Community College of Allegheny County Radiation Therapy Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: “What is a Radiation Therapist?”

A: Radiation Therapists are part of a multi-disciplinary cancer management team of physicians, physicists, dosimetrists, nurses, and other support staff who administers the application of ionizing and gamma radiation to patients with neoplastic diseases.

They are responsible for accurately positioning patients for treatment, operating equipment to deliver ionizing radiation, monitoring and documenting the prescribed course of treatment, utilizing effective interpersonal abilities to assessing the physical and emotional needs of the patients in challenging and changing situations. *Excellent communication and critical thinking skills are keys to success.*

Radiation therapists must possess competent technical abilities to understand simulation and the treatment delivery process, and thorough clinical knowledge of the disease processes, histopathology, and biological reactions to tissues.

To learn more about the career of a Radiation Therapist, view the career videos from the ASRT and Dr. Kit

Q: “How many students does the program accept?”

A: Enrollment is limited to 14 students per program due to the availability of clinical facilities. Student selection for enrollment is based upon academic qualifications, personal interview, previous healthcare and/or work experience, and the individual’s projected ability to make a significant contribution to the health care profession. See Admission Policy for more details.

Q: “When do the programs start?”

A: The certificate program begins every fall in accordance with the CCAC semester academic schedule and continues through the end of July the following summer.

The AS program begins *every other fall* in odd years and continues through July of the second summer.

Q: “Am I qualified for the same job by completing the AS program as students who complete the Certificate program?”

A: Graduates of both programs are equally eligible to take the national A.R.R.T. registry examination to become certified professionals to qualify for an entry-level position in the field of radiation therapy.

Q: “What are clinicals?”

A: The Radiation Therapy Program is a competency based program which will be performed at off-site JRCERT approved clinical sites. Students will be supervised and work under the direct supervision of a certified radiation therapist at all times. Students are required to provide their own transportation to all clinical sites.

Q: “Am I able to work while attending the program?”

A: The Radiation Therapy Program is an in-depth and fast-paced program that requires a full-time commitment. Students are required to be on campus or at the clinical facility Monday through Friday during daylight hours with the possibility of some evening classes. Students will not be able to work a full-time job during the program. Some students choose to work part-time on evenings and/or weekends, but are still required to keep the program obligations a top priority.

Q: “Can I take the program classes at night?”
A: The Radiation Therapy Program is primarily a day time program. However, there may be labs or classes scheduled at night and/or on Saturdays. There is no night time curriculum track offered. A significant portion of the program is spent in off campus clinical locations, which are open during daytime hours only.

Q: “Is there an online program option?”

A: The Radiation Therapy Program is offered as an “on campus” curriculum only, but some courses may be offered online.

Q: “Can I take classes at any campus at CCAC?”

A: All “RTT” and most other classes are offered only at the Allegheny Campus. Exceptions may include first or second semester courses in the AS program such as Medical Terminology or English Composition. Visit the CCAC course catalog for schedules and locations.

Q: “May I take any of the required courses before I am admitted to the Radiation Therapy program?”

A: It depends. All “RTT” courses MUST be taken during the progression of the program. Most other courses can be taken before program admittance, as long as the prerequisites of that course are met. NOTE: Completion of other required courses does not guarantee admittance into the Radiation Therapy Program.