Your future in Respiratory Care

Prospective Student Information Guide | 2027 curriculum planning

CAREERS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Respiratory therapists assess and treat patients with breathing and cardiopulmonary conditions, from premature newborns to older adults. They provide oxygen and breathing treatments, manage airways and mechanical ventilators, monitor patients, and respond to emergencies. RTs are part of healthcare teams in emergency departments, intensive care units, neonatal and pediatric units, and other healthcare settings.

Why choose Stark State Respiratory Care?

100% RRT credentialing success • 95% employment in the field | 2023–2025 reporting period

Small cohorts (maximum 24 students), hands-on simulation and labs, supervised clinical experiences with Northeast Ohio healthcare partners, and an accredited pathway to a rewarding healthcare career.

Program at a glance

- Degree: Associate of Applied Science in Respiratory Care.
- Format: Five-semester sequence beginning each fall; daytime respiratory care courses on the main campus.
- Learning experiences: Classroom instruction, hands-on laboratories, and supervised clinical rotations.
- Program courses follow a prescribed sequence and are offered once each year.

Program outcomes (2023–2025): 100% RRT credentialing success and 95% employment in the respiratory care field.

- The program is 63 total credit hours and enrolls a maximum fall cohort of 24 students.

What will I study?

You will learn respiratory assessment, airway management, medical gas administration, pharmacology, respiratory diseases, critical care, mechanical ventilation, cardiopulmonary anatomy & physiology, care of neonatal and pediatric patients and hemodynamics. The curriculum combines foundational science, clinical reasoning, case studies, simulation/laboratory work, and supervised patient care.

Clinical education

Clinical experiences are unpaid and assigned by the program's Clinical Coordinator. Students may rotate among different healthcare facilities and should plan for travel and scheduling flexibility. Clinical start and end times depend on site placement. Before clinical placement, students must complete required health and safety clearances, including a physical examination, immunization documentation, TB screening, BLS/CPR certification, BCI and FBI background checks, and a 10-panel urine drug screen (urinalysis). Additional requirements may vary by clinical site. Incomplete or unmet requirements may delay or prevent clinical placement.

Clinical partners include Aultman, Cleveland Clinic facilities including Akron General, Mercy, Union and main campus, Summa Health, Akron Children's, Select Specialty, and UH facilities including Ahuja, main campus, and Rainbow Babies. Actual placements and participating sites may change.

Time commitment and student success

- Expect a demanding schedule of lectures, labs, clinical experiences, and independent study.
- Most respiratory care coursework occurs during daytime hours; there is no separate evening/weekend program track listed.
- Attendance, punctuality, professionalism, good communication, and flexibility are essential.
- Students must earn at least a C in each required Respiratory Care course to progress.

Mandatory advising & student support

Once accepted into the Respiratory Care program, students are assigned a faculty advisor based on the first letter of their last name: A–L — Jodi Lahmers; M–Z — Jenn Walton. Students are required to meet with their assigned advisor each semester. These advising sessions help students review non-technical academic progress, plan their prescribed course sequence, identify challenges early, and connect with academic support resources.

Plan your pathway

Admissions • Credentialing • Next steps

From student to respiratory therapist

After completing the accredited degree program, graduates pursue the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) credentialing examination. The NBRC is implementing a redesigned Respiratory Therapy examination in January 2027. Most Stark State graduates plan to practice in Ohio, where respiratory therapists must also obtain a Respiratory Care Professional license through the State Medical Board of Ohio before practicing. Graduates planning to work in another state must meet that state's licensing requirements. Students should consult the NBRC and the applicable state licensing board for current requirements.

Accreditation

Stark State College's Respiratory Care program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC).

Continuing your education

An associate degree can prepare graduates for entry into respiratory care practice. Some graduates later pursue bachelor's-level education for additional career development, including leadership, education, and other advanced pathways. The University of Akron and Youngstown State University are current articulation partners. Either will accept all SSC credits toward completion of a bachelor's degree.

Admissions checklist

☐ Confirm current admission prerequisites, application deadlines, and required documents with the program.

☐ Meet with an advisor to plan prerequisite science and general education courses.

☐ Obtain the current program application, curriculum, and tentative course schedule.

☐ Submit the completed application by the published deadline; plan for daytime classes, clinical travel, and personal commitments.

QUESTIONS?

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SCAN TO EXPLORE THE RESPIRATORY CARE PROGRAM

Important planning notes

Course availability, clinical placements, admission requirements, tuition, and schedules may change. The official Stark State College catalog and current program materials govern. This guide is intended as an introduction for prospective students.