

Prospective Students' Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Prospective Students

Q: Who is the JRCERT?

For more than 40 years, the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) has worked to promote excellence in education and evaluate quality and safety in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry educational programs. As of March 1, 2014, the JRCERT accredits 725 radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry educational programs in the United States, District of Columbia, and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Alaska is the only state that currently does not have a JRCERT-accredited educational program. Educational programs are sponsored by institutions of higher education (i.e., colleges and universities), for-profit, private institutions, medical facilities (i.e., medical centers and hospitals), and the military.

The JRCERT was first recognized by the U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1977 [in cooperation with the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA)] for its accreditation of radiologic technology programs and has maintained continual recognition by the United States Department of Education (USDE) as a reliable authority for the establishment of educational standards in radiologic sciences (eventually clarified). The JRCERT is the only agency recognized by the USDE for the accreditation of traditional and distance delivery educational programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry.

The JRCERT is also recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The JRCERT has been continually recognized by CHEA since 2004. "CHEA is a national advocate and institutional voice for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations."¹ The JRCERT is the only agency recognized by CHEA for the accreditation of traditional and distance delivery educational programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry.

The mission of the JRCERT is to promote excellence in education and evaluate the quality and safety of patient care through the accreditation of educational programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry.

Q. What is accreditation?

Accreditation is the process of voluntary, external peer-review, in which a private, non-governmental agency grants public recognition to an institution or specialized program of study that meets established qualifications and complies with educational standards. The USDE maintains "the goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality"²

Accreditation in the United States has been around for more than 100 years and evolved from concerted efforts of institutions of higher education's desire to protect public health and safety, develop more uniform educational practices, admission standards, and develop transfer of credit policies and equivalencies for institutions across the nation.

There are two basic types of accreditation in the US, *institutional* and *specialized* (programmatic). *Institutional accreditation* typically applies to the entire institution as a whole, that is, how the entire institution assesses the overall quality and integrity of itself. There is no direct review or evaluation at a specific program level. Institutional

¹ CHEA, CHEA-At-A-Glance, http://www.chea.org/pdf/chea_glance_2006.pdf

² USDE, Overview of Accreditation, <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation.html#Overview>

accreditation is primarily performed by two (2) types of organizations. *Regional accrediting agencies* are private, nongovernmental agencies that accredit institutions within specific geographical regions of the United States and its commonwealths and territories. Each regional organization is named after the area it predominately serves (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western). *National accrediting agencies* are usually either faith-based or career-based. *National Faith-Related agencies* accredit institutions across the nation and review religiously-affiliated or doctrinally-based institutions. These institutions are mostly degree-granting and non-profit. *National Career-Related agencies* also operate across the nation and review predominately non-degree-granting for-profit private career institutions. Many are single-purpose institutions that focus on education in business, information technology, or healthcare.³

Specialized or programmatic accreditation applies to programs, departments, or schools that are part of a larger institution. The accrediting agency's review is focused on the educational standards for a specific discipline to assure a well-structured, comprehensive curriculum is designed and implemented, a thorough self-evaluation or quality improvement plan is in place, qualified faculty are teaching within the program(s), and assessment of student learning at the programmatic level.

The USDE provides a list of nine (9) functions of accreditation⁴:

1. Verifying that an institution or program meets established standards;
2. Assisting prospective students in identifying acceptable institutions;
3. Assisting institutions in determining the acceptability of transfer credits;
4. Helping to identify institutions and programs for the investment of public and private funds;
5. Protecting an institution against harmful internal or external pressure;
6. Creating goals for self-improvement of weaker programs and stimulating a general raising of standards among educational institutions;
7. Involving the faculty and staff comprehensively in institutional evaluation and planning;
8. Establishing criteria for professional certification and licensure and for upgrading courses offering such preparation; and
9. Providing one of several considerations used as a basis for determining eligibility for Federal assistance.

For additional information regarding accreditation in the United States, you may want to search information on the [USDE](#) or [CHEA](#) websites. Click [here](#) to view a video produced by CHEA, titled "Types of Accreditation – What's the Difference" to help the public and prospective students understanding the various types of accreditation.

Q. Where do I go to find out if an institution is accredited?

To learn more about which institutions are accredited go to the [Database of Institutions and Programs Accredited by Recognized U.S. Accrediting Organizations](#) on CHEA's main website, www.chea.org. Or, go to the USDE's *Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs* at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx>. Either database will also include contact information for any specialized or programmatic accreditors that accredit programs within the specific institution.

³ CHEA, Fact Sheet #1, Profile of Accreditation, http://www.chea.org/pdf/fact_sheet_1_profile.pdf

⁴ USDE, Accreditation in the U.S., http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg2.html

Q. Why does JRCERT accreditation matter?

The JRCERT is the only organization recognized by USDE and CHEA to accredit traditional and distance delivery educational programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry. JRCERT accreditation of an educational program provides students, as graduates, assurance that the educational program will provide them with the requisite knowledge, skills, and values to competently perform the range of professional responsibilities expected by potential employers nationwide. It also assures they will be eligible for licensure in each of the 50 states. By requiring programs to teach the entire curriculum developed by the professional society, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT), it also assures students will have the foundation knowledge to continue to develop as professionals in the various fields within the radiation sciences.

You should review the JRCERT module that focuses on the benefits of programmatic accreditation prior to beginning your educational endeavor. It is located under the [Students](#) link on our main webpage, www.jrcert.org. CHEA has published a pamphlet and video to help you in making an informed decision before enrolling in any institution or program. You may want to read [Ask Before You Decide: Accreditation Matters](#) or view [Accreditation and Its Value to You](#) to aid in your decision making.

Q. Where can I find a list of all JRCERT-accredited educational programs?

You can search for current JRCERT-accredited educational programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and/or medical dosimetry under the [Find a Program - Accredited Programs](#) link on our main webpage, www.jrcert.org. For programs that are currently in the initial accreditation stage, search under the [Find a Program - Applicant Programs](#) link.

Q. Are all programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance and medical dosimetry JRCERT-accredited?

No. Due to the voluntary nature of accreditation, there are still just over 100 programs in radiography and radiation therapy that are not JRCERT-accredited. Magnetic resonance educational programs vary widely across the nation. Many are certificate or certificate of completion tracks within radiography programs. Often they focus on providing the registered technologist, who perhaps has clinical experience, with the requisite didactic knowledge needed to prepare for the post-primary certification examination. There are currently several routes to sit for the certification examination administered by the Medical Dosimetrist Certification Board (MDCB). “In 2017, candidates applying for certification will be required to have a Bachelor of Science degree and have graduated from a formal dosimetry program accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) or foreign equivalent”⁵

Q. If I complete a JRCERT-accredited educational program will I be able to take the certifying examinations offered by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) for radiography, radiation therapy, or magnetic resonance; or the certification examination administered by the Medical Dosimetry Certification Board (MDCB) for medical dosimetry?

Yes, a graduate of a JRCERT-accredited educational program in radiography, radiation therapy, or magnetic resonance is eligible to sit for the applicable ARRT certification examination, or in the case of medical dosimetry, for the MDCB

⁵ MDCB, FAQs About The New Routes To Eligibility, http://www.mdcb.org/pdfs/FAQS_NEW%20STANDARDS_2011.5.26.pdf

certification examination. For a complete list of eligibility requirements from either agency go to www.arrt.org or www.mdcb.org.

Q. There is a radiography (radiation therapy or magnetic resonance) program near me that is not JRCERT-accredited; however, they state that graduates are eligible to take the ARRT certification examination based on their regional accreditation. Is this true?

It is true. The ARRT determines the eligibility criteria for their primary certifications and requires candidates to have completed a formal educational program accredited by a mechanism acceptable to the ARRT. The ARRT defines *acceptable mechanism* as one that is administered by an agency that:

- is recognized by CHEA and/or USDE as an accrediting agency; and, if such recognition is as a national institutional and specialized accrediting body, has a scope that includes radiologic technology or allied health; and
- evaluates education using standards endorsed by ARRT.

For further information regarding ARRT Standards for the Endorsement of Accrediting Agencies for Radiography, Nuclear Medicine Technology, Radiation Therapy, Sonography, and Magnetic Resonance Imaging, go to <https://www.arrt.org/Education/Accreditation>.

Will I be eligible to sit for the certifying examinations offered by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) for radiography, radiation therapy, or magnetic resonance; or for the certification examination administered by the Medical Dosimetry Certification Board (MDCB) for medical dosimetry if I graduate from a program housed in a nationally or regionally accredited institution?

The ARRT does recognize other accrediting agencies in addition to the JRCERT; therefore, you should contact the ARRT, www.arrt.org, directly to confirm your eligibility to sit for an ARRT certifying examination in radiography, radiation therapy, or magnetic resonance following graduation from a program operating under national or regional institutional accreditation.

To apply for the MDCB certification examination for medical dosimetry under Route 1, you must have graduated from a JRCERT-accredited medical dosimetry program of at least 12 months in length.

Please be aware that there are alternate routes of eligibility for the MDCB credentialing examination that are further outlined at www.mdcb.com. Furthermore, the MDCB recently announced new standards for certification in medical dosimetry designed to elevate the dosimetry profession. A listing of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) can be found on the MDCB website.

This institution states that their program is programmatically accredited due to it being housed in a regionally (or nationally) accredited institution. Is this true?

No, only radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, or medical dosimetry educational programs accredited by JRCERT can state that they are programmatically accredited. As mentioned earlier, the JRCERT is the only organization recognized by USDE and CHEA to accredit traditional and distance delivery educational programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry. While the program might be housed in an institution that is regionally (or nationally) accredited, it is NOT programmatically accredited and you are not a graduate of a programmatically-accredited program. For clarification, you might want to contact the office for further discussion.

Feel free to call the JRCERT office at (312) 704-5300 to speak with an Accreditation Specialist who can explain this in more detail.

Q. Why should I select an educational program that is accredited?

Graduation from a JRCERT-accredited program assures:

- your chosen program has met a standard of excellence established by the profession to provide the knowledge, skills, and professional values required to deliver safe, high quality diagnostic or therapeutic radiologic services to patients.
- you will be eligible for employment in all 50 states – in some states, only graduates of JRCERT-accredited programs are eligible for state licensure and employment. Additionally, most Veterans Administration (VA) facilities and many other facilities will only employ graduates of JRCERT-accredited programs.
- you will enhance your eligibility for admission into modality-specific (i.e., computed tomography, radiation therapy, nuclear medicine, ultrasound, etc.) and/or higher degree programs in the radiologic sciences.

Q. The school that I graduated from was JRCERT-accredited for 18 of the 21 months that I attended before they chose to voluntarily withdraw their accreditation. Can I still state that I am a graduate of a JRCERT-accredited program since for the majority of my time in school they were JRCERT-accredited?

No. Since the program voluntarily withdrew their JRCERT accreditation prior to your graduation, you did not graduate from a JRCERT-accredited program. Unfortunately, you may now have difficulty in gaining licensure in all 50 states, you may also not be qualified to seek employment at certain facilities that have specifications in their job descriptions to only hire individuals who have graduated from a JRCERT-accredited educational program; you may also not meet the admission criteria for certain modality-specific schools.

Q. I recently tried to seek employment at a Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center near my hometown and found out that I did not meet the criteria for employment due to my educational program not being JRCERT-accredited. What should I do next?

There's not a lot that you can do; however, your voice needs to be heard. You should follow-up with your former program director, dean, vice-president, and/or president to register your dissatisfaction that the educational program did not prepare you for work in the entire profession. Urge the program and institutional officials to seek JRCERT accreditation so that graduates are eligible to gain licensure in all 50 states, work at institutions that have very specific job descriptions, and meet admission criteria for modality-specific schools that require applicants to be graduates from JRCERT-accredited programs.

Q. Does the JRCERT rank educational programs?

The JRCERT does not rank or “grade” educational programs. Programs are evaluated and ultimately awarded accreditation according to their compliance with the ***Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Radiography, Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Radiation Therapy, Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Magnetic Resonance, or Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Medical Dosimetry (STANDARDS)***. The **STANDARDS** are used to assess and evaluate a program’s ability to meet criteria in content areas such as: Integrity, Resources, Curriculum and Academic Practices, Health and Safety, Assessment, and Institutional and Programmatic Data.

Q. I am currently a registered radiographer and radiation therapist who graduated from a hospital-based certificate program both in radiography and radiation therapy. I'm interested in obtaining my bachelor's degree in radiographic sciences; however, I notice that the program I am considering is not listed on your database as currently accredited at the baccalaureate level. Could you explain this?

The JRCERT only accredits radiography, radiation therapy, and medical dosimetry educational programs at the entry-level for professional practice. We do not accredit advanced degree programs; those geared toward the working technologist or therapist who is seeking a higher degree to strengthen their educational foundation, however, you should make certain that the program is housed in an institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by United States Department of Education (USED) or Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). You can search for institutions at the following accreditation agencies' websites.

Regional Accrediting Organizations -

[Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#): Accredits institutions in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

[New England Association of Schools and Colleges](#): Accredits institutions in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

[North Central Association of Colleges and Schools \(the Higher Learning Commission\)](#): Accredits institutions in Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

[Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#): Accredits institutions in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

[Southern Association of Colleges and Schools \(Commission on Colleges\)](#): Accredits institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

[Western Association of Schools and Colleges \(Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges\)](#): Accredits institutions in California, Hawaii, the territories of Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and the Pacific Basin.

[Western Association of Schools and Colleges \(Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities\)](#): Accredits institutions in California, Hawaii, the territories of Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and the Pacific Basin.

National Career-Related Accrediting Organizations –

[Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools](#)

[Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges](#)

[Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools](#)

[Council on Occupational Education](#)