

Respiratory Therapist (RT)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does an RT do?

A: A Respiratory Therapist, often referred to as an RT, supports the cardiopulmonary (heart and lung) health of patients most often within acute care (hospital) and home health care environments. RTs use medical gases, medications and equipment to provide treatments that support airway management and health. RT is a direct patient care health profession.

Q: Is there a certification required to be an RT?

A: Employers require that individuals who work in the respiratory therapist profession be licensed through their state in order to practice. Students who complete the MSTC program take the CRT examination which allows them to become licensed in the state of Wisconsin. In addition, some employers require an RRT (Registered Respiratory Therapist) credential. Employers generally expect the RRT credential to be secured within six months to two years of employment if required. Students who complete the Mid-State Technical College program are eligible to take this test.

Q: What if I already have a certificate, diploma or degree?

A: Students who have already completed college level work may be eligible to transfer credits in for use in this program. Most commonly, students transfer in courses such as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology and some general education courses. If you already have an associate's degree or higher, you may be eligible to transfer in all your general education courses. Please note that some general education courses may still be required as they are program specific.

Q: Is there a waiting list for RT?

A: The RT program has a once a year start each fall semester. Generally, upon admission, students are assigned to the next fall semester for core classes. Occasionally, a longer wait exists. Please consult with admissions for specifics on the semester when core classes are available.

Q: Do I need to drive to Marshfield for this program?

A: The RT program's core classes are offered only on the Marshfield campus. General Education and some other support courses, such as Medical Terminology, can be completed online or at other campus locations.

Q: Where do RT students complete their clinical experience?

A: RT students complete clinical at a variety of healthcare agencies throughout central Wisconsin. Students should plan to travel, at their own expense, to clinical. Students may rotate clinical sites throughout the year in order to access a variety of clinical experiences. Clinical shifts may be days (6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), evenings (3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) or occasionally nights (11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.)

Q: Do I need to attend Smart Start (college orientation)?

A: Students are **highly encouraged** to attend MSTC's college orientation program known as Smart Start. Students learn how to use the college's technology including their student account (MyMSTC). Participants also learn how to register for classes and about many of the services available to students.

Q: Do I need to attend Program Orientation?

A: Program orientation for RT is completed by students online and is **required**. Approximately two to three months before you begin taking "core" program classes you will receive information on how to complete the online orientation. The program orientation provides another overview of the program and its curriculum. It also helps to ensure you understand the policies and procedures of the program.

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Q: What is clinical health work?

A: Students enrolling in health programs that require clinical experiences must document some information about their health including their record of immunizations for certain communicable diseases. This information is required by our clinical affiliates (sites where you will complete your clinical training). Students complete the required health work using a private vendor called Certified Background. There is an additional fee for this service that is the responsibility of the student.