

Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (DMS)

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY, SPECIALIZATION IN ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

Fall 2026 Application

Thank you for your interest in the diagnostic medical sonography program at RCC. If you are eligible (see requirements below), this packet will help you to be successful in your application process. If you need help with this process at any time, please contact a college success navigator. Upon successful completion of the diagnostic medical sonography program curriculum, graduates will be eligible to apply for the Registered Diagnostic Cardiac Sonographer (RDCS) or Cardiovascular Credentialing International CCI examination.

Special Note:

- The Associate of Applied Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Specialization in Echocardiography has approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and the State Council of Higher Education.
- Voluntary accreditation is being sought through CAAHEP (Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs). This approval process is 18-36 months to complete. Students graduating prior to this approval will be eligible to sit for the credentialing exam if; 1. You have a bachelor's degree in any field already, or 2. Once 12 months of hands-on work post-graduation are completed. This is a common practice in sonography.

The diagnostic medical sonography program at RCC is restricted, meaning that there are additional requirements for enrollment over and above those required by the college. Further, there are limited resources of space and faculty to support student learning needs. Thus, the application process is rigorous, and only the most qualified applicants are accepted for the limited seats available. **Submission of the application does not guarantee your acceptance into the program.** Your application must be evaluated in comparison to all others received to determine eligibility. Placement is given to eligible students within the service region ***based on ranking first***. Remaining seats will be filled based on availability, student eligibility, and ranking.

Students currently enrolled in a Pre-DMS program are eligible to apply but ***admission is not guaranteed***. If accepted into the DMS program the classes begin in the Fall of 2026.

Application Dates

Applications may be submitted to start in Fall 2026 according to the following procedures:

- The Admission Committee will rank eligible applicants first and all other applicants who are completing prerequisites second. See ranking information below.
- Students currently enrolled in courses needed to fulfill academic requirements for admission into the DMS program should submit applications by the due date below. You may be awarded provisional acceptance pending completion of all academic requirements. Confirmed acceptance into the program will not be considered until the courses are completed and grades have been posted.

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- No applications will be accepted beyond the cutoff dates. Please plan accordingly.
- Students previously admitted to the RCC Pre-DMS program are eligible to apply

NOTE: Applications are due:

- **Open 1st Monday of March - Close Last Monday of March @ 5 pm for Fall 2026.**

All applicants will be notified regarding the status of the application via RCC email by:

- ✉ **Mid-April @ 5 pm for Fall 2026.**
- ✉ **For Fall 2026 students must accept or decline their seat by Last Friday of April, 2026 @11:59 pm.**

Mandatory Orientation Dates

Program orientation will be in person:

- **Last Wed of May 2026 @ 10 am for the DMS program for Fall 2026 in the Glenns Room TBA**

Please plan accordingly. A second mandatory orientation *may be necessary* the week before classes begin in August.

Applicants Ranking Process for DMS Program entrance:

Block 1:

Student in Service Area: <https://www.rappahannock.edu/about-rcc/rcc-educational-foundation/index.html> or greater than 50% of college courses taken at RCC regardless of home address

College GPA 2.5 or above in the DMS prerequisite courses (SDV 101, MTH 154, PHY 100, ENG 111, BIO 141 & BIO 142)

TEAS Entrance Test Scores minimum 60% overall with a minimum of 50% in each category. Emphasis placed on Overall and Science and Math.

Point allocation for: prerequisite course completion + GPA + TEAS scores
Completed all prerequisites

Block 2: One prerequisite in process + above criteria

Block 3: Outside of Service Region

With point system and in the order as above

Block 4: Students who have had a previous unsuccessful attempt in DMS program within three years, meeting the requirements above and in the order as above

Application Process

1) Admission to the College

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- a) New RCC students or students that have been separated from the college for more than three years must complete a separate application for admission to RCC before applying to the DMS Program. Applications may be obtained online at the RCC website [Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#) or from the admissions office at the college. Please be sure to indicate the Pre-DMS as your program of interest so that you will receive current information about the DMS program.
- b) Continuing students do not need to complete another application to the college. Students who are admitted to the DMS program will have their program plan changed automatically to the Diagnostic Medical Sonography Program following receipt of intent to enroll through the college registrar's office.
- c) Financial Aid: Applicants needing financial aid should complete a FAFSA form and return it to the financial aid office as soon as possible. Go to <https://www.rappahannock.edu/admissions/financial-aid> and meet with a financial aid advisor if you have any questions.
- d) Be sure to keep your personal information updated in the Student Information System (SIS).

2) **Completion of Academic Requirements**

Prior to application students must have:

- a) Graduated from High School or completed a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) by the time of application;
- b) Been admitted to the Pre-DMS Program and have had a college success navigator assigned to you.
- c) Completed or currently enrolled in a Pre-DMS program. On track to complete the pre-reqs by Spring 2026

Pre-DMS Program: At the time of application students must have:

- 1) Completed or be enrolled in the following six courses with a grade of C or better:
 - a) SDV 101
 - b) ENG 111
 - c) MTH 154
 - d) PHY 100
 - e) BIO 141
 - f) BIO 142
- 2) Earned a GPA of 2.5 or higher on the six courses listed above; and
- 3) Earned a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher in high school or in college courses taken, whichever is more recent.
- 4) Completed the TEAS Nursing Entrance Test within the past 3 years, target scores of 60% overall and 50% in each category.

Supplemental requirements for students who have taken college courses and expect credit by transfer, or will use courses to satisfy program requirements:

- a) There is no expiration date for BIO 141 or 142. However, if these courses are seven years old or older, you should consider retaking them.
- b) Transfer courses must be evaluated by the Registrar, Dean of Health Sciences, and/or Program Head of the DMS program prior to substituting these courses for required

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courses. DMS courses from schools outside of the VCCS will not be transferred in for DMS program credit but may satisfy requirements in the Pre-DMS program. Transfers from VCCS schools will be evaluated on a case-by-case, individual basis.

- c) *Official transcripts in sealed envelopes from all colleges and high schools must be sent to the college registrar's office unless they are RCC or VCCS transcripts. Please verify with Admission and Records that your transcripts have been received and processed before the application due date.*
- d) Students must meet the criminal background and drug screens requirements prior to entering the DMS program or lose their seat in the program. In the event you have questions about your background, you are urged to contact www.castlebranch.com for a consultation.
- e) Students who are not in good standing for rehire at a clinical site may run the risk of not being able to participate in the clinical experiences in that facility. If there are no alternative clinical sites available, the student may not progress in the program and will be counseled to withdraw

3) **Application Link:**

- a) **DMS Application Link: To be posted in March 2026**

4) **Post-Acceptance**

- a) Once the student receives an acceptance letter there are other *mandatory* requirements that must be met prior to program entry by specified dates. This will be discussed at the mandatory orientation sessions. This will include a background check, drug screen, purchase of liability insurance, and provider's health assessment. American Heart Association BLS for Healthcare Providers is required for program entry and cannot expire during a semester. Failure to meet the deadlines set forth in the program orientation will result in loss of your seat.
- b) Students are responsible for purchasing the package from Castle Branch and are further responsible for uploading these documents to their profiles, as well as maintaining all documents throughout the DMS program. Details provided at the mandatory orientation.

Additional Information for Prospective DMS Students

All applicants should be advised that the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) Compliance Policies state the following:

www.ardms.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/ARDMS-Compliance-Policies.pdf

Requirements for Clinical Participation Policy

Sonography, as a practice discipline, deals with cognitive, affective, and psychomotor functioning and performance. Students entering the DMS program need to advise the DMS faculty, DMS advisor, and the program head of any potential difficulties in meeting one or more of the essential performance standards, so as to receive possible accommodation assistance and appropriate guidance.

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All individuals who apply for admission to the DMS Program, including persons with disabilities, must be able to perform essential functions included in this document either with or without accommodations. These essential functions are congruent with the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Program (CAAHEP) expectations for any individual seeking initial licensure as a registered diagnostic cardiac sonographer (RDCS) and reflect the Standards of Clinical Practice established by the CAAHEP.

These guidelines serve as essential elements basic to eligibility requirements for clinical participation in the RCC Associate Degree in Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

1. **Core Performance Standards for Admission to and Progression through the DMS Program**

Speech: Communicates in English orally and in writing with clients, physicians, peers, family members, and the health care team from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds.

Hearing: Auditory acuity is sufficient to note slight changes in the client's condition, to perceive and interpret various equipment signals, and to use the telephone.

Vision: Visual acuity is sufficient to distinguish colors and to read handwritten orders and any other handwritten and printer data (i.e., medication records and scales); and to read chart content and provide for clients' safety by clearly viewing monitors in order to interpret data correctly.

Smell: Olfactory ability is sufficient to monitor and assess health needs.

Mobility: Can walk or stand for prolonged periods of six to eight hours. Must be able to bend, squat or kneel, and assist in lifting or moving clients of all age groups and weights. Can perform CPR (i.e., move above the patient to compress the chest and manually ventilate the client). Can work with arms fully extended overhead.

Manual Dexterity: Eye/hand coordination must be sufficient for manipulation of equipment such as syringes and IV infusion pumps, and for using a computer/keyboard.

Fine Motor: Can use hands for grasping, pushing, pulling, and fine manipulation, as well as possessing tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment and distinguishing changes in sensation.

Arithmetic Competence: Can comprehend and apply basic mathematical skills (e.g., factor labeling, use of conversion tables, calculation of drug dosages and solutions). Can measure time, use a calculator, and read and record graphs.

Writing: Can communicate and organize thoughts to prepare written documents that are correct in style, grammar, and mechanics.

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Emotional Stability: Can establish therapeutic boundaries, adapt to changing environment/stress, perform multiple responsibilities concurrently, handle strong emotions, provide the client with emotional support, and focus attention on the task.

Analytical Thinking: Can transfer knowledge from one situation to another, process information, evaluate outcomes, prioritize tasks, and solve problems.

Critical Thinking: Can Identify cause-effect relationships, plan/control activities for others, synthesize knowledge and skills, and sequence information.

Interpersonal Skills: Can negotiate interpersonal conflict, respect differences in clients, establish rapport with clients and co-workers, explain procedures and educate client/family.