

Respiratory Therapist (RT)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does a 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 a 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. Students who have completed one of the BIT certificates offered at MSTC can use those courses to meet the requirements of the associate degree.

Q: Why are there two steps to the admission process?

A: There are two steps in the admissions process for RT because we would like to allow students to begin taking some of their general courses as soon as possible. By completing step one of the admissions process and becoming conditionally accepted to the program, students may begin taking some of the general education courses as well as some of the first semester program courses that do not have pre-requisites (i.e. medical terminology). After being conditionally accepted (by completing Step 1), students may also be eligible for financial aid.

Q: What is the Intent to Enroll form?

A: The final requirement of the Step 2 admissions process is to complete the Intent to Enroll form. This lets the College know that you have completed all the Step 2 requirements and are ready to start your core program classes (those numbered 10-515-1xx). Be sure to attach any documents required as evidence of completing the Step 2 requirements with your form. Please note that some programs do not have spots immediately available in core classes.

Q: Is there a waiting list for RT?

A: The RT program has a once a year start each fall semester. Generally, upon completion of Step 2 of the admissions process 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

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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. Sometimes students receive a second invitation to participate in Smart Start when they complete their Intent to Enroll form and are officially accepted to their program. It is only necessary to participate in Smart Start one time.

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.

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). Several months prior to clinical, students participate in an online health work orientation that provides details on the information you will need to provide. If you would like to get started early on this process, you can begin to gather documentation of immunizations you received as a child starting at age 1.

Q: Is it true that health work can be expensive?

A: Documenting your immunization history is usually free as long as you know where you received your immunizations. Some students may have had their immunizations tracked within RECIN (Regional Early Childhood Immunization Network) that was implemented in central and northern Wisconsin in 1994. If you know you will be unable to provide documentation for immunizations, please be aware that you will need to have lab work (called titers) drawn to measure whether or not you are immune to the diseases. Titers are usually the most expensive part of the health work process so you are encouraged to locate the documents for your immunizations if at all possible. Unfortunately, health care agencies are unable to accept a history of the disease (i.e. having had the chicken pox at age 5) as evidence of immunity so a titer must be drawn for individuals who were not immunized due to a history of the disease. Although sometimes costly, health work is done to help ensure your safety and the safety of your patients. These documents will also be needed when you begin your career as a health profession so it is an investment in your future. Specific health work requirements will be presented to you the semester before you enroll in clinical.