



**ARDMS<sup>®</sup>**

American Registry for  
Diagnostic Medical Sonography

# ARDMS General Prerequisites

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## SPI Examination Requirement

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

The SPI 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 SPI examination under the SPI Examination Requirement must choose a prerequisite in order to apply for a specialty examination.

## 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 Chart section of this guide.
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://www.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.**

# Examination Requirements & Prerequisites

## SPI Examination Requirement

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

### Education

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

### Documentation Required with Application

1. 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](http://ARDMS.org/CME) to view ARDMS-accepted CMEs). The CME credits must be earned within two (2) years prior to application submission.

2. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

### 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.
- A grade report will not be accepted in lieu of the transcript (unofficial or official).

## 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.<sup>1</sup>

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-time<sup>2</sup> clinical ultrasound/vascular experience.<sup>3</sup>

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 official<sup>7</sup> 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 from a supervising physician, ARDMS-Registered sonographer/technologist or the educational program director indicating a minimum of 12 months of full-time clinical/vascular experience including exact dates of ultrasound experience/successful completion of sonography program. For required letter content, please visit [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](http://ARDMS.org/SampleLetters).
4. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s). CV forms are available at [ARDMS.org/CV](http://ARDMS.org/CV).
5. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

## Prerequisite 2

*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 or a student<sup>6</sup> 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](http://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 official<sup>7</sup> 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 program<sup>4</sup>. Program directors must use the mandatory formatted sample letter, available at [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](http://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](http://ARDMS.org/CV).
4. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

**ARDMS offers a Paperless Application Program for Prerequisite 2 Applicants. For more information please visit [ARDMS.org/Apply](http://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-time<sup>2</sup> clinical ultrasound/vascular experience.<sup>3</sup>

### Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of a Bachelor's degree or copy of an official<sup>7</sup> 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 from a supervising physician, ARDMS-Registered sonographer/technologist or an educational program director indicating a minimum of 12 months of full-time clinical/vascular experience including exact dates of ultrasound experience/successful completion of the sonography program. For required letter content, please visit [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](http://ARDMS.org/SampleLetters).

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

4. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

## 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 student<sup>6</sup> 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-time<sup>2</sup> clinical experience<sup>3</sup> within the program.*

## Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of a Bachelor's degree or copy of an official<sup>7</sup> 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 experience<sup>3</sup> is needed<sup>6</sup>. Program directors must use the mandatory formatted student or graduate sample letters, available at [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](http://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](http://ARDMS.org/CV).

4. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

### New 2020 ARDMS Physician Prerequisite:

**Effective January 1, 2020, physicians can apply under the 4A1, 4A2, 4B1, and 4B2 prerequisites or the new physician prerequisite. On July 1, 2020, the new physician prerequisite will be the only prerequisite for physicians applying for ARDMS examinations. [Learn more.](#)**

## Prerequisite 4A1

*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, U.S., and Canada – MD or DO degree earned in the U.S. or Canada.

Formal Training – Attendance of an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), or an American Osteopathic Association (AOA) accredited residency or fellowship that includes didactic and clinical ultrasound/vascular experience as an integral part of the program.

### Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

The Applicant must be able to document clinical experience with a minimum of 800 studies in the area for which he/she is applying.

## Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of medical school diploma or copy of an official transcript indicating the date the degree was conferred.

2. Letter from residency/fellowship program director verifying dates of attendance and completion of a minimum of 800 studies in the area in which you are applying. For required letter content, please visit [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](http://ARDMS.org/SampleLetters).

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

4. Applicants should maintain a patient log or other record of the 800 studies. 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 three (3) years following the date of application submission.

5. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

## Prerequisite 4A2

*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, U.S., and Canada – MD or DO degree earned in the U.S. or Canada.

### Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

12 months of full-time<sup>2</sup> clinical ultrasound/vascular experience.<sup>3</sup>

### Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of medical school diploma or copy of an official transcript indicating the date the degree was conferred.

2. Letter from supervising physician, ARDMS-Registered sonographer/technologist or educational program director indicating a minimum of 12 months of full-time clinical/vascular experience including exact dates of ultrasound experience/successful completion of sonography program. If you are the supervising physician, you may write your own letter. For required letter content, please visit [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](http://ARDMS.org/SampleLetters).

3. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s). CV forms are available at [ARDMS.org/CV](https://www.ardms.org/cv).

4. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

## Prerequisite 4B1

*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 - Outside U.S., and Canada — MD or DO degrees equivalent to those of the U.S. or Canada.

Formal Training — Attendance of an accredited residency or fellowship that includes didactic and clinical ultrasound/vascular experience as an integral part of the program.

### Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

The Applicant must be able to document clinical experience with a minimum of 800 studies in the area in which he/she is applying.

### Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of formal foreign transcript evaluation report converting the foreign medical degree must indicate that this medical degree is equivalent to a doctor of medicine degree in the U.S. or Canada. A listing of organizations that produce individualized, written reports describing each certificate, diploma or degree earned, and specifying its U.S. or Canadian equivalent can be found at [ARDMS.org/ForeignTranscripts](https://www.ardms.org/ForeignTranscripts). If the Applicant has passed all three parts and earned the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG®) certification, a copy of the ECFMG® certificate may be submitted with a copy of a current, valid MD or DO license from the U.S. or Canada in lieu of the evaluation.

2. Letter from residency/fellowship program director verifying dates of attendance and completion of a minimum of 800 studies in the area in which you are applying. For required letter content, please visit [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://www.ardms.org/SampleLetters).

3. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s). CV forms are available at [ARDMS.org/CV](https://www.ardms.org/cv).

4. Applicants should maintain a patient log or other record of the 800 studies. 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 three (3) years following the date of application submission.

5. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

## Prerequisite 4B2

*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 - Outside U.S., and Canada — MD or DO degrees equivalent to those of the U.S. or Canada.

### Required Clinical Ultrasound/Vascular Experience

12 months of full-time<sup>2</sup> clinical ultrasound/vascular experience.<sup>3</sup>

### Documentation Required with Application

1. Copy of formal foreign transcript evaluation report converting the foreign medical degree must indicate that this medical degree is equivalent to a doctor of medicine degree in the U.S. or Canada. A listing of organizations that produce individualized, written reports describing each certificate, diploma or degree earned, and specifying its U.S. or Canadian equivalent can be found at [ARDMS.org/ForeignTranscripts](https://www.ardms.org/ForeignTranscripts). If the Applicant has passed all three parts and earned the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG®) certification, a copy of the ECFMG® certificate may be submitted with a copy of a current, valid MD or DO license from the U.S. or Canada in lieu of the evaluation.

2. Letter from supervising physician, ARDMS-Registered sonographer/technologist or educational program director indicating a minimum of 12 months of full-time clinical/vascular experience including exact dates of ultrasound experience/successful completion of sonography program. If you are the supervising physician, you may write your own letter. For required letter content, please visit [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://www.ardms.org/SampleLetters).

3. Signed and completed clinical verification (CV) form for each appropriate specialty area(s). CV forms are available at [ARDMS.org/CV](https://www.ardms.org/cv).

4. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

## 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 DMU through Australasian Society of Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM).

## 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](https://www.ardms.org/cv).

3. Copy of a non-expired government-issued photo identification (ID) with signature; the first and last names on the ID must exactly match the first and last names in your ARDMS/APCA record.

## Notes About the SPI Examination Requirement

- The SPI Examination Requirement applies to the SPI examination only.

- If the SPI 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 SPI 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/NameChange](https://www.ardms.org/NameChange) for details.**

### Notes About the Prerequisites

<sup>1</sup>A 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> The mandatory Prerequisite 2 Application letter (found on [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://www.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.

<sup>5</sup> The mandatory Student Prerequisite 3B Application Letter (found on [ARDMS.org/SampleLetters](https://www.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://www.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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.



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