

Alphabet soup

A Guide to Organizations in Radiologic Technology

Ingredients: **ASRT, JRCNMT, ARRT, JRCERT, ARDMS, AAMD, NMTCB, MDCB, SNMMI-TS, SVU** and many more...

Many organizations play key roles in the professional lives of radiologic technologists. From evaluating the quality of the education programs they attend to upholding the standards of the profession they've chosen, these organizations provide assistance and support throughout every phase of a radiologic technologist's career.

This brochure was developed by the ASRT as a guide to the different types of organizations that serve the radiologic science community, focusing on their responsibilities to the radiologic technologist as well as their relationships to one another. It also introduces the reader to many of these groups, helping make the "alphabet soup" of radiologic science organizations a little easier to swallow.

The three primary types of organizations that influence an R.T.'s professional life are **accreditation** agencies, **certification** bodies and **membership** associations. Working in cooperation with one another as well as with educators, employers and government agencies, these groups help define the parameters of radiologic technology. Inside, you'll learn more about the roles of each of these types of organizations.





Accreditation Agencies

Accreditation agencies protect radiologic science students by ensuring that the education programs they attend meet standardized criteria. Typically, an accreditation agency reviews a program’s admissions policy,

curriculum, academic practices, faculty qualifications and other criteria before deciding whether to grant approval. Although accreditation is voluntary, most of the certification bodies in radiologic technology have made graduation from an accredited program a prerequisite for taking a certification examination.

Education programs in radiologic technology are housed in universities, community colleges, hospitals, military hospitals and other institutions. They may award a two-year certificate, a two-year associate degree or a four-year baccalaureate degree. Some programs offer postbaccalaureate certificates and master’s degrees. Generally, programs must follow a standardized curriculum to earn accredited status. The curriculum usually is developed by the profession’s membership associations in consultation with educators and managers.

There are two types of accrediting agencies — institutional accreditation agencies and programmatic accreditation agencies. Institutional agencies, such as the Middle States Association of Colleges, accredit degree-granting colleges and universities. These agencies examine an institution as a whole rather than specific education programs within the institution.

Programmatic agencies accredit only the specific programs they are authorized to evaluate. The three programmatic accreditation agencies that evaluate the majority of radiologic science programs are the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT), the Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT) and the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS).

The accreditation process benefits patients as well as students, because it helps ensure that future practitioners graduate with a standard level of competency.



Certification Bodies

In many ways, certification bodies are the gatekeepers of radiologic technology. Using a standardized examination process, they identify the individuals who are qualified to enter the profession.

Some certification bodies also administer “postprimary” examinations, designed to demonstrate a technologist’s ability to specialize in a particular area of practice.

Programs Accredited in 2022

Accredited by JRCERT

Radiography Programs	610
Radiation Therapy Programs	72
Medical Dosimetry Programs	16
Magnetic Resonance Programs	13

Accredited by JRCNMT

Nuclear Medicine Programs	71
-------------------------------------	----

Accredited by JRC-DMS

**Diagnostic Medical Sonography	646
---	-----

**Source: Organization website statistics, April 2022*

***Includes concentrations and add-on tracks*

To be eligible to take a certification examination, an individual usually must graduate from an accredited education program and fulfill specific clinical competencies. However, a few certification bodies allow individuals to take a certification examination after they have completed a certain amount of clinical experience, regardless of whether they graduated from a formal education program in the field.

Examination material is developed by “item writers,” volunteer radiologic technologists, educators and administrators specially trained to develop examination questions. Questions then are assembled into examination forms by exam committees. The questions usually are based on specific competencies that an entry-level radiologic technologist should be able to perform.

The three primary certification bodies are the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT), the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) and the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB). More than 330,000 radiologic technologists are registered with the ARRT, an estimated 90,000 sonographers and other sonography practitioners are certified by the ARDMS and an estimated 23,000 nuclear medicine technologists are certified by the NMTCB. Some other certification bodies in the profession include the Medical Dosimetrist Certification Board (MDCB), Cardiovascular Credentialing International (CCI) and American Board of Imaging Informatics (ABII).

Certification bodies award credentials to individuals who pass the examinations they administer. For example, a person who passes the ARRT certification examination in radiography earns the right to use the credential “R.T.(R)”

while a person who passes the ARDMS certification examination in diagnostic medical sonography is awarded the credential “RDMS.” A list of the primary certification examinations and credentials is provided in the box to the right.

After radiologic technologists pass their certification examinations, their certificates are “registered” by the awarding certification body. Registrations must be renewed annually, and most certification bodies require technologists to earn continuing education credits to maintain their registrations. Each certification body sets its own CE requirements. The ARRT, which registers the majority of radiologic technologists, mandates that its registrants earn 24 CE credits every two years.

Certification is a voluntary process, but many employers hire only certified technologists. In addition, many states recognize national certification as one of the qualifications for licensure as a radiologic technologist.



Membership Associations

According to the American Society of Association Executives, 70 percent of American adults belong to at least one association, club or society, many of them related to their professional interests or careers. Associations inform, represent and lead their members, but they also provide them with something intangible: they offer their members a sense of belonging by creating a community of individuals with similar needs, desires and interests.

In the radiologic sciences, dozens of professional associations provide their members with everything from publications and conferences to practice standards and codes of ethics. These associations work closely with the profession’s accreditation agencies and certification bodies to develop curricula, establish entry-level standards and promote radiologic technology as a career.

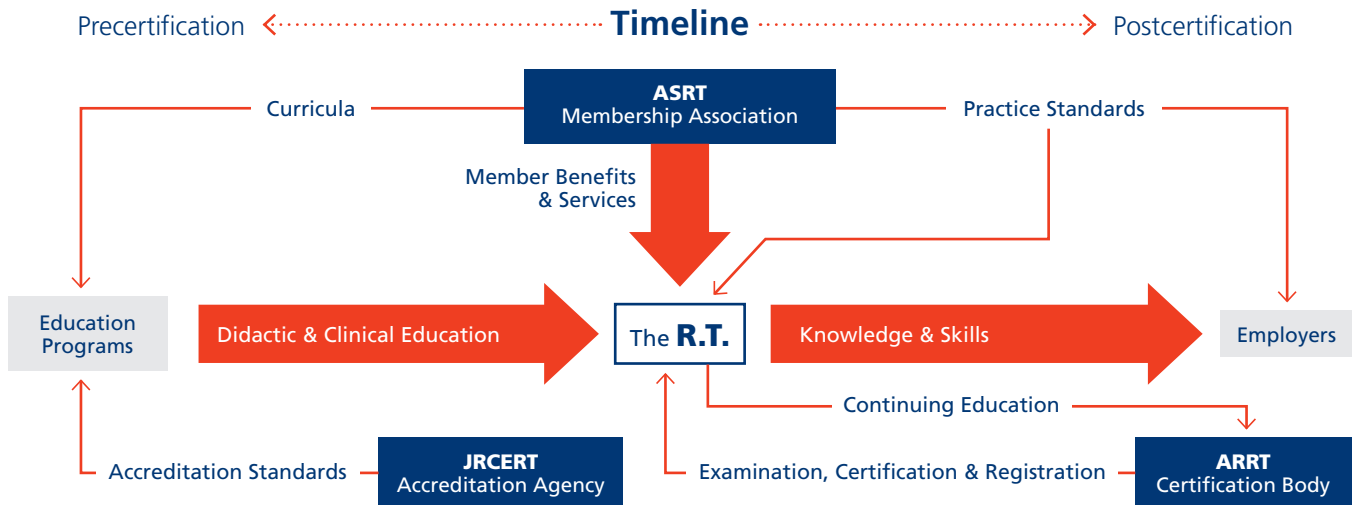
Many radiologic science associations also provide their members with continuing education materials, assist them with career and practice issues, and monitor state and federal legislation that affects the profession.

Most of the membership associations in the radiologic sciences are governed by officers elected by the membership. Most also appoint individual members to serve on committees or task forces to complete the work of the association. Some of the larger associations also hire professional staff to perform daily operations such as maintaining the society’s database, publishing its journals or organizing its educational conferences.

Examples of Credentialing Pathways

Administered by ARRT	Credential Awarded
Primary Examinations	
Radiography	R.T.(R)
Radiation Therapy	R.T.(T)
Nuclear Medicine Technology	R.T.(N)
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	R.T.(MR)
Sonography	R.T.(S)
Postprimary Examinations	
Computed Tomography	(CT)
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	(MR)
Mammography	(M)
Sonography	(S)
Breast Sonography	(BS)
Vascular Sonography	(VS)
Cardiac-Interventional	(CI)
Vascular-Interventional	(VI)
Bone Densitometry	(BD)
Advanced Practice	
Registered Radiologist Assistant	R.R.A.
Administered by ARDMS	
Diagnostic Medical Sonography	RDMS
Vascular Technology	RVT
Diagnostic Cardiac Sonography	RDCS
Musculoskeletal Sonography	RMSKS
Administered by NMTCB	
Nuclear Medicine Technology	CNMT
Nuclear Cardiology Technology	NCT
Positron Emission Technology	PET
Administered by MDCB	
Medical Dosimetry	CMD

the right mix



The American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) is the largest of the profession's membership associations, with more than 156,000 members. It also is the only association that represents all medical imaging technologists, no matter what their area of practice, as well as medical dosimetrists, radiation therapists and radiologic science students, educators and administrators.

Fifty-four associations are affiliates of the ASRT. Affiliates send representatives to ASRT's House of Delegates, the Society's legislative arm. Also serving in the House are delegates from each of ASRT's 15 chapters, representing specialty areas of practice.

Other membership associations in the profession focus on serving specific groups of technologists, educators or administrators. They include the American Association of Medical Dosimetrists (AAMD), Association for Medical Imaging Management (AHRA), American Society of Echocardiography (ASE), Association of Educators in Imaging and Radiologic Sciences (AEIRS), Association of Vascular and Interventional Radiographers (AVIR), Society for Radiation Oncology Administrators (SROA), Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (SDMS), Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Technologists Section (SNMMI-TS), Society for Vascular Ultrasound (SVU), Society of Imaging Informatics in Medicine (SIIM) and many others.

Membership associations collaborate with one another and with certification bodies and accreditation agencies on a range of projects. They frequently work together to strengthen licensure and regulatory standards to ensure that radiologic technologists provide quality patient care.

A Closer Look at the Roles

The ASRT, ARRT and JRCERT are the largest membership association, certification body and accreditation agencies in the radiologic sciences. The graphic above demonstrates a few of the ways these organizations interact with one another as well as with employers, education programs and the R.T. (*Note that the relationships between other membership, certification and accreditation organizations may differ.*) As an example, let's follow the career of a typical radiologic technologist. Jane enrolls in an education program that has been accredited by the JRCERT and that follows a curriculum developed by the ASRT. When she graduates, she takes the ARRT certification exam in radiography. The content specifications for the exam were developed by the ARRT based on entry-level practice, and her education program helped her prepare for the exam by assuring that she studied an approved curriculum. Jane passes the exam, entitling her to use the credential "R.T.(R)." She also joins the ASRT.

Jane gets a job as a staff radiographer at a local hospital, where she follows the practice standards developed by the ASRT. To maintain her status as a registered technologist, she earns continuing education credits as mandated by the ARRT. She earns many of these credits by participating in CE programs offered by the ASRT, as well as through CE programs offered by industry and her employer. Her CE credits are tracked by the ASRT as a member benefit.