



## **DMS PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Can I learn a different specialty after I complete the Gwinnett Technical College DMS Sonography Program?**

Yes, in fact many sonographers learn a new specialty and attain additional credentials after completing a DMS General Sonography program. One of the most common is the addition of credentials in Vascular Technology.

### **Can I do this program part-time or in the evening only?**

No, the Sonography Program is designed as full-time day courses of study which enables the student to finish as quickly as possible, learn the required coursework and complete the required clinical experience/competencies. Clinical education centers maintain a full staff of clinical instructors in the regular day shift and schedule fewer sonographers in the evening.

### **Can I request to be assigned only to clinical sites inside the city of Lawrenceville?**

Sonography students may be assigned to any of the clinical sites utilized by the program and may not request assignment to a particular site for any reason. Students are assigned by the program to a variety of clinical sites (hospitals, clinics, and physician/specialty practices) throughout the length of the program to provide the student with the well-rounded clinical education. Some clinical sites perform specific sonographic examinations and some are highly specialized. Sites used by the Sonography Program are located in Lawrenceville, Gainesville, Athens and the surrounding Atlanta area. Rotations to some clinical sites that have late shifts may be offered to students upon Program Director's approval.

### **How many students are accepted for each class?**

Sonography programs tie admission numbers/class sizes to the number of available, appropriate clinical sites that will accept students for clinical placements during the length of the program. Since Gwinnett Technical College is aiming for CAAHEP accreditation, we are using these standards. The DMS program projects 16 students per class.

### **I heard that you have to be a nurse or a Radiographer to do the Sonography program. Is that true?**

No. Gwinnett Technical College offers the Associate of Science Degree for DMS and ECHO and only the currently published requirements need to be met to apply for admission.

### **I have a BS degree or higher. Is there an accelerated plan for me to enter the Sonography program?**

No, all applicants must complete all prerequisites as stated. No exceptions or advance placement is made for those with advanced education regardless of the type of degree.

### **I heard there is a two-year waiting list for the Sonography program. Is this true?**

No, the "waiting list" applicant format is not used by the Gwinnett Technical College sonography program. An applicant is ranked within the pool for each class. Therefore the

applicant pool is “fresh” for each class. If an applicant is not accepted, he/she is welcome to reapply for the next admission class.

**Can I finish my college course prerequisites in the semester while my application is considered?**

No, specific prerequisite college courses must be completed prior to application to the program, by the application deadline which will be May 20 of the current year every year with a fall start. GPA from the prerequisite courses is a major component in ranking the DMS applicant.

**Where should I have my letters of recommendation sent?**

Letters of recommendation, employment awards, resumes, and/or notes from previously employers are NOT part of the application process and are not accepted.

**Is a Criminal Background Check and Drug Screen a program requirement?**

Yes. Only students admitted to the Sonography program will receive instructions regarding the CBC, drug screening process, DMS Health Form, and Felony Acknowledgement Forms after you have been accepted in the DMS Program.

**I need to work at least part-time if I am admitted to the DMS program. Is this possible?**

The amount of time a Sonography student must spend in study, practice and attending clinical rotations is significant. The Sonography Program cannot make accommodations for a student's work schedule. Most Sonography students find it difficult to maintain passing grades in their Sonography courses and work at the same time but it can be done if one is determined and organized.

**Are the graduates able to sit for the ARDMS exams?**

Yes, Gwinnett Technical College DMS students are required to pass the SPI (Sonographic Principles and Instrumentation examination) **and** attempt both the Abdomen and OB/GYN registry examinations prior to graduation.

**Are Sonography students in class a lot during the week?**

Sonography course schedules vary by semester but a Sonography student can expect to be in a lecture class two to three times a week with labs as assigned. Sonography scanning labs are intensive the first two semesters of DMS education, up to 12 hours/week. Optional lab hours (highly encouraged) are available each semesters. Many Sonography didactic (lecture) courses have a lab that is part of the course. In addition to the above lecture/lab and scanning lab sessions, the Sonography student attends clinical affiliate education hours two to four days/week that varies each semester.

**Will I have to wear a uniform and dress a certain way when I am a Sonography student?**

Yes, Gwinnett Technical College Sonography students represent themselves, the Sonography Profession, and Gwinnett Technical College at all times. Sonography students are required to

meet a dress code which includes wearing a program color-specified scrub top, pant, optional lab jacket/coat and quality, appropriate shoes. Your appearance must comply with this dress code for all clinical and scanning lab courses/sessions.

**How long is the program?**

Prerequisite educational and core courses may take a year or longer depending on classes needed and student course load choices. Following completion of prerequisite courses and acceptance into the program, the DMS Program is five consecutive semesters, about 21 months.

**Will Gwinnett Technical College accept my transfer courses?**

College policies dictate how course credit is transferred or accepted (see Credit by Transfer). It is the applicant's responsibility to check the transferability of all courses.

**What degree will I receive from Gwinnett Technical College after successfully completing the DMS Program?**

Associate of Applied Science Degree in Diagnostic Medical Sonography

**Where are the DMS classes held?**

Didactic classes are at the Gwinnett Technical College Campus, Lawrenceville, GA.

**Do I get to choose my clinical sites?**

No. The clinical coordinator schedules all rotations to ensure the widest range of student experiences. Students travel to several different clinical sites for their clinical instruction/education with ARDMS certified sonographers. Students must have dependable transportation. Clinical sites are within an hour (distance measure not traffic measure) from Gwinnett Technical College.

**Do men enter this profession?**

Certainly, there are several male clinical instructors for our program. Some exams may require a chaperone depending on employer policies.

**Are many jobs available for sonographers?**

According to the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Occupational Outlook for 2016-2026 the employment of diagnostic medical sonographers is expected to increase by about 23 percent through 2026, a more rapid increase than the average for all other occupations.

Nationally there is a shortage of registered sonographers in all specialties and for many types of employment settings. Here in Lawrenceville and Georgia in general there are times when several full-time and/or part-time job openings are available in a variety of employment settings.

Sonographer job vacancies vary as departments may only employ three or four sonographers for all shifts as compared to tens or even hundreds of nurses employed in a facility.

**What is the current average salary?**

According to the 2018 Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography Survey and the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, salaries averaged \$73,132 (\$35.16/hour) which includes all levels of experience.

**What are the opportunities for advancement in the sonography field?**

Graduates find jobs in advanced scanning labs, sales, marketing, supervisory positions, research, technical advisors, education, writing, are just a few examples.

**Where can I get more information about a career in DMS?**

The best websites are: [sdms.org](http://sdms.org) (Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography); [ardms.org](http://ardms.org) (American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography); [aium.org](http://aium.org) (American Institute for Ultrasound in Medicine).

**How can I schedule a volunteer appointment? Call or email:**

Tavia Thurmond at [tthurmond@gwinnettech.edu](mailto:tthurmond@gwinnettech.edu) or 678-226-6404