

# Accreditation Process

## ELIGIBILITY

Athletic therapy educational programs sponsored by degree-granting post-secondary academic institutions or consortia are eligible for accreditation if the sponsoring institution meets the standards for education in athletic therapy as stated in the *Standards and Guidelines for an Accredited Educational Program for the Athletic Therapist*. A consortium is a formal institutional partnership which effectively teaches and measures the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to be successful as a Certified Athletic Therapist. The Canadian Athletic Therapists Association standard is that the students in the consortium have a degree from post-secondary institution accredited by the Association of University and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) as a requirement for either entrance or graduation.

Notwithstanding the above definition of “consortium”, post-secondary institutions within the AUCC and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) or international equivalent may seek accreditation for a post-baccalaureate program based on standards that are mutually acceptable between the institutions.

## OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

The accreditation process is comprised of the following stages:

- I application including self study report,
- II site visit,
- III report of findings and response,
- IV final review and decision,
- V accreditation award, and
- VI maintenance of accreditation.

### I APPLICATION

1. The accreditation review process conducted by the Program Accreditation Committee (PAC) shall be initiated only at the written request of the president of the post-secondary institution.
2. Application for program accreditation is made to the PAC of the Association. To apply, the [Self Study Report \(see #5-40\)](#) is to be requested from the address listed below, completed by the institutional representatives and returned with all documentation listed in “3” below to the Chair of the PAC.

Chair, CATA Program Accreditation Committee  
c/o CATA  
Suite 402 - 1040 7th Avenue S.W.  
Calgary, AB, T2P 3G9

3. The application must include the following:
  - a) the completed Self Study Report;
  - b) a cover letter from the president of the post-secondary institution;
  - c) an outline of the philosophy of the school or the university;
  - d) the calendar for the current year describing the general requirements of the institution;
  - e) the proposed calendar descriptions describing the athletic therapy program;
  - f) descriptions of all courses required for the athletic therapy program if not included in “d” or “e” above;
  - g) objectives and outlines of each of the athletic therapy courses, including textbooks and other resources to be used;
  - h) copies of all evaluation forms used for the students;
  - i) the schedule (year-by-year) of practical hour accumulation over the course of the students' education;
  - j) copies of the practicum experience logbooks to be used by the students;
  - k) inventories of all athletic therapy equipment (preventative, treatment and rehabilitative);
  - l) library list of pertinent texts and journals;
  - m) list of potential clinical and field placements with copies of proposed contractual agreements between schools of athletic therapy and these placements, and
  - n) the application fee.

### **Self Study Report**

1. The PAC requires all new and continuing programs to develop and submit one hard copy and five electronic copies of the Self Study Report (see #5-40) by the date assigned by the PAC.
2. The program should provide potential dates acceptable for the on-site evaluation within the months identified by the PAC in the accreditation timetable (see Accreditation Timetable and Fees, #2-40).
3. The PAC:
  - a) Reviews and evaluates the application information including the Self Study Report to decide whether the next stage of the process, a site visitation, is warranted.
  - b) If warranted,
    - establishes tentative dates for a site visit,
    - assigns the site visit team, and
  - c) provides each member of the site visit team with a copy of the application information (see #5-20) and Self Study Report (see #5-40).

## **New Programs**

The post-secondary institution initiates the accreditation process by submitting the Application for Initial Accreditation (see #5-20). This application must be signed by the institution's president. Applicants may consult with the PAC during program development for purposes of submission of the application, program planning, and to ensure the accreditation process is completed, so the first class of graduating students are considered graduates of an accredited program. The PAC evaluates the application materials and, if necessary, may request additional information from the program officials. Upon successful completion of the accreditation process, the date of inception is September 1 of that year.

## **Continuing Programs**

The PAC initiates the accreditation process based upon the program's last site visit date. Existing programs are provided with the necessary accreditation materials one year prior to the next scheduled site visit. Deadlines for submission of the continuing accreditation application and the Self Study Report are established for the program at that time.

## **II SITE VISIT**

1. The purpose of the site visit is to validate the Self Study Report and evaluate the program's compliance with the standards and guidelines.
2. The on-site evaluation includes a review of both the didactic and practicum aspects of the program including visits to both on-campus and off-campus practicum sites to evaluate the correlation among all aspects of the program. All clinical sites should be within a geographical area that allows visitation within the allotted period of time the site visit team is on campus. The number of off-campus practicum sites to be visited is determined by PAC. Site visitations are usually between two and two and one-half days in length.
3. The program should provide a conference room or office for the site visit team to use throughout the visit.
4. The sponsoring institution is responsible for payment of each site visitor's expenses. The PAC invoices the institution after the site visit for all site visitation team expenses. The arrangements for the travel and accommodation will be made between the program representative and the PAC Chair. Costs for alcoholic beverages, movies or other entertainment are not reimbursed. Expenses that appear excessive are investigated by the PAC prior to invoicing the program.

For additional information about the site visit see:

- Site Team Composition and Responsibilities, #3-20;
- Model Site Visit Agenda, #3-40;
- Site Visit Report, #3-60; and
- Report of On-Site Evaluation Report, #5-100.

### **III REPORT OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSE**

Before the PAC formulates its accreditation recommendation to the Association, the post-secondary institution is given an option to comment in writing on the report of the site visit team for the purpose of correcting factual errors.

The site visit team chair sends the site visit report (see Report of On-Site Evaluation, #5-100) to the PAC. The report defines any areas found to be deficient by the site visit team at the time of the on-site review.

An opportunity to respond to the site visit report is offered to all programs and must include the signature of a senior administration designate of the institution. If no deficiencies are cited and/or the site visit report is accepted by the institution "as is", receipt of the site visit report must be acknowledged. -

### **IV FINAL REVIEW AND DECISION**

1. At their next regularly scheduled annual or semi-annual meeting, the PAC evaluates the site visit report and the program's response.
2. When determining a recommendation for accreditation, the PAC considers:
  - a) the site visit report,
  - b) the program's response to the site visit report, and
  - c) all accreditation documentation relating to that process.
3. Throughout the accreditation process, a program must assure the PAC that it has developed and implemented appropriate policies, procedures, processes and practices to demonstrate compliance with the "Competencies in Athletic Therapy" as listed in the Self Study Report (see #5-40).
4. Following the PAC adjudication, the PAC Chair forwards the Committee's recommended decision to CATA's Board of Directors. The BoD decision is then sent by PAC chair to the program officials (see "Final Report" below) with the length of accreditation (see Accreditation Outcomes, #2-60) and a summary of the PAC's findings. Depending on the significance of the recommended improvements the PAC may request a process for resolution including timelines. .
5. A program with a two-year accreditation must demonstrate significant improvement by the next evaluation to be recommended for a subsequent two-year or a four-year accreditation.. Limited improvement or lack of improvement is justification for the PAC to recommend a limited or reduced accreditation, or withdrawal of accreditation.

#### **Final Report**

The final Program Accreditation Committee report sent to the institution:

1. Provides the Committee's impressions of the program as it relates to students, administration and athletic therapy faculty.

2. Identifies strengths, deficiencies and recommendations for the program..
3. May indicate procedures and potential timelines for the implementation and re-evaluation of the identified criteria.

## **V ACCREDITATION YEAR**

Accreditation year begins on September 1 and continues until August 31 of the expiration year.

## **VI MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION**

To maintain accreditation, accredited programs must:

1. Complete a PAC annual report.
2. Submit a Self Study Report or a required progress report within a reasonable period of time, as determined by the PAC.
3. Agree to a reasonable site visit date before the end of the period for which accreditation was awarded.
4. Inform the PAC within a reasonable period of time of changes in required program personnel (i.e., program directors, clinical staff and administrators).
5. Inform the PAC of its intent to transfer program sponsorship.
6. Pay the Association fees (in keeping with Accreditation Timetable and Fees, #2-40).
7. Promptly inform the Association and the PAC of any adverse decision affecting its accreditation or other speciality recognition status.
8. Conduct other related functions prescribed by the PAC.

Failure to meet these administrative requirements for maintaining accreditation may lead to changes in accreditation status and may ultimately lead to having accreditation withdrawn (by the Association on the recommendation of the PAC).

An institution sponsoring a program may voluntarily withdraw from the Association's accreditation system at any time (see "Withdrawal of Accreditation" in Accreditation Outcomes, #2-60).