



Histotechnician Program **Information Guide**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

Dear Prospective Histotechnician Student,

Thank you for your interest in Reading Area Community College's Histotechnology (HT) program. Histotechnicians are in high demand nationwide and the field is fast-growing with many new advances in biotechnology. These new advances have created new job opportunities. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with additional information about the HT Program to help you make an informed decision.

The Histotechnician Program at RACC is currently seeking accreditation by the National Accrediting Agency of Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS) and is currently in "Serious Applicant Status". Graduates of the program are eligible to sit for the Board of Certification examination given by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP).

I wish you the very best in your educational journey.

Sincerely,

Alayne Fessler

Alayne H. Fessler, M.Ed., MT (ASCP)

Professor/Program Director

Medical Laboratory Technician & Histotechnician Programs

Reading Area Community College

WANT MORE INFO? WHO TO CONTACT:

HT Program Director: Alayne H. Fessler, M.Ed., MT (ASCP) afessler@racc.edu

HT Program Education Coordinator, Adjunct Faculty: Donna Chuddley, AAS, BS, HT (ASCP)QLS^{cm} dchuddley@racc.edu

In addition to the HT program advisors, Connection Coaches and Success Navigators are located in the Student Success Center in B209 to provide assistance with registration and academic planning.

<https://www.racc.edu/academics/academic-advising>

ACCREDITATION:

Reading Area Community College is seeking accreditation by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) for the Histotechnician Program. For complete information on the NAACLS accreditation status, please go to www.naacls.org

National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), 5600 North River Road, Suite 720
Rosemont, Illinois 60018 Phone 773-714-8880

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The AAS degree program in Histotechnology is designed to provide quality instruction to develop highly skilled and ethical histologic technology providers. Students will obtain the necessary academic and technical skills in all areas of the histology laboratory. Technical skills will include training to process body tissues for microscopic examination, frozen section assistance, embedding techniques, microtomy, and special staining techniques.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Mission of the Histotechnician Program is to provide the region with graduate histotechnicians with entry-level knowledge, application, and problem-solving skills to competently and safely perform histological procedures while functioning as an integral member of the healthcare team.

PROGRAM GOAL:

The primary goal of this Program is to provide the theoretical and practical training necessary to prepare a student to enter the job market as an entry-level, competent histotechnician who is eligible to become a certified Histotechnician (HT) through the American Society for Clinical Pathology.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion from the Histotechnician Program, graduates will:

- Demonstrate the knowledge and skills to perform current laboratory procedures as entry-level histotechnicians.
- Follow approved safety procedures and standards of practice when working in the histology laboratory.
- Recognize unexpected results and instrument malfunctions and take appropriate actions.
- Exhibit professional and ethical behaviors consistent with those of a healthcare professional.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Essential functions (or technical performance standards) represent the essential non-academic requirements that students in the Histotechnician Program must demonstrate to participate in the Program successfully. Students must be able to affirm their ability to comply with the following functions:

I. Physical Requirements:

A. OVERALL PHYSICAL HEALTH:

- Possess the overall physical, mental, and emotional health to maintain alertness and concentration during a clinical day under the stressful conditions of technical malfunctions, time constraints, and a distracting environment
- Bend, stoop, stand, and lift and move objects of at least 20 pounds
- Perform moderately taxing repetitive tasks, often requiring prolonged sitting or standing over several hours

B. MANUAL DEXTERITY:

- Possess sufficient hand-eye motor coordination to allow delicate manipulations of specimens, instruments, and tools
- Grasp and release small objects (such as specimens, specimen containers, forceps, scalpels, slides, coverslips, pipette tips, pipettes, reagent vials)
- Fine motor skills to twist and turn dials/knobs, pick up small objects, pinch, twist, and squeeze.
- Utilize a computer keyboard and mouse to operate laboratory instruments and verify and transmit data

C. VISION:

- Read and interpret charts, graphs, labels, instrument panels, and printouts
- Discriminate colors, hue, shading or intensity and clarity
- Read microscopic material and record results
- Possess adequate peripheral vision
- Judge distance and depth accurately
- Read a computer screen

D. SPEECH AND HEARING:

- Possess normal or correctable hearing to receive directions, respond to questions, answer phones, and respond to beepers, timers, or alarms.
- Communicate effectively and sensitively to assess and comprehend verbal communication and adequately transmit information.

II. Interpersonal Skills:

A. BEHAVIOR:

- Interact with coworkers and other members of the health care team in a polite, professional manner
- Function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments and display flexibility
- Demonstrate integrity, concern for others, commitment, and motivation

B. COMMUNICATION:

- Read and write in English in order to receive written and verbal instructions and accurately carry them out using proper channels of communication
- Follow verbal and written instructions in English
- Read and comprehend text, numbers, and graphs in professional and technical materials
- Use applicable computer software and the Internet for communication, education, and professional purposes

SELECTIVE ADMISSION PROCESS:

Clinical resources are limited. Therefore, admission into the Histotechnician Program is on a selective basis. The deadline to apply for “clinical student status” application is January 1 in order to participate in the first summer practicum.

The student must meet the following ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA To be considered for selective admission into the Histotechnician Program:

1. At the time of application, the following courses must be completed or currently in progress: BIO 250, MAT 130, and HTT 110.
2. HT students must have a "C" or better in all courses in the HT curriculum.
3. The student must achieve a science/math GPA of 2.5 or higher (combined GPA of BIO 250, MAT 130, and HTT 110).
4. No course in the Histotechnician Program curriculum, or which is a prerequisite for a course in the curriculum, can be repeated more than once. This requirement includes any courses taken at RACC or at another institution. It also includes courses from which the student may have withdrawn or in which the student earned less than a “C” grade.
5. No more than 12 credits of the Histotechnician Program curriculum may be repeated. This includes courses taken at RACC and at other institutions. It also includes withdrawals or courses in which the student earned less than a “C” grade.
6. Course repeats or withdrawals that are older than ten years may be excluded from consideration in the admissions process at the discretion of the program director.
7. The student must meet with the HT Program Director to determine eligibility and to certify that the student is able to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a Medical Laboratory Technician Student by agreement through the “Essential Functions” document.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The student must submit the following by January 1:

1. Submit a comprehensive Letter of Intent requesting clinical student status.
2. Submit two (2) letters of recommendation; at least one must be from a RACC faculty member. Students from LCCC or NCC may substitute a faculty recommendation from their home school.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. The HT Selection Committee will meet after January 1 to determine eligibility, evaluate the applicant’s application materials and assign a rank value to each applicant. A point system will determine the rank of the student applicants. Incremental points will be awarded based on several criteria, including cumulative GPA, science /math GPA (combined GPA of BIO 250, MAT 130, HTT 110).

2. Accepted students will be accepted beginning with the highest-ranked student until all the available clinical spaces are filled.
3. Students meeting the criteria but not assigned due to lack of clinical sites will be placed on a ranked waiting list unless space becomes available before the beginning of the summer semester. Students not given a clinical assignment will be required to re-apply the next year following the full application protocol.
4. Students declining clinical placement will be required to re-apply the following year.
5. The student will receive a notice stating the committee's decision (Accepted, Accepted with provision, Declined, or Waiting list) and clinical site assignment by February 1. Accepted students may register for the summer practicum 1 (HTT 150).
6. Progression into clinical experience is contingent upon satisfactory completion of coursework and maintenance of a 2.5 GPA in science and math.
7. All students are required to meet the health and immunization requirements of Reading Area Community College and our clinical affiliates. Accepted students will complete and submit the following to Castle Branch by April 15:
 - a. Complete medical assessment including a physical exam and medical history
 - b. Proof of immunity for Measles, Mumps, Rubella Varicella, and Hepatitis B
 - c. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination; current Flu vaccination; Tdap vaccination
 - d. Tuberculosis screening
8. Certification in Basic Life Support (BLS) by the American Heart Association.
9. "No record" status for PA Child Abuse Clearance, PA State Police Criminal Record Check, FBI fingerprint check.
10. Proof of a negative drug screen within 30 days of the first day of the summer practicum.
11. Proof of current enrollment in a health insurance plan.
12. Students must agree to abide by dress code/personal appearance and other policies set forth by the clinical affiliates

The above policies may be changed or modified to comply with the accreditation agency or affiliate requirements. The Histotechnician Program reserves the right to make changes in the admission process without prior notice.

The HT program reserves the right to review any HT student's academic performance and personal characteristics. Such a review may result in the dismissal of the student from the HT Program.

TUTORING SERVICES:

Online and In-person tutoring service are available by subject area. Walk-In or schedule an appointment. To check hours or to schedule an appointment go to racc.mywconline.com

Locations:

The Math Learning Center: BERKS HALL B-506

Science Learning Center: Yocum Library, third floor

The Writing Studio: Academic Learning Commons, Yocum Library, 4th floor

Student Success Coach

LOCATED IN WEITZ HALL room 110. Services available include:

- Math review
- Content review
- Study and Reading skills
- Time Management and Organization skills
- Test taking strategies
- Stress Management

For more information, contact our Student Success Coach: Dr. Megan Zerillo at mzerillo@racc.edu

For additional information regarding tutoring services go to: <https://www.racc.edu/services/achievement-center>

SAFETY POLICIES:

AT THE CLINICAL SITE:

1. The student must follow all safety policies of the clinical agency.
2. The student must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). The clinical agency will supply lab coats, gloves, and face shields if required. Failure to use proper PPE will result in written warnings and may result in dismissal from the Program.
3. Injuries or exposures to blood and body fluids or contaminated materials must be IMMEDIATELY reported to the clinical instructor and supervisor of the department. The student must report the incident to the program director as well and submit an incident report. Failure to report an injury or exposure immediately may result in dismissal from the Program.
4. Incident Report: An incident report must be filed whenever an occurrence has happened between a student and a patient or an instructor, or when a student has sustained an injury during the clinical period. Two separate reports must be filed: one from the clinical agency and one from the College. The student must notify the program director within 24 hours of the incident. The report should be filed as soon as possible. The person completing the information should report the incident in a factual, objective, and sequential manner and provide all supporting data.

ACCIDENTS, INJURIES, AND EMERGENCY CARE:

At the clinical site, students may be working with human tissue, blood, and body fluid specimens. The specimens can transmit bloodborne pathogens such as Hepatitis B and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Accidental exposure to potentially infectious blood or body fluids is an occupational hazard of Histotechnicians. With proper safety training and equipment, students can avoid exposures. However, a certain amount of risk remains.

1. Students must carry health insurance to provide for costs related to diagnostic services, hospital care, emergency room care, and physician's fees.
2. Students who sustain an injury at the clinical site will need to be examined and are personally responsible for those costs incurred.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Honesty is an essential value in any healthcare profession. Students participating in Reading Area Community College's HT program must embrace this core value if the profession's integrity is to be upheld.

Academic Honesty includes but is not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials. Depending upon the nature and severity of the dishonest act, the Program Director may discipline a student, including removing the student from the course and possible expulsion from the Program.

Academic dishonesty as outlined in the College policy: *Academic Honesty and Copyright Policy*

<https://www.racc.edu/sites/default/files/imported/Academics/Catalogs/AcademicHonestyPolicy.pdf>

COMPLETION OF THE HISTOTECHNICIAN PROGRAM:

All HT classes and HT practicum requirements must be successfully completed as assigned to complete the Program. A grade of 70% or higher is required to pass any course.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

1. When a student has a complaint issue, the student should document the complaint in writing. If the complaint is urgent, the student may make a verbal complaint, followed by written documentation.
2. The Program Director then will discuss the complaint and possible solutions with the student. The Program Director will take action, where appropriate, to resolve the problem.
3. If the problem cannot be resolved on this level, the student will meet with the Program Director and the Dean of Health Professions to resolve the issue. If it is not resolved, it will be referred to a college administrator.

TEACH OUT PLAN IN THE EVENT OF AN UNEXPECTED CLOSURE:

In the situation where an unforeseen event occurs that results in an interruption of the College's ability to operate the Histotechnician Program, the program director will make every effort for currently enrolled students to continue their training. The College will continue to provide the necessary resources and support to the current HT students in the Program to meet the requirements for graduation from the HT program.

For clinical students with an interruption of their clinical training, attempts will be made to accommodate the student to complete the training. If any other clinical site is available, the program director may move the student to another site to complete their training. Students may also be provided with remote or virtual learning alternatives to meet course competencies and program learning outcomes.

In the event of an administrative decision to suspend the operation of the Histotechnician Program, new students will not be admitted to the Program, but current students will follow their academic plan to complete the program requirements.

If the Teach-Out Plan ever goes into effect, the Program Director will submit the Teach-Out Plan to NAACLS within 30 days of the official announcement of the closure of the Program.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:

Social media is designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques within a public domain. Examples include but are not limited to personal blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube websites.

In academic and clinical roles, students need to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in a working, professional environment. The same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with other students, program faculty, program alumni, clinical preceptors and instructors, patients, patient's families, and any other program or college constituents apply online as in the real world. Students are liable for anything they post to social media sites.

Under no circumstances is it permissible for a student to discuss patients, clinical sites, program faculty, or grievances related to the Program, the Program Faculty, the Clinical Sites, Preceptors, Instructors, or the College through social media. Posting any identifiable information (such as photographs, video recordings, etc.) related to the aforementioned is strictly prohibited.

Failure to follow this policy may result in dismissal from the HT Program and the College.

SERVICE WORK POLICY:

Clinical rotations are designed to enhance the student's integration of theory and practical skills. Students will perform actual laboratory testing under the supervision of a clinical preceptor. Students cannot perform laboratory testing or report laboratory results without the supervision and co-signature of the clinical preceptor. Students are encouraged to help with the work in an assigned laboratory; however, they are not to take the place of a paid employee

- Students who choose to become employed in the facility where they are enrolled as RACC Histotechnician Program students may do so before or after regular student hours.
- Employment is by choice of the HT student. Student grades or evaluations cannot be influenced by such employment.
- The clinical facility site employer will pay for the employment of the HT student outside of student hours.
- Any competencies or criteria that need to be met as employment eligibility shall be set by the employer alone.
- Reading Area Community College will accept no responsibility for employment activities sought by students after regular school hours. Such agreements will exist solely between the student and the employer.

GRADUATION:

All students completing the Program must apply for graduation online through the RACC portal in "Self-Service". ***The granting of the Associate's Degree in Applied Science in the Histotechnician Program is not contingent upon a student passing any type of external certification or licensure examination***