approved by Preceptor

Experience required during Spring break unless pre-approved by Preceptor

Given the time commitment to fulfill these expectations, it is difficult to combine majoring in athletic training with other extracurricular activities (off-campus job, choir, band, varsity sport, danceline, etc.). **Therefore, those students choosing to combine these activities will need to give first priority to clinical experience requirements/assignments.** Due to the overlap in timing, athletic training majors will only be allowed to participate in one varsity sport season per year (exclusive of 1st year students). However, these students will not be relieved from fulfilling their clinical experiences during their athletic season. Moreover, students who major in athletic training and participate on a varsity sport will not be allowed to practice athletic training with their varsity team (apply modalities, evaluate injuries to make return to play decisions, etc.).

**Failure to follow the clinical experience expectations will be considered a violation of the rules and regulations of the program and could result in disciplinary action.**