FAQs

1) What is the difference between the CRT and RRT credentials?
The Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) national credential represents education in a one- or two-year program and clinically trained in every area of respiratory care at the entry-level.

The Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) national credential is an advanced credential in the profession that recognizes the individual as having advanced clinical skills, advanced decision-making skills, and further training to act in a consulting role in matters concerning patient care planning and treatment. RRT-eligible individuals are educated in a two- or four-year degree program in a college or university.

2) How many questions are on the CRT exam?
140 multiple choice questions

3) Do I have to take the CRT exam?
Yes. You must take and pass the CRT exam before becoming eligible to take either portion of the RRT exam.

4) Am I required to take both parts of the RRT exam?
Yes. The RRT exam consists of a written portion and a clinical simulation portion. You must successfully complete both the RRT Written exam and the RRT Clinical Simulation exam to earn the RRT credential.

5) Am I required to take both parts of the RRT exam on the same day?
No. You may schedule each part of the exam on a different day. You are allowed to take both parts of the exam on the same day. The RRT Written exam can be completed in the morning and the RRT Clinical Simulation exam can be completed in the evening.

6) Is board credentialing different than licensing in the State of Texas?
Yes. Licensing is required at the state-level and all RTs must obtain the Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP) license before providing any patient therapy or care. (See FAQ #7)

Credentialing is required at the national-level through the National Board for Respiratory Care. Once a student is eligible to sit for national board exams, the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) Entry-Level exam is taken first. After passing the exam with at least a 75%, the CRT credential is awarded and the therapist must then apply for state license. After completing the CRT national credential, the therapist is then eligible to sit for the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) Written Exam and Clinical Simulation exam.
7) Do I need a license in Texas to practice Respiratory Therapy?
Yes. The State of Texas, through the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), requires all respiratory therapists providing patient care to be state licensed.

The TDSHS recognizes the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) national credential as the entry-level credential appropriate for qualifying an individual to perform patient respiratory care. Once the CRT credential is earned, individual qualify to become licensed in Texas as a Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP). All states in the US except Alaska have similar state licensure acts and recognize the CRT credential as qualification for state license.

8) Can I perform Respiratory Care activities while I am a student in a Respiratory Care program?
While enrolled as a student in the clinical portion of the Texas State Respiratory Care Program, a student is permitted by Texas state law to practice patient care under the “Student Status” provision; however, a graduate of a respiratory care program CANNOT work under the student status provision after graduation.

9) When should I apply for a state license?
Thirty (30) days prior to graduation, the prospective graduate should contact the Respiratory Care Division of the TDSHS at www.dshs.state.tx.us/respiratory/default/shtm to apply for a temporary state license. The temporary license is valid for 6 months and during that time it is expected that the graduate will apply for and pass the NBRC Entry-level CRT Exam. Once the CRT exam is passed, the temporary license can be converted to the RCP license by contacting TDSHS.

Graduates are NOT considered employable in Texas UNTIL the RCP license or a temporary license is obtained. CRT and RRT national credentials MUST be accompanied by the appropriate Texas license before a therapist can be legally employed. It is the graduate’s responsibility to obtain a temporary Texas license and to register for national board exams.

10) When can I sit for my CRT and RRT national board exams?
The short answer is...at the end of the Junior RC year (following Summer Session II) in the BSRC curriculum.

Once all coursework for the Advanced-Level Respiratory Therapist portion of the BSRC curriculum has been successfully completed with a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 and a minimum RC major GPA of 2.25, the student is eligible to sit for the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) board exams. In order to satisfy the requirements for Advanced-Level Respiratory Therapist status, the student must complete all coursework detailed in Attachment G of the Student Handbook or pick up the form in the RC Department.
Once the requirements for completion of the Advanced-Level Respiratory Therapist curriculum with the required GPAs have been confirmed, the NBRC will be electronically notified of your status as “RRT Eligible.” After NBRC has been notified, you may register for all board exams on-line at www.nbrc.org and you will be permitted to sit for the NBRC CRT Entry-level exam, the RRT Written Registry exam, and the RRT Clinical Simulation exam immediately.

11) Can I take the NBRC Entry Level CRT board exam before I graduate?
Yes. You can register to take the CRT national board exam at www.nbrc.org within 30 days of expected graduation. However, your exam results will not be released to you until after you have completed the required coursework or degree. If you wait to take the CRT exam after you graduate, you will get your CRT score immediately upon completion of the exam.