

Career Information

Respiratory Therapy

Bachelor of Science

The MCG Respiratory Therapy Program

The Medical College of Georgia grants a bachelor of science degree in respiratory therapy. This is a 2+2 program, meaning the student completes the first two years at any accredited college or university of choice, and the last two years on MCG's campus. All 2+2 students begin the program fall semester after completing the general core curriculum in areas A-F (see *Courses to Take for the First Two Years*). MCG's program consists of five semesters and includes classroom and clinical education.

The percentage of respiratory therapists with higher degrees has increased considerably since 1992. In 2005, nearly one-third of all respiratory therapists had a bachelor's or graduate degree. Graduates with a bachelor's degree are highly marketable for lucrative positions.

Respiratory Therapy: A Life-and-Breath Career

Respiratory therapists provide direct care for patients with cardiopulmonary disease and other disorders requiring life-support technologies. Patients range from newborns to the elderly. In the hospital, respiratory therapists assist physicians by assessing the patient's condition, planning and initiating treatment and providing patient education. Treatments include oxygen and humidity therapy, chest physical therapy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and state-of-the-art life support technologies. Respiratory therapists also obtain and analyze arterial blood samples to evaluate and optimize patient oxygenation and ventilation and evaluate cardiopulmonary function using specialized equipment.

A Multi-Skilled Profession

Respiratory therapy requires manual skills and a broad range of cognitive capabilities. Respiratory therapists' relative autonomy demands a high degree of responsibility and professionalism. Their significant patient contact requires empathy, interpersonal skills,

communication and the ability to collect, evaluate and synthesize patient information. Therapies are based on strong patient assessment, highly technical skills requiring good manual dexterity and mechanical aptitude to perform them safely and acceptably.

Related interests may include physician assistant, nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and radiologic sciences.

Career Options Abound

MCG graduates are eligible to take national credentialing exams from the National Board for Respiratory Care, leading to designations of certified and registered respiratory therapist, certified and registered pulmonary function technologist and competency recognition as a perinatal/pediatric respiratory care specialist and certified asthma educator. These credentials are recognized nationally and internationally. First-time pass rates for MCG graduates are well above the national average.

Most respiratory therapists work in acute-care hospitals, but roles outside the traditional work setting are rapidly growing. Career opportunities include education, research and patient care in clinics, skilled nursing or long-term acute-care facilities and physicians' offices. Therapists with a bachelor's degree can work as disease or case managers, clinical educators, supervisors, departmental directors, medical equipment marketers, clinical or education specialists and pharmaceutical representatives.

Because of an acute shortage of registered therapists, the job market is excellent. The number of full-time employee positions has increased by over 20,000 since 2000, according to the American Association for Respiratory Care. According to the U.S. Bureau of Statistics, demand for respiratory therapists is expected to increase much faster than the national average for other occupations through 2012, with particular demand in the Southeast.

Excellent Earning Potential

Registered therapists assume considerable responsibility and command high salaries. The mean annual salary for respiratory therapists in 2005 was \$56,160.



The mean salary for experienced respiratory therapists ranges from \$50,000 to \$70,000 depending on job responsibilities, education and location. Private industry offers particularly lucrative career opportunities.

General Admissions Criteria

Admission is based on college grade point average, completion of the 60-hour academic core from a regionally accredited institution, personal interview, references and assessment of professional qualities needed to successfully complete the program. Admission criteria include a minimum overall GPA of 2.30; current cardiopulmonary and first aid certification; and a minimum TOEFL score of 550 (paper based), 213 (computer-based) or 79 (internet-based) and TSE-P score of 45 for applicants whose first language is not English. Completion of the CPR for Professional Rescuers course is strongly recommended. Job shadowing is required prior to enrollment. Emphasis should be placed on shadowing therapists in critical care areas. Computer literacy is also expected.

Technical Standards

In addition to demonstrating personal characteristics appropriate for a health professions career, students must satisfy general and specific technical standards for this program. Please visit www.mcg.edu/sah/respther/techstandards.htm to review these requirements.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Financial aid and other assistance is available. MCG participates in all federal student aid programs as well as state and private programs. Educational assistance may be available for respiratory therapy students who want to work in rural Georgia.

MCG helps students fund their education through grants, scholarships, loans, a service commitment program and/or employment. MCG students are very competitive for national, regional and local scholarships for the first and second year.

Courses to Take the First Two Years

The courses required to graduate from MCG comprise a core curriculum divided into six categories (Areas A-F). The options for completing these prerequisites for transfer to MCG are listed below.

- A. Essential Skills** 9 semester hours
 English Composition I 3 hours
 English Composition II. 3 hours
 (Literature based)
 College Algebra, Mathematical Modeling, Trigonometry,
 Pre-calculus or Calculus 3 hours
- B. Institutional Options**** 4-5 semester hours
 Introduction to Computers
 Critical Thinking
 Creative Writing
 Ethics
 Health and Wellness
 Statistics
 Economics
 Speech
 Medical Terminology
 Any approved guided elective from Area F
- C. Humanities and Fine Arts**** 6 semester hours
 Ethics
 Foreign Language
 Speech, Oral Communications
 Literature
 Philosophy
 Drama, Art or Music Appreciation
 Logic
 Electives in Humanities and Fine Arts
 Religion

- D. Science, Mathematics and Technology** 10-11 semester hours
 One eight-hour laboratory course sequence in biology, chemistry or physics and an additional course in mathematics, science or technology.

- E. Social Science**** 12 semester hours
 United States History
 United States Government
 Other History
 Economics
 Psychology
 Sociology
 Anthropology
 Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups
 Lower division electives in Psychology and Sociology

- F. Courses Appropriate to the Major** 18 semester hours
 Anatomy and Physiology I and II w/labs . 8 hours
 Microbiology 4 hours
 Guided electives 6 hours
 Biology* Chemistry* Research Methods, Human Development, Physics, Statistics

* If this is taken in another area of the core, additional hours would be taken in additional guided electives to a total of 18 semester hours.

** If a student planning to transfer to MCG from another school in the University System of Georgia has completed this area with courses taken there or at another institution from which MCG accepts transfer credit, MCG will accept the area as satisfied. A student planning to transfer from a school not in the University System of Georgia should choose from the list of courses.

Estimated Full-Time Academic Expenses

	<i>Tuition</i>	<i>Fees</i>	<i>Books/Supplies/Other</i>
Per semester	\$1,910*	327.50	1,000**

* Non-residents of Georgia pay an additional \$5,730 tuition per semester. Residents of Aiken and Edgefield counties in South Carolina receive a waiver of non-resident tuition.

** Costs vary by major. Please check with your department for details.
 (Costs are for 2006-2007. All tuition charges, board, room rent or other charges are subject to change at the end of any academic term.)

Estimated Living Expenses

	<i>On- or off-campus apartment</i>	<i>Commuter</i>
9 months	\$13,869	\$9,864
12 months	18,492	13,152

Academic Common Market

The MCG Department of Respiratory Therapy participates in the Academic Common Market. Students from Delaware, South Carolina and Virginia may petition their home state to learn whether they qualify for in-state tuition at MCG.

Accreditation

Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care
1248 Harwood Road
Bedford, Texas 76012-4244
(817) 283-2835

When and How to Apply

This is a transfer program that requires applicants to attend another accredited college or university of their choice to complete the required core curriculum courses (refer to the Courses to Take the First Two Years section). During their sophomore year, students can apply for transfer admission to MCG. Accepted applicants will transfer fall semester to begin their junior year.

Applications received on or before April 1 will be given priority consideration. Applications must be received by June 1.

How to Get an Application

To receive an application for this career field, visit www.mcg.edu/admissions, or call or write:

Office of Academic Admissions
170 Kelly Building—Administration
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta, Georgia 30912

Telephone: (706) 721-2725
1-800-519-3388

E-mail: underadm@mcg.edu

Web site: www.mcg.edu/admissions

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to complete all my academic core courses before entering the program?

Yes. We can consider your application before you have completed all of the academic core prerequisites. Follow the guidelines in the application to indicate when you took or plan to take the academic core prerequisites. Make sure the courses you will need will be offered the semester you plan to take them. **All prerequisites must be completed prior to starting the program.**

Can I attend the program part time?

No. The 2+2 program is full time.

Can I work part time while in the program?

We highly recommend that students not work while attending the program full time. Our program is very demanding. Classes and clinics generally meet during the day Monday through Friday. Periodic clinical assignments may be assigned evenings and weekends. The Office of Student Financial Aid is very helpful in finding alternative funding sources. Also, many hospitals and businesses may provide financial assistance in return for a specified amount of time spent working at their facility. You should identify these resources and treat them as you would any employment contract by determining your willingness to work at their facility, assessing the terms and comparing them to other financial aid opportunities.

What do you mean by proof of certification in CPR and first aid?

We require a copy of your card validating CPR certification through your first semester on campus and proof that you have completed a first aid course. The course need not be completed before you apply, but you must submit the information before admittance. We strongly recommend the American Heart Association's CPR program for health care providers. CPR certification is required for all clinical rotations.

What about my references?

MCG requires two references for admission. We prefer recent academic, clinical or employment references.

What if I take U.S./American History and American Government courses in a college outside of Georgia?

The U.S. History and U.S. Government legislative requirements will be satisfied; however, the Georgia History and Georgia Constitution legislative requirements will not be. Georgia also requires the Regents Exam for reading and essay. These requirements can be satisfied by exam after enrollment at MCG, but should be satisfied prior to MCG enrollment if you are transferring from another institution in the University System of Georgia.

I took some of my courses a long time ago. Will I have to retake any of these courses?

Probably not. Depending on the accreditation of the school you attended, most of the core courses should transfer if they match the current core descriptions. This will be determined when the transcripts are officially evaluated by the Office of Academic Admissions.

**The Medical College
of Georgia is an Equal
Opportunity Educational
Institution.**