Roadmap to Becoming a Respiratory Therapist

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Respiratory Care Program
Associates in Applied Health
Trident Technical Collage

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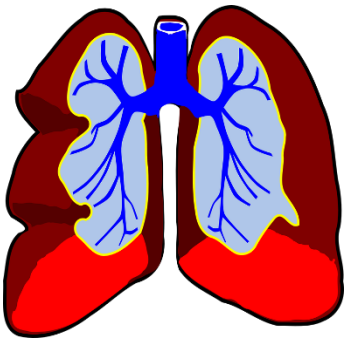

What Is a Respiratory Therapist?

A respiratory therapist is trained and skilled to assess, diagnose, and treat patients who have difficulty breathing. They work with people of all ages, from infants to the elderly, in conjunction with physicians and nurses to come up with treatment plans aimed at best helping restore as much natural breathing function as possible.

From initial interviewing and examining, to teaching patients how to administer treatments on their own, respiratory therapists are a critical component in helping people living with cardio-pulmonary disease and disorders.

Respiratory Therapist Job Description

A day in the life of a respiratory therapist can involve meeting and assessing new patients, as well as administering treatment to and following up with existing patients. RTs work in a variety of healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, physicians' offices, critical care units, neonatal intensive care units, ERs, and even in patients' homes. RTs should be detail-oriented, patient, compassionate, and possess stellar interpersonal skills as they interact with vulnerable patients who often need as much genuine comfort as they do medical treatment.

What training do RTs have?

- To become an RT in the United States, a person must earn a degree in respiratory care, pass credentialing exams, and obtain a state license. Most states also require RTs to take continuing education courses.

- To become a Respiratory Therapist, a person needs an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or master's degree in respiratory therapy.

- The Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care must support or accredit the respiratory therapy education program.
- Credentials for RTs are the CRT and the RRT.
- A person who gets a high-cut score will also receive the CRT credential. They will then be able to take the Clinical Simulation Examination (CSE) if they meet the eligibility requirements.
- After passing the TMC and CSE, a person receives the RRT credential

Respiratory Therapist Job Duties

Respiratory therapists have a wide range of duties throughout their days. A typical day or shift can consist of:

- Meeting with and examining patients who have pulmonary diseases, disorders, or complications
- Conducting, performing, and analyzing diagnostic and function tests to assess lung capacity and capability
- Working with physicians and nurses to create treatment plans
- Treating patients with aerosol medications and chest physiotherapy
- Evaluating progress of treatment
- Administering inhalants
- Documenting care by updating charts and records
- Operating mechanical ventilators and other machines
- Completing discharge planning by working with other members of the medical team
- Training patients how to administer treatments and use equipment on their own
- Recommending equipment and treatment for outpatient or home health
- Protecting patients (and other healthcare employees) through stringent protocols
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How Much Do Respiratory Therapists Make?

The average annual **respiratory therapist salary** in the U.S. is $61,330. Most respiratory therapists work full time, and they can work shifts during “normal” business hours, or they may work shifts during nights and weekends.

Where Do Respiratory Therapists Work?

There is opportunity for work in a multitude of medical settings in addition to hospitals, including outpatient and long-term nursing care facilities. Some RTs even travel to patients’ homes for home health visits. RTs can work long days, and often spend more hours on their feet than some other professions, but hours and work weeks can be flexible.

Regardless of where a job is, RTs will perform similar duties for patients. That said, certain settings may demand slightly different focuses on care. For example, RTs working in a nursing home will work with the elderly, whereas in a neonatal intensive care unit, the care for newborn and premature babies could look very different.

Respiratory Therapist Workplaces

Responsibilities can be based on where an RT works.

- **Hospitals -** By far the most common workplace environment for an RT, treating patients who have the most need. Therapists often are members of the code/rapid response team, assisting with endotracheal intubation, airway care, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and management of a trauma patient. Additionally, they perform pulmonary function testing to determine disease state and course of treatment, drawing blood samples and performing chest physiotherapy to remove mucus from the lungs. They can also administer therapeutic gases and administer medications for asthmatics and patients suffering from COPD. Finally, they institute, monitor, and maintain mechanical ventilators for patient on life support.
- **Pulmonary Rehab Clinics -** An outpatient respiratory therapy office is a place where patients with pulmonary complications can go for checkups, treatment, and breathing therapy. Respiratory therapists there could perform a range of duties, including counseling, educating, and rehabilitating to help patients breathe more easily.
- **In-Home Care -** RTs can do at-home care for patients who have a difficult time or are unable to get to a physical location. They can help train patients and families on machines and equipment for breathing assistance.
- **Sleep Disorder Centers -** Respiratory therapists who work at sleep disorder centers can help diagnose and prepare treatment plans for those with sleep disorders. They run in-lab sleep studies and work with patients who may have pulmonary disorders like obstructive sleep apnea.

TRIDENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Respiratory Care Program Associate in Applied Science

Applicants will be admitted to this program on a "first-qualified, first-admitted" basis. Applicants are considered qualified for admission to the next available class when they meet **all** TTC and program requirements. Classes begin **Summer Semester**.

Program Admission Requirements

In addition to meeting the college's general admission requirements, including submission of official high school and college transcripts, applicants must complete all of the following requirements:

1. Complete the **Health Sciences Application** through the TTC Portal. Application link can be found on the TTC Health Sciences webpage.

   Note: When the number of applicants qualifying at the same time exceeds space available in the program, admission will be prioritized according to the date and time that the Health Science application was received in the Admissions office.

2. Complete the following courses with a minimum grade of C:
   a. MAT 102 Intermediate Algebra or higher (or achieve qualifying equivalent math placement).
   b. BIO 210 Anatomy and Physiology I. This course must have been taken within five years of acceptance into the program.

3. Achieve a minimum cumulative 2.75 GPA at the time of acceptance and at date of entry into the program based on classes taken within five years of acceptance into the program.

4. Complete the Information Session on the TTC webpage for Respiratory Care and achieve a 100% score on the online quiz following the session to verify the information was reviewed and understood.

5. Submit the Statement of Completion form found on the Health Sciences webpage to HealthSciencesAdmissions@tridenttech.edu.

Accreditation - The Respiratory Care Program at Trident Technical College is housed on the Thornley Campus, awards an Associate in Applied Science, and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care, 1248 Harwood Road, Bedford, TX 76021- 4244; telephone: 817-283-2835; website http://www.coarc.com.

Steps to apply and be accepted for the Respiratory Care program at TTC:

1. Apply to the college as an *Associate in Science - Health Science Prep* major and meet all admission requirements for the college (ex. State-issued photo ID and proof of high school graduation/GED)
2. Request that official college and military transcripts be sent to the TTC Admissions office from all of the institutions you previously attended. These transcripts will be used to review academic history, potential transfer credits, and to help calculate your GPA for the Respiratory Care application. After you submit all official college transcripts, your credits will be evaluated for transfer credit by the Registrar's office.
3. You will then have access to the online health sciences application found here: https://hsapp.tridenttech.edu/HealthApp/ You can complete that and request the Respiratory Care program.
4. Your application will be reviewed and you will be sent a list of your missing requirements, including
    a. MAT 102 and BIO 210 with grades of C or higher
        i. You have the option to request a math placement test. If you score high enough, you could waive the MAT 102 requirement.
    b. Online information session
    c. GPA requirement – you need a 2.75 five-year cumulative GPA, which is calculated using only courses completed at your most recently attended institution
    d. For general information regarding the prerequisites required prior to entering the Respiratory Care program, you can review the "Program Admission Requirements" section of the Respiratory Care program's course catalog webpage.
5. While you work on meeting your prerequisites, your application will be held in pending status.
6. Upon completion of your prerequisites, you can submit a statement of completion form. This will begin your review for acceptance into the next available class. *The next available class for the Respiratory Care program is currently **Summer 2023**. This is subject to change due to a limited number of seats each year and as students are accepted in accordance with TTC's Health Science Admissions policy of "first-qualified, first-admitted."*

			Lecture	Lab	Credit
PREREQUISITES					
BIO 210		Anatomy and Physiology I	3	3	4
					4
First Semester – Summer					
ENG 101		English Composition I	3	0	3
AHS 104		Medical Vocabulary/Anatomy	3	0	3
RES 110		Cardiopulmonary Science I	2	0	2
RES 121		Respiratory Skills I	3.5	1.5	4
					12
Second Semester – Fall					
BIO 211		Anatomy and Physiology II	3	3	4
RES 131	F1	Respiratory Skills II	3.5	1.5	4
RES 111	F1	Pathophysiology	2	0	2
RES 246	F2	Respiratory Pharmacology	2	0	2
					12
Third Semester – Spring					
RES 150		Clinical Applications I	0	12	4
RES 112	S1	Cardiopulmonary Pathophysiology	3	0	**3**
RES 140	S1	Introduction to Mechanical Ventilation	1.5	1.5	2
RES 247	S2	Advanced Respiratory Pharmacology	2	0	2
RES 243	S2	Mechanical Ventilation II	1.5	1.5	2
					13
Fourth Semester – Summer					
PSY 201		General Psychology	3	0	3
Humanities Elective		See College Catalog for approved humanities	3	0	3
RES 152		Clinical Applications II	0	9	3
RES 210		Cardiopulmonary Science II	3	0	3
RES 220		Hemodynamic Monitoring	1	0	1
					13
Fifth Semester – Fall					
RES 253		Advanced Clinical Studies I	0	18	6
BIO 225		Microbiology	3	3	4
RES 142	F1	Basic Pediatric Care	2	0	2
RES 205	F2	Neonatal Respiratory Care	2	0	**2**
					14
Sixth Semester – Spring					
RES 254		Advanced Clinical Studies II	0	21	7
RES 235	S1	Respiratory Diagnostics	3.5	1.5	4
RES 249	S2	Comprehensive Applications	2	0	2
					13
		TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS			**81**

Course Progression: Once accepted into the program, students must earn a grade of C or better in each course and earn a grade of satisfactory on professional development evaluations in order to progress to the next semester.

Please note: All Health Sciences students are required to have drug screenings, criminal background checks, and a current Student Health Record with immunizations and titers. For more information, students may contact their Respiratory Care advisor. NOTE: Falsification of any information submitted will make a student ineligible for admission to or continuation in the Respiratory Care Program.


Respiratory Therapists at MUSC have opportunities to work in:
* Research
* Burn Center- only one in SC
* Neuro ICU
* Adult & Pediatric Transplant Centers
* Adult & Pediatric Level 1 Trauma Center
* Level IV NICU
* ECMO Center of Excellence
* SMT Team to care for patients with special medical needs
* Pulmonary Function
* Sleep Medicine
* Bronchoscopy
* 3 hospitals all in the Charleston downtown area (2 Adult and 1 Children's)
* Clinical Ladder program to increase rates of pay RT1, RT2, RT3, Shift Lead
* Robust leadership pathways to help develop future RT leaders
* Shared Governance structure within the depts.
RT Clinical Practice at MUSC includes:
* Inhaled Veletri, Nitric, Heliox
* A-Line Insertion
* Attendance at high-risk deliveries
* 83 Bed Level IV NICU
* Only Pediatric Cardiac ICU in SC and #1 in the Nation
* PICU # 1 in the Nation for clinical outcomes
* ECMO Team (by application)
* Assistance with both bedside tracheostomies and bronchoscopies
* 9 Different critical care areas including the ER and Chest Pain Center
* Over 120 Adult critical care beds
MUSC Health
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