

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Cardiorespiratory Sciences Program

We have prepared this sheet to answer some of the questions asked by students. As with most things, circumstances change. Use this information as a resource, and be sure to contact the Program Director at 702-651-7479, for more detailed information or a tour of our facility.

Cardiorespiratory Sciences Program
W. Charleston Campus, Building "K"

702-651-7479
Office K 156, in the "K annex"

1. I don't have much college experience and feel uneasy about how to address college faculty members. Any hints?

The college culture is rich in tradition and convention, so it is appropriate to be formal, unless it has been indicated to be less than formal. As a rule-of-thumb, when you first meet a person, you will shake hands, and that person will introduce himself to you. That is the indicator of how he wants to be addressed. In academia, a tenured person may be addressed as "Professor", and a person who has a doctorate may be addressed as "Doctor". Absent these circumstances, Miss, Mrs., Ms., and Mr. are always polite. Less formality works better in CRS, so you may address the instructors as "Professor" or you may use first names.

2. Does the Cardiorespiratory Sciences (CRS) Program include preparation to become a Respiratory Therapist?

Our graduates ARE respiratory therapists! (As soon as the National Board for Respiratory Care examination has been successfully completed, that is!) The CRS Program is a multi-disciplined, multi-credentialed program. This means that students are prepared to take credentialing examinations offered by several different organizations (National Board for Respiratory Care, Cardiovascular Credentialing International, etc.). It is very important to understand, however, that the Program's major intent is to prepare graduates to be Registered Respiratory Therapists (RRT). You will hear different terms used for people who practice in Respiratory Care, as there are two professional levels. There is the Entry Level, which is called Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT). In order to take the CRT examination, one must have an associate degree. The Advanced Level Practitioner, Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT), must also have an associate degree, must pass the CRT examination, and must take another two-part examination to be "Registered". Either may be referred to as a Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP). It's a lot like the distinction between an LPN and an RN, but both are called nurses. **The primary outcome of the CRS Program is to have its graduates attain the Advanced-Level (Registered Respiratory Therapist, RRT) credential!**

3. Is the CRS Program accredited?

The Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) accredits the CRS Program ([https://www.coarc.com/Students/Find-an-Accredited-Program-\(2\).aspx](https://www.coarc.com/Students/Find-an-Accredited-Program-(2).aspx)). It also accredits America's other 440 respiratory therapy schools. The CRS Program at CSN has been fully accredited since 1998.

4. What are the local and national job markets like for Respiratory Care?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://data.bls.gov/projections/occupationProj>), the field of Respiratory Care is expected to have a growth rate of 12%. This means that approximately 43,000 jobs (nationally) are expected to become available between 2014 and 2024.

All of the credentials earned in the CRS Program are national credentials, so you can go anywhere in the U.S. and probably find work. There are more students graduating in the local market these days, so it is more important than ever to attain the Advanced Level Respiratory Therapy credential (RRT) as well as all the other credentials the CRS Program encompasses. The more professional you are during school and the more credentials you obtain, the more opportunities will be available to you after graduation. Here are some other resources: <http://aarc.org/>

5. What do Respiratory Therapists do?

There are some good web-sites that give detailed descriptions of the Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP) community. Use search terms *Respiratory Care Practitioner* in Yahoo or Google. Spend some time reading all of the information. Pay special attention to the American Association for Respiratory Care's site – <http://aarc.org/>, as it is the national professional organization for Respiratory Therapy. They have great streaming videos you can watch to help answer this question (find *Be an RT*, or search the AARC site for "Life and Breath" video). A quick response is that the RCP is generally employed in hospitals, but also in physician offices, durable medical equipment providers, skilled care facilities, etc.

In the hospital, RCP's work extensively in trauma units, intensive care units, and pediatric/neonatal specialty units. They obtain both venous and arterial blood for analysis, are responsible for airway and ventilator management (life support equipment), assist with pulmonary rehabilitation, and participate in many other aspects of heart and lung care. They also educate patients and their families about lung disease and treatment. Like most other health professionals, RCP's are usually scheduled for 12-hour shifts, and often work on weekends and holidays; entry-level positions will include the night shift (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.).

6. What salary could I expect after graduation?

The purpose of the CRS Program is to have its graduates attain the RRT credential. As a newly credentialed RRT, you may expect to make in excess of \$50,000/year. Experience and additional professional growth will bring a greater salary.

7. Can I work during my CRS schooling here at CSN?

It is important for you to understand that the CRS Program is a challenging curriculum. Content for this profession has grown considerably more complex and sophisticated over the past 20 years, and this has necessitated the growth of the professional curriculum. In short, over 40 hours per week are going to be dedicated to the Program. This includes lecture time, clinical time, computer-assisted-instruction time, and study time. Think about working with caution, as the acquisition and maintenance of competence is required for program continuation. In the event you must work, there may be slightly more time in the 3rd semester (summer) or in the 5th (final) semester. If you can, get a job within any hospital; the exposure to the hospital subculture will be invaluable.

8. The School of Health Sciences offers Health Programs Orientations. Do I need to attend?

This is a critical experience that provides you with important information on the Limited Entry Process (essentially, how to get into the Program). It is so important that it has been made a requirement for admission. Attendance at one of the orientations is required before you may meet with a Health Programs Advisor. We strongly recommend that you meet with the HPA before scheduling time with us. Then, meet with us as soon as possible. This meeting usually takes about an hour, and we review transcripts, prerequisites, and other important matters. It is imperative that a student is fully aware of the Program structure before making the important decision to commit to this endeavor.

9. I have heard that the CRS Program is a “Limited Entry Program”. How does this affect my effort to get into the program?

The Limited Entry Office of the School of Health Sciences accepts student applications to the various limited entry programs, including the CRS Program. Aside from being the required path for admission, the Limited Entry Office organizes the information you submit as part of the application process. After the application deadline, a committee meets to review the completed files. This committee will make a recommendation for selection based on the ranking of students. This means that you are responsible for seeing that all of your transcripts from other colleges have been evaluated by CSN, and that all of this coursework has been placed in our computer system. You are also required to know the courses you have taken, and the grades you received for those courses. **You must make certain that all of this is done by working through the Admissions and Records Office (651-4060), not the Limited Entry Office!**

Occasionally students share that they have taken four or five courses in their life, yet cannot remember what the subjects were. These students are not likely to be successful in the CRS curriculum. The point is: Get serious about your college work and come prepared to talk business!

(Hint: Get both official and unofficial transcripts sent to your house from every college you have attended—but don't break the seal on the official envelope; just keep it in reserve. These transcripts are in addition to official transcripts you send to CSN's Registrar for evaluation. Create a file of all college administrative papers. It really helps.) **Again, the Limited Entry Office is not there to assist you in getting all of your college work correctly entered in the CSN computer system. You are responsible for having all of your previous college records reviewed by CSN's Admissions and Records Department (651-4060).**

10. I have some previous college courses completed, but my grades weren't very impressive. Is this going to affect my chances of getting into the CRS Program?

Maybe, or maybe not! Prerequisite coursework is very important. According to the advising sheet, you must achieve a grade of "C" for each of the prerequisite courses, with an overall prerequisite GPA of at least 2.75. Applicants will be ranked by GPA, TEAS score, and numbers of courses completed. Therefore: Maintain as high a GPA as possible, especially on prerequisite courses.

11. I have looked at the advising sheets for several of the programs at CSN. It seems that the general education requirements, like Communications, Social Science, Human Relations, and English courses are very similar. Why does the CRS Program require that most of these be taken before a person can start the CRS Program, when some of the other programs allow the student to take these general education courses while they are in that program?

The CRS Program is a challenging curriculum. It requires a considerable commitment in time, energy, money, and motivation. The professional courses that are taken in the two years before graduation are time-consuming; there simply is no time to take a lot of other coursework. Students are encouraged to complete other Program requirements such as the Constitution, Microbiology (BIOL 251), and Physics (PHYS 110 or higher) prior to beginning the CRS Program; while it is not necessary to complete these before getting into the Program, completion of these will mean you will have more time for CRS specific classes later. Additionally, understand that in order to be successful, the student needs to have the knowledge gained from the prerequisite coursework to succeed in the professional courses. Success in this program is dependent on seriousness, motivation, and academic preparation.

12. Many pre-requisite or special program requirement courses fill early. Have you any hints on how to get these courses completed more expediently?

Many students require BIOL 189, 223, and 224 for their Health Related Profession programs. BIOL 189, BIOL 223, and BIOL 224 fill early in the registration period, and students become frustrated at not being able to register. These courses may also be offered at either UNLV or Nevada State College or outside facilities such as National University or Grand Canyon University. To be sure that you have the requisite courses, find out when you may first register, and make sure you are the first in line!

13. Does the CRS Program have any special requirements that I should know about before I go through all of the effort of completing the prerequisites and entering the program?

We strongly recommend that any potential School of Health Sciences student carefully read the official College Catalog and CRS AAS Degree sheet that are available on the college web site. Additionally, the School of Health Sciences Student Handbook is available online at www.csn.edu/health/. Finally, the CRS Program has a Student Handbook that addresses special requirements. The aspiring CRS student should know that as part of professional preparation, the therapist must be state-licensed. In Nevada, the licensure process includes a criminal background investigation. A similar background check is required prior to attending clinical rotations at the local hospitals. While it is not necessary to have a flawless history, it is important that any possible problems be discussed with the CRS Program Director (PD) before you proceed. Drug-screening is also required before professional courses begin. If there are potential problems in this area, a discussion with the PD or the Dean is advised. Finally, CRS students should know that this curriculum includes several credentials that require preparatory courses and testing. This will add about \$3,000 to the cost of the program (see Advising Sheet). Many fees will be required while attending the Program; these will be discussed in-depth when you meet with CRS Program faculty members.

14. How difficult is the CRS coursework?

Respiratory Care practices have grown significantly in complexity and sophistication over the past twenty years. With this has come an increase in the complexity and sophistication of Respiratory Care education. The CRS Program will challenge the student in time commitment, reading comprehension, writing, and general academic competence. Additionally, students should expect to complete about 24 hours of clinical experience per week while in the program. This is a challenge for even the most energetic student. Over the 22 months (including summer semester) of professional courses, there are very few breaks (see Academic Calendar). The more successful CRS graduates have been those with minimal outside burdens, or who had significantly strong (family) support systems in place.

15. What is the most important thing for me to do if I am interested in pursuing a career as a Respiratory Care Practitioner?

The most important thing is for you to meet with us. The sooner you meet with us in the planning process, the more appropriately we can help you plot an efficient course toward program entry. The Limited Entry process may, at first, appear a bit daunting. Allow us to help you, early in the process, so that we may assist you with correct and efficient file preparation.

16. What is the cost of attending the CRS Program?

The CRS Program is one of the most expensive at CSN. It is however, significantly less expensive than many other Respiratory Care education programs. If you are attending college for the first time and have absolutely no college credit, you can expect your Associate degree to cost about \$18,000. This will include EVERYTHING you will need, including but not limited to: tuition, fees, books, uniforms, vaccinations, drug and background testing, and examination fees. If you have previous college coursework that you will be transferring to CSN, the costs of those courses may be subtracted from the figure quoted previously. CRS Faculty members go to great lengths to find ways for our students to save money without affecting the quality of education. When we hear of ways to save money, we pass the information to students immediately. There are many grants and special programs available to assist students with tuition, fees, and textbooks. Students are discouraged from taking any more student loans than absolutely necessary; obtaining a degree from CSN should enhance your life and earning potential; beginning your new life owing a huge sum of money on student loans is counterproductive!

17. Is my degree transferable from CSN to other colleges or universities?

YES! Not only is the degree transferable, but each individual course is as well. This means that if you choose to go on to study for a more advanced degree, every individual class you have taken will transfer to UNLV or any other University. Most advanced degrees will require general educational courses such as math, history, and English. Your classes from CSN will meet these requirements (assuming your grade meets the University's minimum).

18. What sort of "pass rates" does the CRS Program have on credentialing examinations?

CRS graduates do very well on credentialing examinations, particularly the RRT exams. We are very proud of these results; if you stop by our offices, we will give you a copy of our most recent results. In order to maintain our accreditation, we must document that at least 50% of our graduates obtain the Advanced RRT credential within a year of completing our Program. However, our graduates surpass these expectations! You might also be able to find a comparison of all school pass rates on our accrediting agency website: <https://www.coarc.com/Students/Programmatic-Outcome-Data.aspx>