



PRE-DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY ADVISING GUIDE

Is the Diagnostic Medical Sonography profession right for you?

If you enjoy science, caring for people, taking pictures, and want to work directly with patients in close proximity, then consider diagnostic medical imaging. Sonographers are allied health professionals with didactic and clinical education in human anatomy, ultrasound technology, and customer care.

Neuro ultrasound technicians are in the highest demand compared to the other ultrasound pathways.

What does a Sonographer typically do?

Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonography (RDMS) professionals, commonly known as ultrasound technicians, are clinically trained ARDMS-certified noninvasive medical imagers who practice in medical settings. Sonographers engage in diagnostic and surgical procedures requiring ultrasound and ultrasound therapy for healing and pain relief. They can monitor fetal growth and understand the health of the heart, abdomen, vascular, and musculoskeletal systems.

- Prepare patients for procedures by interviewing and educating patients.
- Operate and maintain diagnostic medical equipment to obtain diagnostic images.
- Review images and test results for quality and coverage to offer accurate diagnoses.
- Recognize and record differences between normal and abnormal findings for diagnosis.
- Analyze and prepare diagnostic information for physicians and patients.

Where do Sonographers work?

Upon completion of sonography school and acquisition of ARDMS credential (SPI Examination and specialty), you can work in any of the following areas:

- Hospitals
- Imaging Centers
- Diagnostic Laboratories
- Outpatient Care Facilities
- Occupational / Physical Therapy
- Cardiovascular Care Units
- Private Practice (Physician's Office)
- Women's Health Clinics (Including Non-Profit)
- Labor & Delivery (Maternity Wards/Midwife)

What is the difference between a Sonographer and a Radiologic Technician?

There are differences between sonographers and radiologic technicians:

- **Radiologic Technologists** primarily work with X-ray machines and other radiographic tools to provide imaging for physicians and other healthcare professionals. Radiologic Technologists most commonly specialize in Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) or Computed Tomography (CT). Radiologic Technology is the most common pre-sonography degree as it is also a diagnostic-imaging field.
- **Diagnostic Medical Sonographers** primarily work with soundwave technology that converts wave frequencies emitted against soft tissues, organs, and blood vessels into images for diagnostic purposes. Medical Sonographers can specialize in different areas: Abdomen (AB), Breast (BR), Adult/Fetal Echocardiography (AE/FE), Neurosonography, Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN), and Pediatrics (PS), or go down the pathway of cardiac (RDCS), vascular (VT), musculoskeletal (MSKS), or midwifery.



BECOMING A DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHER

Job Outlook

Median wages	\$39.11 hourly, \$81,350 annually
Employment (2022)	83,8000 employees
Projected growth	Much faster than average (9% or higher)
Projected job openings (2022-2023)	5,700
Occupational Outlook Handbook	Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Colorado Programs

Colorado does not require ultrasound technicians to be certified or licensed, however ARDMS-accredited businesses want them to be. To become a certified sonographer, you obtain clinical and didactic education through a CAAHEP or CMA accredited certificate or associate program in sonography, and then apply and sit for the [ARDMS examination](#) with a corresponding specialty pathway within 5 years.

Links to Programs:

[Red Rocks Community College](#)

[UCHealth University of Colorado Hospital](#)

[Pueblo Community College](#)

Program Requirements

Most programs require applicants to have either a four-year degree, or a two-year degree in an allied health profession that has a clinical internship/externship and a national certification/registry exam, as well as meet the eligibility requirements of the [AART](#) and [ARDMS](#), pass a screening process (which includes a background check and drug screen), and complete prerequisite courses. Pre-sonography students should consult with the individual institutions about their program requirements.

Common Allied Health Degree:

Lab Technician

Licensed Vocational Nurse

Medical Assistant

Physical Therapy Assistant

Radiologic Technician

Surgical Technician

Common Prerequisites:

Algebra or higher

Anatomy & Physiology I & II

Arts & Humanities

Introduction to Sonography

English Composition or

Communication

Multiplanar Sectional Imaging

Physics (Algebra-based)

Psychology (General or

Developmental)

Medical Terminology

Credential Maintenance:

Recertify every 5 years through the ARDMS Examination

[Accreditation and Certification Organizations for Sonography](#)

Additional Resources

[American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#) (ARDMS)

[ARDMS General Prerequisites](#) for SPI Examination

[Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#) (SDMS) | [Certification Exam Scholarships and Grants](#)

O*NET Online Summary: [Diagnostic Medical Sonographers](#)