



ARDMS®

American Registry for
Diagnostic Medical Sonography

ARDMS General Prerequisites

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SPE Examination Requirement

The Sonography Principles & Instrumentation (SPE) Examination Requirement allows students to apply for and take the SPE examination prior to graduation. The SPE Examination Requirement can be found in the Prerequisite section of this guide.

The SPE Examination Requirement cannot be used when applying for a specialty examination (e.g. AB, BR, OB/GYN, FE, AE, MSKS, PE, PS, VT). Applicants previously approved for the SPE examination under the SPE Examination Requirement must choose a prerequisite in order to apply for a specialty examination.

SPE Examination Requirement

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to submission. See the Notes About the SPE Requirement on page 10.

Education

Successful completion of a general, medical or sonographic physics class/seminar/course.

Documentation Required with Application

A transcript (see transcript requirements below) reflecting successful completion of a graded general, medical or sonographic college, post-secondary or higher education physics class (with a grade of C or above);

OR

A CME certificate denoting successful completion of a general, medical or sonographic physics seminar, physics review course, or physics correspondence course, denoting a minimum award of 12 ARDMS-accepted CME credits. The certificate must meet ARDMS CME documentation requirements (visit [ARDMS.org/CME](https://www.ardms.org/CME) to view ARDMS-accepted CMEs). The CME credits must be earned within two (2) years prior to application submission.

Transcript Requirements

- Name of Applicant and school must be printed on the transcript; handwritten information will not be accepted.
- The class or course name must specifically indicate **Physics, Physical Principles** and/or **Instrumentation** in the title and be printed on the transcript. Supplementary information will not be accepted.
- Transcript can be unofficial or official.
- If submitting a foreign transcript or degree, a formal course by course foreign transcript evaluation report must accompany the application summary and indicate the aforementioned requirements.
- Transcripts indicating only a number grade must include a **grade key** printed on the transcript showing the equivalent letter grade. Supplementary information will not be accepted.

Notes About the SPE Examination Requirement

- The SPE Examination Requirement applies to the SPE examination only.
- If the SPE examination is your first ARDMS examination (excluding PVI and MSK), please note: those who can fully meet an existing ARDMS prerequisite are strongly encouraged to apply under that prerequisite, as future application processing will be faster and easier.
- Applicants who have been approved to take one of the following examinations will apply as a re-applicant (no required supporting documentation) AB, BR, OB/GYN, FE, AE, PE, VT, PS, MSKS.
- A clinical verification (CV) form is not required for the SPE examination.
- To apply for an ARDMS specialty examination (AB, BR, OB/GYN, FE, AE, PE, VT, PS), an existing ARDMS prerequisite must be met.

Important: The name on all supporting documentation must be consistent and must match the name under which you apply. If it does not, you will need to submit legal documentation of the name change (e.g. a marriage/divorce certificate) with your application summary page and all other supporting documentation. Visit [ARDMS.org/manage-personal-information](https://www.ardms.org/manage-personal-information) for details.



Registered Musculoskeletal Sonographer – RMSKS Credential Examination Prerequisite

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to application submission

Education

Must hold an active credential or license in a health related field*.

Individuals who hold a valid medical license in good standing without any conditions or restrictions to practice medicine as an MD, DO, DPM, MBBS, DC, NP, PA, DPT or PT must apply for the RMSK® credential offered by APCA, ARDMS' companion Council.

Required Clinical Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Experience

Performed a minimum of 150 musculoskeletal ultrasound studies within the preceding 36 months of application. None of the 150 case log requirement can be labeled as therapeutic (injection or aspiration). For purposes of satisfying this requirement, these studies must be completed on an actual patient in a clinical diagnostic** setting. Simulation is not acceptable for this attestation.

Recommended Continuing Medical Education (CME)

Although CMEs are not required to apply for the MSKS examination, ARDMS highly recommends and encourages Applicants to earn a minimum of 30 musculoskeletal ultrasound specific CMEs to assist with preparing to take the MSKS examination. Applicants do not need to submit CME documentation as this is only a recommendation and not a requirement.

Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of current, valid license or active credential in a health related field***.
2. Completed online third-party attestation form indicating that you have performed a minimum of 150 musculoskeletal ultrasound studies within the preceding 36 months of application. To download the third-party attestation form, visit [ARDMS.org/MSKS-Attestation](https://www.ardms.org/MSKS-Attestation).

3. Applicants must maintain a patient log indicating that he/she has performed a minimum of 150 musculoskeletal ultrasound studies within the preceding 36 months of application. None of the 150 case log requirement can be labeled as therapeutic (injection or aspiration). This log does not need to be submitted with the application but may be requested as part of a random audit. This documentation should be maintained by the applicant for at least 36 months following the date of application for the MSKS examination.

*An individual whose health care practice is enhanced, or directly related to, the use of musculoskeletal sonography. Completion of an allied healthcare education program does not meet this requirement.

**Clinical diagnostic settings include hospitals, clinics and private practices. ARDMS does not accept volunteer, instructorship, unpaid, barter or veterinarian experience.

***Individuals who hold a valid medical license in good standing without any conditions or restrictions to practice medicine as an MD, DO, DPM, MBBS, DC, NP, PA, DPT or PT must apply for the RMSK certification offered by APCA, ARDMS' companion Council.

Note: The name on all supporting documentation must be consistent and must match the name under which you apply. If it does not, you will need to submit legal documentation of the name change (e.g. a marriage/divorce certificate) and all other supporting documentation.

Musculoskeletal Sonographer (MSKS) Specialty

The Musculoskeletal Sonographer (MSKS) specialty is part of the Registered Musculoskeletal Sonographer (RMSKS) credential. The RMSKS credential examination assesses basic ultrasound-related musculoskeletal knowledge and skills. By earning the RMSKS credential, sonography professionals gain a critical edge in promoting public safety in musculoskeletal sonography.

For MSKS application dates, and examination administration dates, visit [ARDMS.org/MSKS](https://www.ardms.org/MSKS) and select **Schedule**.



Examination Requirements & Prerequisites

Choosing a Prerequisite

To earn an ARDMS credential, Applicants must choose and meet the requirements of a prerequisite.

Please follow the steps below.

1. Review the Prerequisite Prep tool at [ARDMS.org/Prerequisite](https://ardms.org/Prerequisite) to help guide you through the prerequisite selection process and to select a prerequisite that best meets your education and clinical ultrasound experience.
2. Find your education level in the section labeled **Education**.
3. Ensure you have met the clinical experience requirement within that prerequisite.
4. When you see a numbered term, please refer to **Notes About the Prerequisites** section of this guide.
5. Assemble the required documentation under **Documentation Required with Application** and submit with the online application form and appropriate fees. You may now submit your documentation by uploading it into your **MY ARDMS** account (or MY APCA for physicians)!

Eligibility will not be determined by telephone, fax or e-mail.

For a complete prerequisite chart, log on to [ARDMS.org/PrereqChart](https://ardms.org/PrereqChart).



Applicants must apply online, pay all fees, and submit all of the required supporting documentation by the deadline provided in order for ARDMS to determine eligibility.

Prerequisite 1

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to submission. See the Notes About the Prerequisites on page 11 for footnotes, definitions and complete details.

Education

A single two-year allied health education program that is patient- care related.¹

Allied health occupations include, but are not limited to, diagnostic medical sonographer, radiologic technologist, respiratory therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and registered nurse.

Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

12 months of full-time² clinical ultrasound/vascular experience.³

Note: If you are using your DMS/CVT program for the educational requirement, you still have to document an additional 12 months of full-time clinical ultrasound/vascular experience earned outside the two-year program.

Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of an official⁷ transcript from a two-year allied health education program as noted in the **Education** requirement of this prerequisite. Must state specific number of credits and indicate quarter or semester based system. Must include graduation information.
2. Copy of education program certificate, certification or license.
3. Letter verifying completion of clinical ultrasound/vascular experience. Please see [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://ardms.org/SampleLetters) for specific requirements (Employer Sample Letter or Program Completion Sample Letter).³
4. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s). CV forms are available at [ARDMS.org/CV](https://ardms.org/CV).

Prerequisite 2

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to submission. ARDMS does not allow for retro accreditation. See the Notes About the Prerequisites on page 11 for footnotes, definitions and complete details.

Education

Graduate or a student⁶ in a program accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), United States Department of Education (USDOE) or Canadian Medical Association (CMA)/Canadian Health Standards Organization (HSO), that specifically conducts programmatic accreditation for diagnostic medical sonography/diagnostic cardiac sonography/vascular technology. Currently the only organizations that offer programmatic accreditation under the aforementioned associations are the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA)/Canadian Health Standards Organization (HSO). Students whose Program Directors use the Paperless Prerequisite 2 Application Program may apply for the examination(s) up to 60 days prior to graduation. For more information, please visit [ARDMS.org/paperless-application](https://ardms.org/paperless-application).

Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

No additional experience is required.

Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of a diploma from an ultrasound/vascular program or copy of an official⁷ transcript indicating the date the degree was conferred.
2. Letter signed by your program director and/or medical director indicating your date of graduation or successful completion of the program⁴. Program directors must use the mandatory formatted sample letter, available at [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://ardms.org/SampleLetters).
3. The CV form is not required if the application is submitted and received within one year after successful completion of the program. Otherwise a signed and completed CV form for each appropriate specialty area(s) must be submitted. CV forms are available at [ARDMS.org/CV](https://ardms.org/CV).

ARDMS offers a Paperless Application Program for Prerequisite 2 Applicants. For more information please visit [ARDMS.org/Apply](https://ardms.org/Apply).

Prerequisite 3A

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to submission. See the Notes About the Prerequisites on page 11 for footnotes, definitions and complete details.

Education

Bachelor's degree (any major) or foreign degree equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in the U.S. or Canada.

Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

12 months of full-time² clinical ultrasound/vascular experience.³

Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of a Bachelor's degree or copy of an official⁷ transcript earned in the U.S. or Canada, or a copy of a formal foreign transcript evaluation report indicating that the degree is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in the U.S. or Canada.

2. Letter verifying completion of clinical ultrasound/vascular experience. Please see ARDMS.org/SampleLetters for specific requirements (Employer Sample Letter or Program Completion Sample Letter).³

3. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s). CV forms are available at ARDMS.org/CV.

Prerequisite 3B

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to submission. See the Notes About the Prerequisites on page 11 for footnotes, definitions and complete details.

Education

Graduate of or student⁶ in a Bachelor's degree in sonography or vascular technology program or foreign degree equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in sonography or vascular technology in the U.S. or Canada.

Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

No additional experience is required.

Note: Sonography or vascular technology Bachelor's degree Applicants may take the examination one year prior to the completion of degree, provided they have completed 12 months of full-time² clinical experience³ within the program.

Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of a Bachelor's degree or copy of an official⁷ transcript earned in the U.S. or Canada or a copy of a formal foreign transcript evaluation report indicating that the degree is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in the U.S. or Canada.

2. Letter signed by an education program director verifying length of ultrasound or vascular experience. If program is not completed at the time of application, a letter signed by the program director indicating the graduation date and completion of appropriate clinical ultrasound experience³ is needed⁵. Program directors must use the mandatory formatted student or graduate sample letters, available at ARDMS.org/SampleLetters.

3. The clinical verification (CV) form is not required if the application is submitted and received within one year prior to successful completion of the program, provided that the Applicant has completed 12 months of full-time clinical experience within the program at the time that the application is submitted. Otherwise, a signed and completed CV form for each appropriate specialty area(s) must be submitted. CV forms are available at ARDMS.org/CV.

Prerequisite 5

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to submission. See the Notes About the Prerequisites on page 11 for footnotes, definitions and complete details.

Education

General—Must hold one of the following Active credentials:

ONLY RCS, RCCS or RVS through Cardiovascular Credentialing International (CCI), or

ONLY Sonography, Vascular Sonography or Breast Sonography through American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT), or

ONLY CRGS, CRCS or CRVS through Sonography Canada, or

Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

Previously met by achievement of other organization's certification.

Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of Active credential identification card or copy of license reflecting an acceptable certification as noted in the **Education** requirement at this prerequisite.

2. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s). CV forms are available at ARDMS.org/CV.

ARDMS Physician Prerequisite

Note: All listed items must be met and completed prior to submission. See the Notes About The Prerequisites on page 11 for footnotes, definitions and complete details.

Education

MD, DO license, or MBBS degree

Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

Minimum of 500 clinical diagnostic studies/cases in the applied for specialty area completed over a minimum of 6 months.

Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of current, valid license to practice.

2. Letter verifying completion of clinical ultrasound/vascular experience. Please see ARDMS.org/SampleLetters for specific requirements.

3. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s), CV forms are available at ARDMS.org/CV.

4. Applicants must maintain a patient log indicating that he/she has performed a minimum of 500 clinical diagnostic studies/cases. This log does not need to be submitted with the application but may be requested as part of a random audit. This documentation should be maintained by the applicant for at least 36 months following the date of application.

Notes About the Prerequisites

¹A two-year allied health education program that is patient-care related is defined as (1) 24 full-time consecutive calendar months or (2) 60 semester credits or (3) 84 quarter credits (4) and requiring a clinical internship/externship to complete the program. Credit hours are based on U.S. equivalency in a post-secondary institution. The program or school must be authorized by an accrediting agency to award semester or quarter credits and the type of credits granted must be reflected on the transcript. Transcripts reflecting clock hours must be converted to credit hours. If submitting a foreign degree, a formal course by course foreign transcript evaluation report must accompany the application summary and indicate the aforementioned requirements.

² Full-time is defined as 35 hours per week, at least 48 weeks per year. If working part time, the requirements are prorated. Twenty hours per week would take approximately

two years. The full-time definition applies to both paid clinical ultrasound/vascular experience and experience earned through completion of a formal ultrasound/vascular program.

³ Clinical ultrasound/vascular experience may be obtained one of two ways: (1) being employed as an ultrasound/vascular sonographer in a clinical setting for a minimum of 12 months and a minimum of 1,680 hours, or (2) successfully completing a formal, full-time ultrasound/vascular program that is a minimum of 12 months in length, a minimum of 1,680 total program hours, including appropriate clinical and didactic hours, and requires a clinical internship/externship to complete the program. If the total length of the program exceeds 12 months, the Applicant must successfully complete the program in its entirety prior to using the program as documentation of the required clinical ultrasound/vascular experience. Note: the above two options are not applicable to Prerequisite 3B. To apply as a student under Prerequisite 3B, the Applicant must have completed a minimum of 1,680 hours of clinical scanning experience over a minimum of 12 months within the program. It is recommended that an Applicant be directly involved in a minimum of 800 diagnostic cases during his/her clinical experience in each specialty area for which he/she is applying. Clinical diagnostic settings include hospitals, clinics and private practices. ARDMS does not accept volunteer, instructorship, unpaid, barter or veterinarian experience. The time frames in which the education and clinical requirements are met cannot overlap. Additionally, if the Applicant is using an ultrasound program to meet the clinical ultrasound/vascular experience then credits from the program used to meet the educational requirement cannot be transferred into the ultrasound program. This would be considered an overlap and therefore unacceptable. Clinical experience earned to document the education requirement cannot also be used to support the clinical requirement.

⁴ The mandatory Prerequisite 2 Application letter (found on [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://ardms.org/SampleLetters)) is valid for one year from the date of graduation. If the application and appropriate supporting documentation are not received within one year from the date of graduation, after one year of successful completion of the program, the Applicant will need new documentation verifying successful program completion, and a current, completed, signed CV form for each applied-for specialty area will be required. A letter per student is required. First-time Applicants applying under Prerequisite 2 must apply for either the Sonography Principles & Instrumentation (SPI) examination or a specialty area that is included within the programmatically accredited curriculum.

⁵ The mandatory Student Prerequisite 3B Application Letter (found on [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://ardms.org/SampleLetters)), is valid through the expected graduation date. If the student chooses to apply after graduation, then the Graduate Prerequisite 3B Application letter (found on [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://ardms.org/SampleLetters)) and a current, completed, signed CV form for each applied-for specialty area will be required. A letter per student is required.

Note: If the Bachelor's Degree sonography/vascular technology program is also programmatically accredited through one of the following: Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), United States Department of Education (USDOE), or Canadian Medical Association (CMA)/Canadian Health Standards Organization (HSO), and the students have graduated, then the prerequisite 3B students should apply under Prerequisite 2.

⁶ Students deemed eligible for examination under Prerequisite 2 or 3B prior to graduation must successfully complete said program in order to be able to keep any credentials awarded by the ARDMS. In the event that the student does not successfully complete said program, ARDMS, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to rescind any credentials earned.

⁷ Official transcripts may be opened so they can be uploaded into a **MY ARDMS** or MY APCA account for submission.

Note: Prerequisite requirements are subject to change at any time and from time to time. Applicants must meet current prerequisite requirements in effect at the time of application. ARDMS, in its discretion, may request from you or others information concerning matters that may be relevant to your eligibility for certification and certification status. Documentation received in a language other than English must include a notarized translation in English. All documents, communications, and other information received by ARDMS become the property of ARDMS and will not be returned.

Note: ARDMS, in its discretion, may request from you or others information concerning matters that may be relevant to your eligibility for certification and certification status.

Documentation (MD licenses, CMEs, etc.) received in a language other than English must include a notarized translation in English and all submitted foreign degrees must be accompanied by a course by course evaluation done by a Foreign Education Transcript Evaluation Organization.

All documents, communications, and other information received by ARDMS become the property of ARDMS and will not be returned.

Impartiality

ARDMS functions under policies intended to demonstrate impartiality, high ethical standards, and validity of its certification assessments. ARDMS does not restrict Applicants, Candidates, or becoming a Registrant based on limiting conditions, such as membership of an association or professional society of any organization. ARDMS will not unfairly impede or inhibit access to its certification to Applicants, Candidates or Registrants who meet our stated policies regarding qualification requirements, renewal requirements and/or passing ARDMS' psychometrically sound certification assessments.