



# BOC Standards of Professional Practice

VERSION 3.5 - PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2023  
IMPLEMENTED JANUARY 2024



# Introduction



## BOARD OF CERTIFICATION

The BOC was incorporated in 1989 as a not-for-profit credentialing agency to provide a certification program for the entry-level athletic training profession. The BOC establishes both the standards for the practice of athletic training and the continuing education requirements for BOC Certified Athletic Trainers (ATs).

The BOC works with state regulatory agencies to provide credential information, professional conduct guidelines and regulatory standards on certification issues. The BOC also has the only entry-level accredited certification program for ATs in the United States and has an International Arrangement with Athletic Rehabilitation Therapy Ireland (ARTI), British Association of Sport Rehabilitators (BASRaT) and Canadian Athletic Therapists Association (CATA).

In 2021, the BOC Orthopedic Specialty Certification (orthopedic specialty) for ATs was launched. The Board Certified Specialist in Orthopedics (BCS-O) credential is available to ATs who have acquired specialized education and focused experience in orthopedics beyond the requirements for the ATC® credential. It is the first and only board-certified specialty for ATs who specialize in orthopedics and it is backed by the BOC's rigorous process and standards.

The BOC is the only accredited certification program for Athletic Trainers in the United States. Every five years, the BOC must undergo review and re-accreditation by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA is the accreditation body of the Institute of Credentialing Excellence.

## CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS

The BOC certifies ATs and identifies, for the public, quality health care professionals through a system of certification, adjudication, standards of practice and continuing competence programs. Athletic Trainers are health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to optimize activity and participation of patients and clients. Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis and intervention of emergency, acute and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations and disabilities.

## BOARD CERTIFIED SPECIALIST

Specialty certification identifies ATs who have clinical practice abilities beyond the ATC® credential. These abilities will be identified via demonstration of post-professional education and training (e.g., CAATE-accredited residency and/ or employment and experience) and passing of a specialty certification exam. The specialty certification demonstrates an ability to enhance quality of patient care, optimize clinical outcomes, increase cost-effectiveness, provide value-based care and improve patients' health-related quality of life within a specialized area of athletic training practice.

## BOC MISSION

Provide exceptional credentials and standards the public can trust

## BOC VISION

Lead credentialing excellence globally

## BOC VALUES

Each day we:

- exhibit **INTEGRITY** through transparency, honesty, and accountability
- uphold **FAIRNESS** through quality credentialing standards and practices
- foster a devoted **SERVICE** culture through a commitment to exceed stakeholder expectations
- promote **COLLABORATION** through strong partnerships and diverse perspectives

# Introduction

## BOC COMMITMENT

**Our Responsibility:** In line with our responsibility of public protection, the BOC is dedicated to inclusion, diversity, equity and advocacy.

**Our Goal:** Our ultimate mission is to protect the public - a serious responsibility. The population includes everyone and all its diversity. The BOC must be diligently aware, equitable and inclusive to provide protection to our constituents.

## STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The “BOC Standards of Professional Practice” are reviewed by the BOC Standards Committee and recommendations are provided to the BOC Board of Directors. The BOC Standards Committee is comprised of Athletic Trainer and/or public members. The BOC Board of Directors includes six Athletic Trainer Directors, one Physician Director, one Public Director and one Corporate/Educational Director.

The Practice Standards and Code of Professional Responsibility defined in this document have been constructed in alignment with the BOC’s mission, vision, values and the BOC’s commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and advocacy outlined above.

The “BOC Standards of Professional Practice” consists of two sections:

- I. Practice Standards
- II. Code of Professional Responsibility

## GLOSSARY

**Culturally Congruent Practice** is patient centered care; a dynamic interaction in which patient and family preferences are skillfully addressed by being inclusive of cultural values, beliefs, influences, worldview, and practices.

**Worldview** is a collection of attitudes, values, stories and expectations about the world around all of us, which informs our every thought and action.



# I. Practice Standards

## CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS

### PREAMBLE

The primary purpose of the Practice Standards are to establish essential duties and obligations imposed by virtue of holding the ATC® credential. Compliance with the Practice Standards are mandatory.

The BOC does not express an opinion on the competence or warrant job performance of credential holders; however, every Athletic Trainer and applicant must agree to comply with the Practice Standards at all times.

### STANDARD 1: DIRECTION

The Athletic Trainer renders service or treatment under the direction of, or in collaboration with a physician, in accordance with their training and the state's statutes, rules and regulations.

### STANDARD 2: PREVENTION

The Athletic Trainer implements measures to prevent and/or mitigate injury, illness and long term disability.

### STANDARD 3: IMMEDIATE CARE

The Athletic Trainer provides care procedures used in acute and/or emergency situations, independent of setting.

### STANDARD 4: EXAMINATION, ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

The Athletic Trainer utilizes patient history and appropriate physical examination procedures to determine the patient's impairments, diagnosis, level of function and disposition.

### STANDARD 5: THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION

The Athletic Trainer determines appropriate treatment, rehabilitation and/or reconditioning strategies. Intervention program objectives include long and short-term goals and an appraisal of those which the patient can realistically be expected to achieve from the program. Appropriate patient-centered outcome assessments are utilized to document efficacy of interventions.

### STANDARD 6: PROGRAM DISCONTINUATION

The Athletic Trainer may recommend discontinuation of the intervention program at such time the patient has received optimal benefit of the program. A final assessment of the patients' status is included in the discharge note.

### STANDARD 7: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Athletic Trainer documents all procedures and services in accordance with local, state and federal laws, rules and guidelines.

### STANDARD 8: CULTURALLY CONGRUENT PRACTICE

The Athletic Trainer practices patient centered care that is aligned with the cultural values, beliefs, worldview, and practices of the patient and other stakeholders.



## BOARD CERTIFIED SPECIALIST

### PREAMBLE

BOC specialty certification is a voluntary process by which an Athletic Trainer earns formal recognition of their advanced education and experience within a specialized area of clinical practice.

Compliance with the Practice Standards are mandatory for every individual who holds the ATC® credential. The BOC board-certified specialist must maintain the ATC® credential; therefore, the specialist must comply with the Practice Standards. The essential duties and obligations of the BOC board-certified specialist are also directed by the current practice analysis for the respective specialty. The BOC does not express an opinion on the competence or warrant job performance of specialty credential holders; however, every specialist and specialist applicant agrees to comply with the Practice Standards for the respective specialty.

### BOARD CERTIFIED SPECIALIST - ORTHOPEDICS (BCS-O)

Passage of the BOC Orthopedic Specialty Exam signifies a standard level of knowledge in the following domains that signify the major responsibilities or duties that characterize orthopedic specialty practice:

#### STANDARD 1: MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

The Orthopedic Specialist performs and synthesizes a comprehensive evaluation that includes, but is not limited to, interpreting patient history, completing a physical examination, and identifying appropriate diagnostic studies to formulate a differential diagnosis, educate the patient and formulate a plan of care to optimize patient-centered care.

#### STANDARD 2: PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE

The Orthopedic Specialist implements a plan of care and provides procedural and/or operative care (pre-, intra-, and/or post-) to ensure optimal patient outcomes.

#### STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The Orthopedic Specialist collaborates with an interdisciplinary health care team to establish processes and quality care programs that promote value-based care, population health strategies and cost containment to improve patient outcomes.



# II. Code of Professional Responsibility

## PREAMBLE

The Code of Professional Responsibility (Code) mandates that BOC credential holders and applicants act in a professionally responsible manner in all athletic training services and activities. The BOC requires all Athletic Trainers, specialists and applicants to comply with the Code. The BOC may discipline, revoke or take other action with regard to the application or certification of an individual that does not adhere to the Code. The “Professional Practice and Discipline Guidelines and Procedures” may be accessed via the [BOC website](#).

## CODE 1: PATIENT CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Athletic Trainer, specialist or applicant:

- 1.1 Renders quality patient care regardless of the patient’s age, gender, sex, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic including those protected by law.
- 1.2 Protects the patient from undue harm and acts always in the patient’s best interest and is an advocate for the patient’s welfare, including taking appropriate action to protect patients from health care providers or athletic training students who are, impaired or engaged in illegal or unethical practice.
- 1.3 Demonstrates sound clinical judgment that is based upon current knowledge, evidence-based guidelines and the thoughtful and safe application of resources, treatments and therapies.
- 1.4 Communicates effectively and truthfully with patients and other persons involved in the patient’s program, while maintaining privacy and confidentiality of patient information in accordance with applicable law.
  - 1.4.1 Demonstrates respect for cultural diversity and understanding of the impact of cultural and religious values.
- 1.5 Develops and maintains a relationship of trust and confidence with the patient and/or the parent/guardian of a minor patient and does not exploit the relationship for personal or financial gain.
- 1.6 Does not engage in intimate or sexual activity with a patient and/or the parent/guardian of a minor patient.
- 1.7 Informs the patient and/or the parent/guardian of a minor patient of any risks involved in the treatment plan.
  - 1.7.1 Does not make unsupported claims about the safety or efficacy of treatment.

- 1.8 Does not practice athletic training, or otherwise render patient care, while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any other substance that may or is likely to impair the Athletic Trainer’s ability to render quality, skilled care to the patient.

## CODE 2: COMPETENCY

The Athletic Trainer, specialist or applicant:

- 2.1 Engages in lifelong and professional learning activities to promote continued competence and culturally congruent practice.
- 2.2 Complies with the most current BOC recertification policies and requirements.

## CODE 3: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Athletic Trainer, specialist or applicant:

- 3.1 Practices in accordance with the most current BOC Practice Standards.
- 3.2 Practices in accordance with applicable local, state and/or federal rules, requirements, regulations and/or laws related to the practice of athletic training including, without limitation, applicable state licensing and ethical requirements.
- 3.3 Practices in collaboration and cooperation with others involved in a patient’s care when warranted; respecting the expertise and medico-legal responsibility of all parties.
- 3.4 Provides athletic training services only when there is a reasonable expectation that an individual will benefit from such services.
- 3.5 Does not misrepresent in any manner, either directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, identity or services or the skills, training, credentials, identity or services of athletic training.
  - 3.5.1 Provides only those services for which they are prepared and permitted to perform by applicable local, state and/or federal rules, requirements, regulations and/or laws related to the practice of athletic training.
- 3.6 Does not guarantee the results of any athletic training service.
- 3.7 Complies with all BOC exam eligibility requirements.
- 3.8 Ensures that any information provided to the BOC in connection with exam eligibility, certification, recertification or reinstatement including but not limited to, exam applications, reinstatement applications or continuing education forms, is accurate and truthful.

## II. Code of Professional Responsibility

- 3.9 Does not possess, use, copy, access, distribute or discuss certification exams, self-assessment and practice exams, score reports, answer sheets, certificates, certificant or applicant files, documents or other materials without proper authorization.
- 3.10 Takes no action that leads, or may lead, to the conviction, plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendere (no contest) to any felony or to a misdemeanor related to public health, patient care, athletics or education; this includes, but is not limited to: rape; sexual abuse or misconduct; actual or threatened use of violence; the prohibited sale or distribution of controlled substances, or the possession with intent to distribute controlled substances; or improper influence of the outcome or score of an athletic contest or event.
- 3.11 Reports any suspected or known violation of applicable local, state and/or federal rules, requirements, regulations and/or laws committed by themselves and/or by another Athletic Trainer that is related to the practice of athletic training and/or that may impact the Athletic Trainer's ability to practice athletic training in accordance with "BOC Standards of Professional Practice."
- 3.12 Reports any criminal convictions (with the exception of misdemeanor traffic offenses or traffic ordinance violations that do not involve the use of alcohol or drugs) and/or professional suspension, discipline or sanction received by themselves or by another Athletic Trainer that is related to athletic training.
- 3.13 Complies with applicable local, state and/or federal rules, requirements, regulations and/or laws related to mandatory reporting when identified as a "mandatory reporter" or "responsible employee."
- 3.14 Cooperates with BOC investigations into alleged illegal and/or unethical activities and any alleged violation(s) of a "BOC Standard of Professional Practice." Cooperation includes, but is not limited to, providing candid, honest and timely responses to requests for information and/or documentation.
- 3.15 Complies with all confidentiality and disclosure requirements of the BOC and existing law.
- 3.16 Does not endorse or advertise products or services with the use of, or by reference to, the BOC name without proper authorization.
- 3.17 Complies with all conditions and requirements arising from certification restrictions or disciplinary actions taken by the BOC, including, but not limited to, conditions and requirements contained in decision letters and consent agreements entered into pursuant to Section 4 of the "BOC Professional Practice and Discipline Guidelines and Procedures."
- 3.18 Fulfills financial obligations for all BOC billable goods and services provided.

### CODE 4: RESEARCH

The Athletic Trainer, specialist or applicant who engages in research:

- 4.1 Conducts research according to accepted ethical research and reporting standards established by public law, institutional procedures and/or the health professions.
- 4.2 Protects the human rights and well-being of research participants.
- 4.3 Conducts research activities intended to improve knowledge, practice, education, outcomes and/or public policy relative to the organization and administration of health systems and/or health care delivery.

### CODE 5: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Athletic Trainer, specialist or applicant:

- 5.1 Strives to serve the profession and the community in a manner that benefits society at large.
- 5.2 Advocates for appropriate health care to address societal health needs and goals.

### CODE 6: BUSINESS PRACTICES

The Athletic Trainer, specialist or applicant:

- 6.1 Does not participate in deceptive or fraudulent business practices.
- 6.2 Seeks remuneration only for those services rendered or supervised by an Athletic Trainer; does not charge for services not rendered.
- 6.2.1 Provides documentation to support recorded charges.
- 6.2.2 Ensures all fees are commensurate with services rendered.
- 6.3 Maintains adequate and customary professional liability insurance.
- 6.4 Acknowledges and mitigates conflicts of interest.