**Frequently-Asked Questions D. Merriman, February 2017**

**What is Radiologic Science?** This is a catch-all term for healthcare careers that employ “ionizing radiation”, including x-ray energy. You can read more about ionizing radiation at [www.who.int/ionizing\_radiation/about/what\_is\_ir/en/](http://www.who.int/ionizing_radiation/about/what_is_ir/en/) . Ionizing radiation can be used to create images of bone, air, fluid, and soft tissue, as well as foreign objects such as metal. Ionizing radiation can also damage tissue, accidentally or on purpose. Thus, imaging-making *and* controlled tissue damage are *both* aspects of radiologic science. They just have different goals.

Image-making using x-rays: This career is termed Radiologic Technology and the method is properly termed “radiography” (“graph” means “image”).

Controlled tissue damage using x-rays: These careers are termed Radiation Therapy and Medical Dosimetry. The targeted tissues are tumors.

Because the scientific basis is the same for both aspects of radiologic science, *both* share a common licensure agency, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists ([www.arrt.org](http://www.arrt.org)). Since radiation can be harmful to the body no matter what its intended use, the medical professionals using it must be well-educated, detail-oriented persons.

You can learn more about “Tech vs. Therapist” at [www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home.htm).

**So, my UW Oshkosh degree in Radiologic Science is kind of the same as Radiologic Technology?** Yes. We call it Radiologic Science because that is the name chosen by the national organization.

For more information on the Rad Tech career, check out [www.asrt.org/main/careers/careers-in-radiologic-technology](http://www.asrt.org/main/careers/careers-in-radiologic-technology) and [www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/radiologic-technologists.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/radiologic-technologists.htm) The national organization of “Rad Techs” is the ASRT ([www.asrt.org](http://www.asrt.org)) and the Wisconsin organization is the WSRT ([www.wsrt.net](http://www.wsrt.net)).

**Can I go into Radiation Therapy with a Radiologic Science degree from UW Oshkosh?** Yes, but it will require one additional year of education after your UW Oshkosh degree, and that additional year will have to be outside of Wisconsin. Let me explain.

The UW Oshkosh BSRS program produces licensed Rad Techs: image-makers.

It’s not unusual for a Rad Tech to pursue a 1-year “post-baccalaureate certificate” in Radiation Therapy, in order to be qualified for BOTH professions.

You can search for Radiation Therapy programs, including “post-baccalaureate certificate” programs, at <https://portal.jrcertaccreditation.org/accredited-educational-programs/search>. At this time (2017), the nearest Therapy certificate program is in Omaha, NE.

**Wait a minute. Can’t I do Radiation Therapy in Wisconsin, at UW La Crosse?**  Yes, you can, but that’s not a 1-year certificate program. Instead, it’s a 4-year BS program. You would do it *instead* of the UW Oshkosh Radiologic Science 4-year BS program. See <http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/radiationtherapy/radiationtherapybs/>

**Is Radiologic Science the same as Sonography?** No, because Sonography uses sound waves instead of x-rays to create medical images. UW Oshkosh *does not* have a program in sonography. To learn more about sonography, see [www.ardms.org/](http://www.ardms.org/).

**Is there a Rad Sci Department at UW Oshkosh?** No. The Rad Sci degree is offered by UWO’s Biology Department.

**What exactly are x-rays?** X-rays are a small part of the larger “electromagnetic spectrum” of radiant energy that is part of the physical universe. For an introduction to the electromagnetic spectrum, check out <http://missionscience.nasa.gov/ems/index.html> (scroll down to read about x-rays). Stars (including our Sun) emit x-rays, but we also have machines that can generate them. Students typically learn about x-rays in a Physics course, and all radiologic science professionals take at least one Physics course at some point in their college education. For more on the medical use of x-rays, see [www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/x-ray/basics/definition/prc-20009519](http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/x-ray/basics/definition/prc-20009519).

**I see options on other campuses for Associate’s degrees in medical imaging, which cut my time in college in half. Why should I even consider a 4-year Bachelor’s program like UW Oshkosh’s?** For a long time, you didn’t even have to have an Associate’s degree to be a Rad Tech, but that changed in 2015 when the Associate’s degree became the bare minimum credential for all new trainees in the profession.

The main reason to consider going beyond the Associate’s degree is advancement once you are out of school and working. There *are* step-up careers in Radiologic Technology but, to pursue them, you must already have a Bachelor’s degree. One such career is the Radiologist Assistant, who functions something like a “Physician Assistant” in relation to a doctor. You can read more about this at [www.asrt.org/main/careers/radiologist-assistant](https://www.asrt.org/main/careers/radiologist-assistant)

You may not think about advancing in the profession now, as a college student, but that may well change after you’ve worked for a few years. Under the unanimous advisement of several radiography schools, UW Oshkosh decided to provide the Bachelor’s so that our graduates have the most options open to them.

**Why is an “accredited” program so important?** An accredited education program has, by definition, subjected itself to expert, in-depth review of its practices and outcomes. In other words, it has undergone formal quality control with public announcement of the results. This doesn’t happen just once, either. Accreditation is renewed every few years, too, so it’s not a one-and-done evaluation.

Accreditation is not limited to education programs. Hospitals, nursing homes, and medical laboratories all undergo accreditation. Quality control is very important in healthcare.

Should an education program ever lose its accreditation, its current students find themselves with damaged or worthless degrees.

This 2009 article in *Diverse Education* describes a lawsuit brought by nursing students when their school lost its accreditation, despite warnings: <http://diverseeducation.com/article/13264/>.

This 2015 article in the *Wall Street Journal* highlights the importance of honest accreditation for any investment in college: [www.wsj.com/articles/colleges-seek-workarounds-to-keep-their-seal-of-approval-1436206962](http://www.wsj.com/articles/colleges-seek-workarounds-to-keep-their-seal-of-approval-1436206962)

Radiologic science education programs are accredited by the JRCERT, the premier agency for the profession ([www.jrcert.org](http://www.jrcert.org)). ALL of UW Oshkosh’s affiliated clinical programs are fully accredited by the JRCERT. You can easily identify appropriately-accredited programs using this online search tool: <https://portal.jrcertaccreditation.org/accredited-educational-programs/search>

Pre-clinical education at UW Oshkosh itself is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission ([www.hlcommission.org/](http://www.hlcommission.org/)). We are undergoing re-accreditation during 2017, in fact.

**How can I decide if Radiologic Science is right for me?** Read as much as you can about the profession, especially at [www.asrt.org](http://www.asrt.org). If you ever need an x-ray or scan, talk to the professional who is carrying out the scans about how they chose their profession and what they have learned while “being one”. In addition, there is NO SUBSTITUTE for job-shadowing a professional (or two!) to see what the career truly entails. You may be able to arrange Rad Tech job shadows as a High School student through your local hospital or clinic. Be ready to provide a vaccination history, sign a confidentiality agreement, and pass a background check.

In addition, here are a few situations that mean Rad Sci is a BAD fit for you:

* Cannot meet certain physical standards imposed by the clinical programs (such as lifting, bending, vision, hearing).
* Cannot pass a drug screen.
* Cannot pass a criminal background check, due to certain criminal convictions or pending charges.
  + To find out if your criminal record is going to be a problem, see [www.arrt.org/ethics/](http://www.arrt.org/ethics/) and arrange for a “Pre-Application Review”. You should do this during freshman year, because that will give you time to choose another major if you discover you are ineligible.
* Cannot handle contact with vomit, urine, blood, feces, *etc*.
* Cannot earn sufficient college grades in math, science, and communication.
* Have misconduct record from college (*e.g.* cheating).

**Can anyone declare the Rad Sci major, or is there a selection process?** “Yes” to both. Anyone can *declare* the major but, since there is competitive admission to clinicals, there is *also* a selection process. Plus, see the disqualifiers listed directly above.

**I don’t have a C.N.A. and/or experience caring for patients. Is it really necessary for this major?** Currently, you can *apply* to clinicals without these, but you *we’ve never had a student who lacked the CNA credential get accepted* to a hospital affiliate. Moreover, *those without job experience have been told to re-apply* next year.

Just as importantly, if you don’t like the close contact with patients that comes with a C.N.A. job, you won’t like being a Rad Tech, either. So it’s in your best interest to do this sort of work early enough in life to be sure it’s the right path for you.

**I’m definitely interested in UW Oshkosh’s Rad Sci program, but it’s really important for me to get done with my Bachelor’s degree on the 2+2 schedule. How do I make that happen?**

* Get as many AP or CAPP credits as you can while in high school.
* Get your C.N.A. credential while in high school and work a C.N.A. job the summer before you start college.
* Once enrolled at UW Oshkosh as a new freshman, email [merrimad@uwosh.edu](mailto:merrimad@uwosh.edu) to be added to the Rad Sci D2L so that you can access the Handbook for Enrolled Students. Appendix III of that Handbook gives the ideal 2+2 schedule. With skill and luck, you can do it.
* Register for classes on TitanWeb the very first moment you are able to (your registration day/time is on your STAR).
* Plan to complete at least 15 credits per Fall or Spring semester. This minimum 15 credits should include one 3 credit “Gen Ed” course per Interim (3 week accelerated session; no extra tuition).
* Plan to take *at least* 4 credits during the summer session between Freshman and Sophomore year. Extra tuition applies, but it’s worth it if it saves you a year.
* Be prepared to work very hard and to limit your extracurricular obligations (including a job, athletics, trips home to see family, *etc*.) so that you can protect your GPA. Don’t get such low grades that you have to repeat a class, because that will make a 2+2 impossible to follow.

**What happens during clinicals?** Most of our clinical students need to move out of the Fox Valley to attend clinicals, so relocation is likely. During clinicals, you are still a full-time UW Oshkosh student, so you still qualify for financial aid and you still pay tuition via your UW Oshkosh student account. Tuition varies depending on the clinical program but, at this time, is not very different from regular UW Oshkosh tuition. You can still access UW Oshkosh student services during clinicals.

Clinical classes will include lectures and labs like you experienced in pre-clinicals on the UW Oshkosh campus, but will also include clinical experiences with patients. At first, you will be closely supervised, but more and more independence will be expected as time goes on. You will be given “typical” exams along with lots of “practical” exams (hands-on, with a patient). Toward the end of your 2-years of clinicals, you will be prepared for your national board exam known as the Registry.

A full description of the most recent version of the national clinical curriculum for Rad Techs can be found at: [www.asrt.org/docs/educators/ED\_Curr\_BSRSRvsnDrft\_052312.pdf](http://www.asrt.org/docs/educators/ED_Curr_BSRSRvsnDrft_052312.pdf)