Cardiovascular Sonography Program
Department of Cardiopulmonary Science
LSU Health Sciences Center - New Orleans

Information for Prospective Students

What is cardiovascular sonography? Why is it important?

Cardiac sonography is a noninvasive diagnostic ultrasound exam performed by a cardiac sonographer to image the heart. Cardiac sonography is commonly known as echocardiography. An echocardiogram ("echo") is also referred to as a heart ultrasound. Cardiovascular sonography refers to imaging of both the heart and the vascular system (venous and arterial).

Cardiac sonography provides important information for cardiologists to analyze overall heart function and determine the condition of all 4 heart valves. Cardiac sonographers have extensive knowledge about the heart and ideally should be registered to perform echocardiograms. After choosing and passing the desired exam, the credentials a cardiac sonographer can obtain are Registered Diagnostic Cardiac Sonographer (RDCS; https://www.ardms.org) or Registered Cardiac Sonographer (RCS; https://cci-online.org).

Vascular ultrasound is a noninvasive exam that provides important information about a patient's venous/arterial system. This test screens for blockages, narrowings, clots, and other abnormalities in the venous or arterial system that can cause a patient harm. Registered Vascular Technologist (RVT; https://www.ardms.org) or Registered Vascular Specialist (RVS; https://cci-online.org) are the credentials a vascular sonographer can obtain to perform vascular ultrasounds.

What can a bachelor’s degree in cardiopulmonary science (cardiovascular sonography track) do for me?

The Department of Cardiopulmonary Science at LSU Health Sciences Center - New Orleans (LSUHSC-NO) offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Cardiopulmonary Science. Having a bachelor’s degree provides you the opportunity to work in a managerial or supervisory role and the option to pursue post-undergraduate education if desired. The curriculum of this program allows you the necessary time to fully understand echocardiography and vascular sonography. With a first-time pass rate of 94.3% for the SPI exam (Sonography Principles & Instrumentation) and 96.2% for the adult echocardiography registry exam, your chances of success in this program are high. This bachelor’s program allows essential hands-on experience for you to feel confident in your knowledge and skills before diving into the workforce.

LSUHSC-NO's bachelor’s degree in cardiopulmonary science (cardiovascular sonography track) encompasses the professionalism, academic curriculum, clinical rotation options, and registry pass rates that will give you the tools and confidence you need to excel in your career as a cardiovascular sonographer.

What type of environments can I work in with this educational background?

The job outlook for cardiovascular sonographers is promising. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of cardiovascular sonographers is expected to grow by 10% during the years of 2022-2032 (*www.bls.gov*).

After completion of this program and registry examinations, there are a variety of healthcare facilities you will be qualified to work in. Hospitals (inpatient) and clinics (outpatient) are the most common types of workplaces for sonographers. There are also mobile ultrasound companies and travel sonographer positions all over the United States. Graduates may work in cardiac or vascular sonography or both, depending on the workplace. Once you complete your education and pass the registry examinations, the opportunities are endless!

What can I expect during my time at LSUHSC as a cardiovascular sonography student?

During your time on campus as a cardiovascular sonography student, you can expect to attend lectures on campus with your classmates, participate in scan labs (echo & vascular) for hands-on practice, and clinical rotations at inpatient/outpatient facilities. LSUHSC-NO's scan lab provides a state-of-the-art ultrasound machine (Canon Aplio a550) so you can develop your scanning skills with advanced technology! Clinical rotations in both inpatient/outpatient facilities will allow you to practice scanning with real patients. During your clinical rotations, you will develop your scanning skills

and be able to put your clinical hours and experience on your resume after graduation to demonstrate that you are qualified for employment.

What is the environment at LSUHSC-NO like?

The Department of Cardiopulmonary Science has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. You will spend an abundance of time studying and learning alongside your classmates. Students develop friendships in this program that last a lifetime! You can expect to be part of a close-knit and driven environment during your time on campus as a cardiovascular sonography student.

Check out our virtual campus tour and see where you would be spending your time during your journey here at LSUHSC-NO!

Virtual Tour: [School of Allied Health Professions - LSU Health New Orleans (lsuhsc.edu)]

Is this program right for me?

LSUHSC-NO's cardiovascular sonography curriculum, state-of-the-art scan lab, variety of cardiovascular clinical rotations, and proven excellent registry pass rates demonstrate that the cardiovascular sonography program is designed for your educational and professional success.

If you are looking for a rewarding and unique career in healthcare that allows you the opportunity to work in a variety of settings, **this is the program for you**! Visit our website homepage today for more information so you can begin your journey towards becoming a cardiovascular sonographer!

Department of Cardiopulmonary Science - Cardiovascular Sonography program:

LSUHSC School of Allied Health Professions

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