

Respiratory Therapy

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Associate in Applied Science Degree (6 semesters)

At a Glance

A respiratory therapist is responsible for administering, under physician's prescription, many types of breathing therapeutics, and utilizing specialized breathing, aerosol and humidification equipment. These include the use of oxygen or oxygen mixtures, chest physiotherapy, mechanical ventilation, and aerosol medications.

Respiratory therapists evaluate and treat all types of patients, ranging from premature infants whose lungs are not fully developed to elderly people whose lungs may be diseased. Respiratory therapists provide temporary relief to patients with chronic asthma or emphysema, as well as emergency care to patients who are victims of a heart attack, stroke, trauma, drowning, or shock.

They perform limited physical examinations, and conduct diagnostic tests that assess breathing capacities and determine the concentration of oxygen and other gases in patients. The respiratory therapist works closely with the physician and also directly with the patient in the treatment situation by performing regular assessments of patients and equipment.

Program Description

This program is designed to provide necessary training for successful completion of the requirements for the entry-level practitioner as defined by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC). A respiratory therapist is responsible for administering under physician's prescription many types of breathing therapeutics, and utilizing specialized breathing, aerosol, and humidification equipment. The respiratory therapist works closely with the physician and also directly with the patient in the treatment situation, which is an attractive feature of this career. The Wallace State Community College Respiratory Therapy Program, CoARC program number 200255, offering the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S) Degree, at its Hanceville campus location, is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (www.coarc.com). Upon graduation the student is eligible to apply to take the registry examination of the National Board for Respiratory Care.

Admission Requirements

1. Unconditional admission to the college – College application must be submitted by the program application deadline.
2. Student must be in good standing with the college.
3. Receipt of complete program applications accepted between March 1 and June 1 for Fall entry. Applications received after the deadline will be considered on a space available basis.
4. The RPT program online application is located on the program's webpage at www.wallacestate.edu. Online application instructions are under the *Program Application* tab. All applicants are required to upload all necessary documentation for consideration.
5. Official transcripts from each college attended must be provided to the Admissions Office and all unofficial transcripts must be uploaded.
6. Student must meet the essential functions and technical standards required for the program as documented on the required WSCC physical form at www.wallacestate.edu -see Physical Form Essential Functions.

7. A minimum of 18 ACT composite score (National or Residual) is required for admission consideration. Proof of score must be uploaded.
8. Meet all the general admission requirements of WSCC.
9. Attain a minimum GPA of 2.5 or greater on a 4.0 scale with a grade of “C” or better on all general required pre-RPT courses. GPA calculated for program selection will be on the general required pre-RPT courses excluding ORI 110.
10. The following general education required courses: BIO 201, ENG 101, and MTH elective, must be completed prior to beginning the Respiratory Therapy major courses. The other general education courses (BIO 202, ENG 102, PSY 200, and IDS 102) may be completed after the student is accepted into the program. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that his or her application is complete and that the required general education courses have been completed.

Selection and Notification

1. The Respiratory Therapy Program admits applicants in the fall semester each year.
2. Program applications will be reviewed for completion of program admission requirements. Written notification of program acceptance status will be sent to each applicant via information supplied on the program application.
3. Following acceptance into the program, students must respond confirming their intent to enroll by using the internet link provided on their letter, by the deadline indicated on the letter. A student who fails to respond will forfeit his/her place in the class.
4. All other factors being equal, applicants will be ranked by ACT score to determine admission if there are more applicants than can be accepted.

Program Expectations

Students admitted into the Respiratory Therapy program are expected to comply with the Health Science Program Regulations and Expectations as published in the Programs of Study section of the Wallace State College Catalog.

Required Competencies

Respiratory Therapy students must demonstrate numerous competencies representing all three learning domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Students learn, practice, and verify these competencies in a number of settings including the classroom, laboratory, and clinic. Respiratory therapy laboratories provide students with the opportunity to view demonstrations, evaluate and practice with medical devices, and perform simulated clinical procedures. In addition to the cognitive skills required in the classroom, students must demonstrate psychomotor skills in manipulation of patients and equipment, as well as general professional behaviors, like team-building and interpersonal communications. To satisfy laboratory and clinic requirements, students must perform all procedures without critical error.

Upon Admission

In order to enroll in the program after acceptance, students must attend a mandatory orientation session. A student who fails to respond will forfeit his/her place in the class. A signed consent to drug testing is required prior to enrollment.

Upon acceptance into the program, students must submit a physical examination form (current within one year), which includes documentation of immunizations along with evidence of having begun the Hepatitis B vaccinations. Students are required to provide proof of current CPR certification from a health care provider course as well as proof of health insurance prior to attending clinical.

Students will also be required to successfully complete a background check and drug screening.

Progression

RPT students must achieve a “C” or above in all general and major required courses. Students who fail to achieve a “C” or above in a major required course cannot progress and will be dismissed from the Program and must re-apply for readmission. A minimal grade of 75 constitutes a “C” in Respiratory Therapy courses.

Readmission to Program

Level I Students (First, Second, and Third Semester Students)

1. Any student that leaves the program for any reason, (academic or personal) during the first three semesters must start the program from the beginning.
2. These students must re-apply to the program prior to the June 1st deadline. If the student fails to progress during the summer semester they must re-apply within 1 week of the last day of attendance.
3. A student who fails to progress during the first three semesters is not automatically ranked and/or re-entered.
4. All first, second, and third semester students will be ranked along with all other applications and will be accepted based on the ranking process.
5. It is strongly encouraged that if a student is not doing well in a course and is wanting to re-apply for the next year that they seek advice from a program advisor/faculty member about dropping the RPT courses to help their GPA and the ranking process.
6. Any student dismissed from the program for disciplinary reasons will not be allowed to re-enter the program/ nor eligible to re-apply.

Level II Students (Fourth and Fifth Semester Students)

1. Students leaving the program for any reason (academic or personal) during the fourth or fifth semester shall notify the Program Director via email that the student wants to re-enter the Program.
2. The student shall also be required to complete all clinical competencies from the prior semesters.
3. The classes required to be repeated will be reviewed on an individual case-by-case basis.

Career Path

Respiratory therapists have numerous opportunities to specialize and advance. Clinical practice can provide change from general medical care to care of critical patients who have extensive problems with other organ systems such as the heart or kidneys. Advancement to supervisory or managerial positions in a respiratory therapy department is also possible. Respiratory therapists working in home health care and equipment rental facilities may become branch managers.

Specializations

- Respiratory therapists may work in neonatal-pediatrics children’s hospitals and general hospitals with neonatal-pediatric wards.
- Pulmonary rehabilitation therapists provide care and education to patients with chronic lung diseases like asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and pulmonary fibrosis.
- Home care work is often a good next step for those who like to visit with patients and be out and about. Most Respiratory therapists working in home care have extensive experience working in a hospital or other health care setting since home care necessitates a lot of independent thinking.
- For those who like doing detective work to solve a mystery, then working in pulmonary diagnostics is a good specialization. By conducting pulmonary function tests, Respiratory therapists help physicians diagnose whether a patient has a lung disease and, if so, which one.

Job opportunities are expected to be very good, especially for respiratory therapists with cardiopulmonary care skills or experience working with infants. Employment of respiratory therapists is expected to increase significantly through 2029 due to substantial growth in the numbers of the middle-aged and elderly population and the expanding role of respiratory therapists in the early detection and treatment of pulmonary disorders.

Although hospitals will continue to employ the vast majority of therapists, a growing number can expect to work outside of hospitals in home health care services, offices of physicians or other health practitioners, or consumer-goods rental firms.

National median annual earnings of respiratory therapists were \$70,540 in 2022. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Additional career advancement opportunities exist in education, administration, research, and in commercial companies as clinical specialists, pharmaceutical sales, and technical support. Students wanting to earn a four-year degree may do so by transferring to Athens State University – Bachelor of Science in Health Science.

Program: [Respiratory Therapy](#)

AAS RESPIRATORY THERAPY – Guided Pathway/Map

1st Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
ORI 110	Freshman Seminar	1
BIO 201	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
ENG 101	English Composition I	3
MTH 100	Intermediate College Algebra	3
	Sub-Total Credits	11

2nd Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
RPT 210	Clinical Practice I	2
RPT 211	Introduction to Respiratory Care	2
RPT 212	Fundamentals of Respiratory Care I	4
RPT 213	Anatomy and Physiology for the RCP	3
RPT 214	Pharmacology for the RCP	2
	Sub-Total Credits	13

3rd Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
RPT 220	Clinical Practice II	2
RPT 221	Pathology for the RCP I	3
RPT 222	Fundamentals of Respiratory Care II	4
RPT 223	Acid Base Regulation and ABG Analysis	2
BIO 202	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
	Sub-Total Credits	15

4th Semester

IDS 102 may be substituted per advisor's approval.

Item #	Title	Credits
RPT 231	Pathology for the RCP II	3
RPT 234	Mechanical Ventilation for the RCP	4
RPT 254	Patient Assessment Techniques for the RCP	2
IDS 102	Ethics	3
	Sub-Total Credits	12

5th Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
RPT 230	Clinical Practice III	2
RPT 242	Perinatal/Pediatric Respiratory Care	3
RPT 232	Diagnostic Procedures for the RCP	2
RPT 244	Critical Care Considerations for the RCP	2
ENG 102	English Composition II	3
	Sub-Total Credits	12

6th Semester

Item #	Title	Credits
RPT 240	Clinical Practice IV	4
RPT 233	Special Procedures for the RCP	2
RPT 241	Rehabilitation and Home Care for the RCP	2
RPT 243	Computer Applications for the RCP	2
PSY 200	General Psychology	3
	Sub-Total Credits	13
	Total credits:	76