

Diagnostic Medical Sonography Admission Criteria

This is a selective and competitive admission program. Admission to the college doesn't guarantee admission to the clinical component of the program. Work with your advisor to apply to the clinical/core component of the program.

Minimum Criteria to Apply: See the point system

The accepted time limit for science courses (HACC or transfer) for use in health career program requirements is 7 years.

Advising: You are required to meet with a with a DMS advisor **during your first semester**. Find your advisor on MYHACC. If you do not have a DMS advisor please contact the Program Director, Julia Imboden at jrimbode@hacc.edu for additional details.

Application: Applications are posted on the [Health Careers Diagnostic Medical Sonography website](#) **March 1**

Application Deadline: **April 15**

Class Selection Date: **Mid-May**

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO STARTING THE CLINICAL PORTION OF THE PROGRAM (after acceptance into clinical)

Additional information and required forms will be provided to you upon acceptance into clinicals. Failure to provide all the necessary documentation before the established deadline could lead to denial of admission into the clinical program. The following must be completed (at your own expense) after acceptance to clinical, but prior to starting the clinical portion of the program:

Physical Examination and Required Immunizations

All students accepted into the clinical component of the program must submit a health examination form completed by a physician/nurse practitioner/physician's assistant with immunization history including verification through blood work. No student will be admitted with a disqualifying result or failure to meet the specified deadline.

Background Checks

All students accepted into the clinical component of the program must undergo annual Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, FBI Check and State Police Criminal Record Check. No student will be admitted with a disqualifying criminal history or child abuse clearance. Students with criminal backgrounds interested in admission into the clinical portion of any health career program at HACC must follow the Prohibitive Offense Procedure for Health Career Programs.

Drug and Alcohol Screens

All students accepted into the clinical component of the program must undergo a drug and alcohol screen annually at the laboratory specified by the program on or before the stated deadline. This lab is used to protect the integrity of the results being reported. No student will be admitted or retained in the program with a disqualifying result or failure to meet the specified deadline.

Current Certification in American Heart Association Healthcare Provider Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

Any candidate not meeting these criteria will be denied admission into the program.

rev 9/97/20

HACC
Diagnostic Medical Sonography Program
Point System – Fall 2021

Students will be considered for admission into the diagnostic medical sonography program who have:

- 2.5 overall GPA
- Will be at least 18 years of age by the cohort start-date
- Completed English 101, Math 103, and Biology 111* or [Biology 121 **AND** Biology 122] with a “C” or better
- **Met with a DMS advisor during your first semester**
- Attend a mandatory information session the year of application by May 1

* Spring term grades are used in point calculation.

All sonography program applicants will be ranked on the following criteria:

Your Points	Points	Criterion
	10 to 20	* Grade in BIOL 111 A-20 points, B-15 points, C-10 points OR Completion of BIOL 121 AND 122 (C or higher) = 20 points
	10 to 20	* Grade in MATH 103 A-20 points, B-15 points, C-10 points
	10 to 20	*Grade in ENGL 101 A-20 points, B-15 points, C-10 points
* Note: All transferred BIOL 111, MATH 103; ENGL 101 will be assigned the number of points based on the actual grade earned. For any course where credit is given but the course was never taken, a grade of "C" will be assigned.		
	-3 (per occurrence)	Minus 3 for each W, D, or F in DMS, NURS or other Allied Health program core course (within the past 7 years). Equivalent transfer courses are subject to the same deductions.
	0-50	*** Ultrasound Student Assessment (USA) Exam For every score above norm, 5 points per skill (6 skills total) above norm, 0 points if below norm (30 max points) Dexterity Persistence Problem Solving Graphs Judgement Logic For every score above norm, 6 points per skill (2 skills total) above norm, 0 points if below norm (12 max points) Spatial Visualization Overall USA score above norm, 8 points
	0-110	Total Score (110 Max) Minimum 25 points required In event of a tie, Program GPA will be used.

The accepted time limit for science courses (HACC or transfer) for use in health career program requirements is 7 years.

*** See attached for an explanation of this activity

11/30/20

HACC does not discriminate in employment, student admissions, and student services on the basis of race, color, religion, age, political affiliation or belief, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, place of birth, General Education Development Certification (GED), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other legally protected classification.

Ultrasound Student Assessment (USA) Test

- **Required** to complete the clinical application.
- After the clinical application has been processed, eligible students will be emailed to schedule the Ultrasound Student Assessment (USA) Test.
- The USA test must be completed by **April 30.**
- The exam specifically tests examinees for: dexterity, persistence, problem solving, graph interpretation, judgment, spatial ability, visualization and logic.
- An aptitude test does not test knowledge; therefore, you cannot study or prepare.
- Retesting is not permitted.
- The cost is around \$75
- There is no time limit for the test, but most candidates take about 60 minutes.
- The candidate does not see their results, they are sent electronically to the Program Director.

**ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR HEALTH CAREER PROGRAMS
DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY**

All individuals, including persons with disabilities, who apply for admission to the diagnostic medical sonography program must be able to perform specific essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation.

The following outlines the abilities and behavioral characteristics necessary for the student to be admitted to, continue in, and graduate from, the diagnostic medical sonography program at HACC. **These essential qualifications are standards of admission.**

The applicant should carefully review the essential qualifications for the program and ask questions if not familiar with the activities or functions listed. The applicant must decide if he or she has any limitations that may restrict or interfere with satisfactory performance of any of the requirements. It is ultimately the applicant's responsibility to meet these essential qualifications if accepted into the program.

The applicant should consult with the program director to discuss any individual situation if he or she may not be able to meet these essential qualifications. Requests for reasonable accommodation will be considered. Contact the program director if you have any questions about this matter.

COMMUNICATION

1. Communicate verbally using clear and effective English
2. Write legibly in clear and effective English using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling
3. Quickly and accurately comprehend and follow verbal instructions in English
4. Quickly and accurately read, comprehend and follow written instructions in English
5. Actively participate in group discussions
6. Use communication equipment – telephone, computer, other device used for communication

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Possess fine and gross skills sufficient to handle equipment and provide safe and effective patient care

1. Exert maximum physical force to lift, push, pull or carry objects up to 50 pounds (oxygen cylinders, beds, patients, or any other type of equipment (ultrasound system)
2. Wear lead aprons (approx. 10 pounds) up to 8 or more hours
3. Move quickly, freely and safely around the assigned work area and patient care settings
4. Sustain professional activities for up to 8 or more hours
5. Remain standing up to 8 or more hours
6. Remain sitting up to 8 or more hours
7. Reach above shoulder level (to manipulate equipment)
8. Reach below waist level (to manipulate equipment)
9. Move upper and lower extremities, back, hips, and knees without restriction - bend, stoop, and squat
10. Keep hand and arm steady while moving arm or while holding arm and hand in one position
11. Make precisely coordinated movements of the fingers of one or both hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble very small objects
12. Coordinate two or more limbs (for example, two arms, two legs, or one leg and one arm) while sitting, standing, or lying down

OBSERVATION AND SENSORY SKILLS

1. Hear, comprehend and interpret conversation and sounds not solely based on visual cues (including alarms, monitors, faint sounds, such as heart and breath sounds, taking blood pressure; discriminate audible Doppler flow signals, including arterial, venous, low and high resistance and stenosis)
2. Ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer) and at a distance.
 - a) Function efficiently in various degrees of light, from dark to bright lighting
 - b) Differentiate colors, varying shades of same color, and shades of black, white and gray
 - c) Read fine print and hand writing
3. Detect and distinguish odors from clients and environment
4. Distinguish textures, degrees of firmness, temperature differences, pulse rate and vibrations; feel anatomical landmarks and veins
5. Distinguish and describe patient affect, body language and physical responses which the patient cannot verbally relay (i.e. facial expressions, sweating, trembling, color change, bleeding, etc)

INTELLECTUAL, COGNITIVE, AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

1. Concentrate on a task over a period of time without being distracted
2. Apply principles of critical, logical thinking to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw sensible and valid conclusions
3. Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
4. Perform multiple tasks simultaneously
5. Arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (alphabetize)
6. Integrate information quickly, consistently, accurately, especially in an emergency situation

BEHAVIORAL / SOCIAL SKILLS / ETHICS

1. Display a high level of professionalism and discretion in all actions and communication (written, oral and electronic)

2. Function effectively and display integrity, poise and emotional stability under stress (emergency, critical, or dangerous situations) in actions with all (peers, patients, staff, faculty)
 3. Use team approach to carry out responsibilities
 4. Respond to all persons sensitively and with respect for cultural diversity
 5. Maintain general good health and self-care
 6. Display flexibility and adapt to changing environments
 7. Manage time effectively
 8. Accept responsibility for own behavior and be forthright about errors or uncertainty
 9. Refuse to perform or participate in any illegal, unethical or incompetent acts, to include but not limited to the following: falsifying or knowingly making incorrect entries into a patient's record or related document; copying other student's written assignments; cheating on a quiz or examination; making untrue statements to a faculty member or administrator
 10. Monitor/assess performance of self, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action
 11. Capable of developing mature sensitive and effective relationships (with patients, staff, coworkers, etc.)
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Health Career Code of Ethics

In order to promote excellence in patient care, the HACC Health Career student, while in their program, or in their clinical uniform, are to:

- Treat patients with respect for the dignity, rights, and value of each individual.
- Provide nondiscriminatory and equitable treatment for all patients.
- Promote and strive to protect the health, safety, and rights of each patient.
- Maintain confidentiality of patient information following privacy regulations required by law.
- Not disclose or share information associated with their health career program about or relating to any patient, person, clinical facility, or clinical experience outside of the sanctioned educational context of the classroom or online course environment with oversight of an instructor. This includes communication in any format including verbal, written, and digital (includes but is not limited to text, email, photographs, and social media).
- Perform procedures or functions within his/her level of education in the profession.
- Refuse to participate in any illegal, unethical, or incompetent acts.
- Disclose any illegal, unethical, or incompetent acts of others to the proper authority.
- Avoid any conduct that creates a conflict of interest.
- Demonstrate professional behavior that reflects integrity and a positive image of the profession and the college.
- Follow all principles of ethical and professional behavior, as identified in the code of ethics of his/her chosen health career.

Students shall be denied admission to a program for breaches in any of the above code of ethics. Students who are in a clinical program and breach the code of ethics will be dismissed from the program and denied access to any other health career program at HACC.

Health Careers Medical Marijuana Policy

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is currently implementing the Pennsylvania Medical Marijuana Program, a component of the Medical Marijuana Act (MMA) that was signed as [law](#) on April 17, 2016. This program provides access to medical marijuana for patients with serious medical conditions as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

Currently, the federal government regulates drugs through the Controlled Substances Act, which does not recognize the difference between medical and recreational use of marijuana. Under federal law, marijuana is a Schedule 1 controlled substance, which means that it is considered to have no medical value. Practitioners may not prescribe marijuana for medical use under federal law.

Students entering any Health Careers Program are required to have laboratory screenings for drugs and alcohol upon admission to the clinical phase of the program and on a yearly basis while participating in the clinical experiences. As per current policy, if the results are positive, the student will be dismissed from the program immediately and referred for appropriate counseling.

Students using medical marijuana will not be eligible for clinical placement in any HACC clinical program, due to the current discrepancy between state and federal law regarding Drug Free Work Place Act and the MMA. Businesses who are not in compliance with federal law are at risk for criminal or civil charges; and additionally may find issue with eligibility for federal contracts and grants. Additionally, Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana statute specifically provides that an employer does not have to accommodate an individual in a safety sensitive position if that person is under the influence of medical marijuana. Most positions involving direct patient care will be considered safety sensitive positions.

Students should also understand that under current Pennsylvania State Board law, many health career licensing boards require drug screening at the time of application for licensure. Similarly, most health care employers will perform routine drug screening as a condition for employment, as these positions involve direct patient care, and are considered safety sensitive positions. **This discrepancy between federal and state law allows our clinical partners to deny student placement for clinical experiences and the State of Pennsylvania to deny licensure.**

In order to be transparent with this entire process, we recognize our responsibility to fully inform students of HACC's policy regarding the use of medical marijuana. Due to current laws we cannot provide admission to the clinical phase in any of our Health Career Programs and students who have been admitted and are later to be found positive for medical marijuana will be removed.

Frequently Asked Questions about Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Q: Where do sonographers work?

A: Sonographers are employed by hospital, imaging centers and private physician offices.

New graduates will be employed primarily in the hospital setting.

Q: What are the duties of a sonographer?

A: Diagnostic medical sonographers use critical thinking skills to perform diagnostic imaging examinations and prepare preliminary reports according to established procedures under the supervision of a licensed physician. Sonographers are credentialed health care professionals who have completed program requirements and have passed national examinations.

The general sonographer is able to perform the following:

- Obtain, review, and integrate pertinent patient history and supporting clinical data to facilitate optimum diagnostic results;
- Perform appropriate procedures and record anatomic, pathologic, and/or physiologic data for interpretation by a physician;
- Record, analyze, and process diagnostic data and other pertinent observations made during the procedure for presentation to the interpreting physician;
- Exercise discretion and judgment in the performance of sonographic and/or other diagnostic services;
- Demonstrate appropriate communication skills with patients and colleagues;
- Act in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide patient education related to medical ultrasound and/or other diagnostic vascular techniques, and promote principles of good health

Q: What is a typical day in the life of a sonographer?

A: A sonographer usually works an eight-hour shift and during *that* time completes 10-12 or more ultrasound scans along with required paperwork and documentation. This involves interaction with patients, physicians and other health care professionals. The sonographer provides quality patient care. Ultrasound cases are often “added on” to the schedule each day, and then sonographers will be required to work additional hours. Schedule changes play a role in the stressful demands of the career.

Q: Part of the sonography career includes being “on call”. What does that mean?

A: Depending upon the facility, sonographers will be required to be called back in to the department after hours, weekends, and holidays. For example if your shift is over at 4:30 pm, you could drive home and be called back to the hospital at 9 pm, return home to sleep and be called again at 3 am to return to the hospital and then you are still required to be at work at 8 am.

Q: What role do sonographers play in patient care?

A: Sonographers are patient focused and provide care to all patients: **biopsy, emergent, intensive care, obstetrical, trauma etc.** The sonographer will deal with patient issues such as vomiting, bleeding, use of the bed pan etc.

Q: Do sonographers deal with needles, blood, and/or bodily fluids?

A: Yes, sonographers are patient caregivers and indeed deal with all these items and also **go to the ER, ICU, NICU and OR to perform ultrasound imaging.**

Q: Sonographers image babies all day, right?

A: Actually sonographers image many parts of the body - organs of the abdomen: liver, kidneys, pancreas, spleen, gallbladder; organs of the pelvis: uterus, ovaries, prostate; glandular organs: breast, thyroid, testicles. Also the vascular system is imaged by sonographers. Procedures such as transvaginal imaging are a major part of the imaging day. Sonographers **assist with biopsies and other invasive procedures including cases in the operating room.**

Q: When I had my ultrasound the sonographer sat and moved the wand around? Is the job physically demanding?

A: Yes, you are on your feet most of the day. You need to be able to help transfer patients from wheelchairs to stretchers, move ultrasound equipment to other hospital areas, and assist as needed in the hospital.

Q: Is the career stressful?

A: Sonographers are challenged each day to acquire diagnostic images, write accurate impressions and deal with the emotional stress of illness and critical diseases. **Emotional stress** often involves fetal abnormalities including fetal death.

Q: How competitive is the HACC DMS program?

A: We typically have 20-40 applicants for the 10-12 positions, so it is very competitive. Check out the [Admitted Students](#)

[Profile](#) at www.hacc.edu under Health Careers (Admission Criteria). This is why it's important to work closely with your DMS advisor to ensure you are following all DMS application requirements.

Q: Can the DMS program be completed part time?

A: No, a full time commitment is required. Students have not been successful if they attempted to work more than 12-16 hours a week. *Most students find that they are not able to work at all while they are taking the DMS courses.*

Q: What kind of time investment does this program involve?

A: The DMS program requires a considerable amount of time. It is estimated that 2 hours of studying and test preparation is required for every hour of instruction. The courses require completion of assignments and projects in addition to the studying. Students are obligated to about 40 hours per week from the combination of lecture, lab, open lab and clinical rotations.

Q: What are some of the challenges of this program?

A: At the end of each semester, students are required to successfully complete multiple comprehensive final examinations which range from 50-200 questions. The grading for the DMS program is set as: A (93-100), B (85-92) and C (77-84). All DMS courses must be completed with a C or higher grade to continue in the program and graduate.

Q: Where would I do my clinical rotations?

A: Faculty assigns you to an imaging facility for specific learning outcomes; students do not get to choose locations. Students change clinical sites each semester. **Sites can be as far as 80 miles from Harrisburg.** (As you plan your finances for the program, please keep in mind the cost of gas and auto expenses as you are required to drive to the sites for your clinical rotation.)

Q: Is there a national or state certification or credentialing examination that is required in order to be employed?

A: Yes, you are required to pass three American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography® ([ARDMS](http://www.ardms.org)) credentialing exams. Sonography Principles and Instrumentation, Abdomen, and Obstetrics and Gynecology. Exam costs total \$725.00 and are not included in the program cost (it is an out of pocket expense). Check out the ARDMS web site www.ardms.org.

Q: Is the DMS program at HACC accredited?

A: Yes, HACC's Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS) program is accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs \(CAAHEP\)](http://www.caahep.org), 9355 - 113th St. N, #7709, Seminole, FL 33775, Phone: 727-210-2350, Fax: 727-210-2354. www.caahep.org. CAAHEP accredits programs upon the recommendation of the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS), 6021 University Boulevard, Suite 500, Ellicott City, MD 21043; Phone: (443) 973-3251; Fax: (866) 738-3444; Email and web site: mail@jrkdms.org; www.jrkdms.org/

Q: What is the job market like?

A: Nationally there is a demand for DMS professionals. The job market in central Pennsylvania may be limited due to the number of graduates in the area. However, HACC graduates have been successful in finding employment:

Q: What is the starting salary for new graduates in our area?

A: Starting salary in south central Pennsylvania ranges from \$24.00-\$27.00 an hour for a part time or full time position and a \$28.00-\$29.00 for a PRN or flex position.

Student Name: _____ **Student Signature:** _____

Print Name

HACCid

Program

Date

Health Careers Admission Criteria Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the program Admission Criteria. _____ (Initial)

Frequently Asked Questions about Diagnostic Medical Sonography

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the program Frequently Asked Questions. _____ (Initial)

Essential Qualifications

As an applicant to this program or student in this program, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the essential qualifications. I **acknowledge that I am capable of performing the abilities and skills outlined in this document** with or without reasonable accommodation and understand that my status as a student in this program depends on my continued ability to successfully demonstrate these abilities and skills. **I understand that if I am no longer able to meet these essential qualifications I will immediately notify the program director.** _____ (Initial)

I understand that all students accepted into the clinical component of the program must undergo a physical and a drug and alcohol screen annually at the student's expense at the laboratory specified by the program on or before the stated deadline. This lab is used to protect the integrity of the results being reported. The test is at the cost of the student. No student will be admitted or retained in the program with a disqualifying result or failure to meet the specified deadline. _____ (Initial)

I have read and understand the Prohibitive Offense Procedure as posted on the HACC Health Careers website. _____ (Initial)

I understand that some clinical sites do not allow tobacco use and may require testing at the student's expense. _____ (Initial)

I understand that all students accepted into the clinical component of the program must undergo an annual Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, FBI Check, and State Police Criminal Record Check at the student's expense. No student will be admitted or retained in the program with a disqualifying criminal history or child abuse clearance. _____ (Initial)

I understand that students accepted into the clinical component of the program may perform procedures which may expose them to bloodborne and airborne pathogens, ionizing radiation and potentially hazardous materials. _____ (Initial)

I understand that all students accepted into the clinical component of the program must have the following immunizations (at the student's expense): MMR, DPT, Varicella, an annual TB screen, and an annual influenza vaccination. _____(initial)

I understand that in the event of an incident in the clinic, lab or outside rotation that I am responsible for all related medical expenses. _____ Initial

Have you ever been admitted to another clinical health career program at HACC from which you did not graduate?
_____ I have not _____ I have (Good Standing Form to be completed)

I understand my responsibility to disclose to the program director, any release from work at a hospital or health care facility resulting in ineligibility for rehire. This includes events that occurred prior to admission or during enrollment in the program of study. _____ (initial). I also understand that this may affect my eligibility to be admitted or continue in the program. _____(initial)

Health Careers Code of Ethics

I understand that students shall be denied admission to a program for breaches in any of the Health Careers Code of ethics. Students who are in a clinical program and breach the code of ethics will be dismissed from the program and denied access to any other health career program at HACC. _____(initial)

Health Careers Medical Marijuana Policy

I understand that due to current laws we cannot provide admission to the clinical phase in any of our Health Career Programs and students who have been admitted and are later to be found positive for medical marijuana will be removed. _____(initial)

I understand that intentional deceit, falsification or failure to disclose any information on this document will disqualify me from admission and/or continuation in any health career program at HACC. _____(initial)

Student Signature

Date

Witness