

Registered Radiologist Assistant

Radiologist assistants are experienced, registered radiographers who have obtained additional education and certification that qualifies them to serve as radiologist extenders. They work under the supervision of a radiologist to provide patient care in the diagnostic imaging environment. The radiologist assistant is a radiographer certified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) who has successfully completed an advanced academic program encompassing a nationally recognized radiologist assistant curriculum and a radiologist-directed clinical preceptorship. The addition of RAs to the radiology team is intended to improve productivity and efficiency as the demand for medical imaging services continues to increase.



Career Description

Under radiologist supervision, the radiologist assistant performs patient assessment, patient management, and selected exams. The title "radiologist assistant" reflects the nature of the relationship between the radiologist and the radiologic technologist working in an advanced clinical role. The title clearly places the RA's professional role and clinical responsibilities within the radiology environment. The RA has three major areas of responsibility:

- Takes a lead role in patient management and assessment. Duties in this area might include determining whether a patient has been appropriately prepared for a procedure, obtaining patient consent prior to beginning the examination, answering questions from the patient and his or her family, and adapting exam protocols to improve diagnostic quality. The radiologist assistant also is expected to serve as a patient advocate, ensuring that each patient receives quality care while in the radiology department or clinic.
- Performs selected radiology examinations and procedures under the supervision of a radiologist. The level of radiologist supervision varies, depending on the type of examination.
- May be responsible for evaluating image quality, making initial image observations, and forwarding those observations to the supervising radiologist. The supervising radiologist remains responsible for providing a final written report, an interpretation, or a diagnosis.



Employment Characteristics

Radiologist assistants are employed in health care facilities, including community hospitals, university medical centers, and freestanding clinics; they are also employed in settings where their responsibilities focus on education, management, and research.



Salary

Salaries and benefits vary with experience and employment location. Data from the 2008 *Radiologist Extender Salaries and Functions Survey* by the

American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) indicate that the average salary for practitioners is \$102,972, and the average salary of the top 5% of earners is \$112,615. Some states require licensure as a condition of practice. For more information, refer to www.asrt.org/content/RadiologistAssistants/_radiologistassistant.aspx.



Educational Programs

Length. All educational programs for RAs are established at the baccalaureate degree or higher. RAs must be certified as radiographers by the ARRT before enrolling in an RA educational program. Programs may be 2 to 3 years, depending on program design, objectives, and the degree or certificate awarded. Many programs offer online learning options.

Curriculum. The curriculum of a recognized program includes an extensive component of technical and professional courses, including an emphasis on a structured, clinical preceptorship. Interested individuals should contact a particular program for information on specific courses and prerequisites.



Inquiries

Careers/Curriculum

American Society of Radiologic Technologists
15000 Central Avenue SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123
505 298-4500
E-mail: customerinfo@asrt.org
www.asrt.org

Certification/Registration

American Registry of Radiologic Technologists
1255 Northland Drive
St Paul, MN 55120
651 687-0048
www.arrt.org

Program Accreditation

The educational program must be offered through a postsecondary institution accredited by an institutional accreditation agency recognized by the ARRT. No programmatic accreditation exists for radiologist assistant programs at this time, although programs must be formally recognized by the ARRT in order for a graduate to become a candidate for ARRT certification as a registered radiologist assistant.

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