

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When does the Adult Echocardiography program start, and when is the deadline for applications?

A: The program begins on or around July 1 each year. Applications open in early fall and are due by February 1 for the cohort beginning in July. Applications that are incomplete or received after the deadline will not be considered.

2. What are the prerequisites for the Echocardiography program?

A: Admission prerequisites and academic requirements are outlined in detail on our Admissions page:

<https://wvumedicine.org/radtech/echocardiography/>

3. What kind of physics course is required?

A: Any college-level physics course. It does not have to include a lab component.

4. Can a program prerequisite be completed online?

A: Yes, provided the institution offering the course is regionally accredited.

5. What is the basic format of the Adult Echocardiography program?

A: The Adult Echocardiography program is a full-time, 12-month accelerated certification program combining classroom instruction and hands-on clinical training.

Students participate in approximately 40 hours per week of scheduled educational activities. Clinical education is conducted within the Heart and Vascular Institute at West Virginia University Hospitals. Didactic instruction is held in the WVU Health Sciences Building.

This integrated format allows students to apply classroom knowledge directly to real-world clinical experiences throughout the program.

6. What are the hours of attendance for the Adult Echocardiography program?

A: Clinical and didactic schedules are Monday–Friday, 7:00 am–3:30 pm. Students are not scheduled for weekend, holiday, or overnight rotations.

7. Can I transfer from another program or enroll in a part-time option?

A: The program is designed as a full-time, 12-month accelerated certificate program and does not offer part-time or transfer options.

8. How many students are accepted into the program each year?

A: Each year, approximately 10 candidates are selected for interviews. Five students are admitted into the program, with additional candidates placed on a waitlist.

9. When are students notified of their application status?

A: Applicants are notified in early February regarding interview selection. Interviews are conducted in late February, and final admission decisions are communicated by early March.

10. What are the costs associated with attending the Adult Echocardiography program?

A: Tuition – \$1500.00 per semester

Program Fees

- \$50 non-refundable admission fee (due upon acceptance)
- \$25 graduation fee
- \$100 Trajecsyst clinical tracking system fee (one-time fee for the 12-month program)

Estimated Additional Costs

- Books & required materials: approximately \$675 (subject to change)
- Uniforms: estimated \$200-300 for the program duration

Technology Requirement

Students are required to have access to a laptop or iPad for use during the program. Specific technology guidelines will be provided upon acceptance.

Credentialing Exams – (paid directly to the credentialing agency upon graduation)

Graduates apply for certification through one of the following agencies:

American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonographers - ARMDS (both exams must be passed to be credentialed)

1. Sonography Principles & Instrumentation (SPI) \$250-275
2. Adult Echocardiography \$300-400

Cardiovascular Credentialing International - CCI

Registered Cardiac Sonographer: approx. \$365

Credentialing exam fees are set by the respective agencies and are subject to change.

11. Is financial aid available?

A: This program is not eligible for Federal financial aid.

12. If I'm not accepted this year, do I have to reapply next year?

A: Yes, you must resubmit a new application if you wish to reapply for the next year. Application files are kept, so if you reapply within 1 year, you will not need to resubmit your ACT/SAT scores or your academic transcripts unless you have completed additional coursework or retaken the ACT/SAT exam(s) during that time frame.

13. If not selected this year, what can I do to improve my chances of admission if I reapply next year?

A: Enrollment into the Echocardiography program is competitive. The following are recommendations that may improve your chances of admission:

- Complete additional or re-take college-level coursework to improve your academic points (See admissions policy)
- Retake and improve your composite score on the ACT or SAT exam
- Obtain experience in direct patient care
- Thoroughly research the profession of Echocardiography and inquire about shadowing opportunities

14. Is WVU Medicine tuition reimbursement available for this program?

A: Students who are employees of WVU Medicine or have a parent or guardian employed through WVU Medicine may be eligible for the WVU Medicine Employee Tuition Reimbursement program.

15. How is this program different from other post-secondary education programs?

A: Our Echocardiography program is an accelerated, immersive healthcare training experience. Unlike traditional college programs, where classroom learning is the primary focus, this program integrates didactic coursework and hands-on clinical training.

Students spend significant time both in the classroom and in the clinical setting. The pace is rigorous, and success requires strong time management, accountability, and commitment. Many students describe the experience as similar to balancing a full-time job while completing advanced coursework.

Because this is a healthcare profession, professionalism and maturity are essential. Students are expected to demonstrate:

- Consistent attendance
- High academic standards
- Strong clinical skill development
- Respectful and compassionate patient interaction

Clinical education begins early in the program. Students work directly with adult patients who may have complex medical conditions. Exposure to real-world healthcare environments means students must be prepared to encounter illness, physical limitations, bleeding, infectious disease precautions, and emotionally challenging situations.

Throughout training, students are expected to provide care to all patients with professionalism and empathy, regardless of background or medical condition, while maintaining strict patient confidentiality.

This program is designed for individuals who are serious about entering the field of cardiac ultrasound and who are ready to fully commit to the demands of healthcare education.

16. Are musculoskeletal injuries common in sonography?

A: Yes. Studies have shown that musculoskeletal discomfort and injury are common among sonographers due to the repetitive and ergonomic demands of scanning. Symptoms may range from mild discomfort to chronic pain and can affect a sonographer's ability to perform clinical duties.

17. What areas of the body are most commonly affected?

A: Should, neck, wrist and hand, elbow and forearm, upper and lower back. These areas may become strained due to repetitive transducer manipulation, reaching, twisting, leaning, or maintaining static positions during examinations.

18. What is the program's expectation regarding ergonomics and safe scanning practices?

A: Students are expected to actively participate in ergonomic training, apply safe body mechanics during laboratory and clinical experiences, and demonstrate professional responsibility in maintaining workplace safety practices for themselves and their patients.