

S1: Well, I'll tell you here. In recent years, it has been a very good time to be a graduate, that the vast majority of our students are employed 100% within a month. I would say even the last two years, I think everyone had jobs before graduation. So you have doctors, you have nurses, and right behind them are techs and there's a huge need. Way back in the day, you know, students were begging for jobs. Those days are over.

S2: 1987 Chat tech were 98.7% of our students earn a career. On this episode, we dive into the fascinating world of radiography. Join us as we chat with the current instructor, the Program Director, a dedicated student, and a local employer to uncover the nuances between radiology and radiography. Plus, we'll celebrate our program's incredible 100% pass rate on the National Registry exam. Additionally, we'll hear about the launch of the new mammography program. So sit back, relax, and Relax and let's explore the exciting world of mammography and radiography together.

S1: My name is Malcolm Pascal. I am the clinical coordinator and an instructor for the radiography program here at Chattahoochee Tech. So really I'm wearing two hats where I oversee all four clinical radiography courses. Our students do about 1200 clinical hours by the end of the program. So pretty much anything that could come their way out in the field anywhere in the world. Our students have seen it. They've done it. They are absolutely prepared for any task that might be asked to them. And then my other hat would be as an instructor in the classroom. And I do teach a lot of the more technical, science based concepts in the classroom. So how x rays are made. Again, not a lot of people know exactly what an x ray is. So really more focused on that side of the program. And my counterpart, our program director Jamie Bailey, handles most of the positioning aspects, which is really like the day to day patient interaction stuff.

S2: Wow, you really wear a lot of hats. What can students look forward to in the program?

S1: The way I look at it is that this program, this degree, is a starting point because most people know that, you know, just regular x ray is not the only game in town when it comes to medical imaging. So there's computer tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, nuclear medicine, radiation therapy, ultrasound, mammography. You know, it's just you're wide open to the possibilities. And certain modalities are just basically a process of getting some on the job training and doing some online modules. You do not have to go back to a big university for, say, computer tomography. And that is the natural progression from radiography. We've had some of our students that go directly into a CT position right out of X-ray school. And as you might imagine, as you add these credentials, you're also boosting your earning potential. So students are coming right out into an advanced modality at a premium pay. And most folks say that that CT registry, they learned about 80% of it in X-ray school. And I'm super proud of that, because I teach all the digital imaging stuff that goes into CT.

S2: Absolutely something to be proud of. What kind of jobs can a chat tech grad look forward to after finishing the program?

S1: Well, I'll tell you here. In recent years, it has been a very good time to be a graduate, that the vast majority of our students are employed 100% within a month. I would say even the last two years, I think everyone had jobs before graduation. There is a big need for radiologic technologists in the field right now, and not a lot of people know that our population is the third largest population in health care today. So you have doctors, you have nurses, and right behind them are rad techs. And there's a huge need. So virtually anywhere you would want to go and work there's going to be opportunities. So locally for us Wellstar health system, Northside Hospital, we have been dealing with Atrium Health quite a bit. American Health Imaging has been a very big presence for our students here. And then Pinnacle Orthopedics has hired up a number of our students. But like I said, way back in the day, you know, students were begging for jobs. Those days are over. To the point where we have a health system coming and marketing themselves to our students, hoping to get an application at graduation.

S2: This sounds like a high demand job, and it's awesome that you've partnered with reputable organizations. Speaking of reputable organizations, could you share more about your 20th anniversary and that impressive 100% pass rate.

S1: So yes, back in January, we celebrated 20 years of Chattahoochee tech radiography here. Over that time, we did have a stretch where we had 14 years in a row, 100% first time pass rate. And I'm more proud about the fact that our students generally score between 6 to 8 points higher than the national average. And we're being compared to big

universities and places that cost a whole lot more money than what we do. Again, I feel like our students are getting a world class education here at this program. Being a graduate from this program, I know where the standards are and I know where they should be. And I'm super duper proud to say that for the last ten years since my graduation, I've been here helping students again, hopefully getting all the things that I got out of the program because I got way more than an education, that is for sure.

S2: Well, that's something to be proud of. Thanks for joining us. Let's get to our next guest, program director Jamie Bailey. Jamie, could you explain the differences between radiology and radiography?

S3: Okay. So radiology is more of a science or art of medicine that uses imaging technology so that we can treat patients, we can diagnose patients. We can look inside the body and see the different things that go on. Radiography is more of where you use imaging. So we can do like x ray, CT, MRI, nuclear medicine, mammography, nuclear medicine. There's so many things that go in to the imaging side of it. So they kind of work together. So radiography is how we get the images. And then radiology is more of the imaging all together.

S2: How does chat tech connect students with employers.

S3: Our students go out to clinical sites. So they go to the multiple hospitals in the area. And we tell them day one, when you go out and you're there as a student, it's a working interview. They're going to going to remember if you were on time, if you, you know, were a hard worker, if you were a team player or if you were one that really wasn't a go getter, that kind of just kind of was there to get your time in and that's it. And, you know, we have a lot of these hospitals reach out to us, especially during that last semester and say, hey, I want this student. I remember this student, you know, I want to hire them. So can you give them my information or tell them to contact me? So a lot of them already have job offers. But also what we started doing in the past couple of years is we invite a lot of the hospitals to come in and bring their HR representatives with them. Um, some of the imaging centers and we do lunch and learns during their senior senior review class. And during that time they come in, they talk about job opportunities, they take resumes for the students. And also HR is huge because a lot of students, you know, they're they're graduating, they're wanting to go to work and they don't think about, oh, well, what about retirement? What about benefits? They think, oh, I just want that paycheck, you know, hey, I'm ready to get paid. And, you know, I've devoted all this time to working for free, going out to clinicals. So now I'm just ready to to get paid for it. So with that being said, have an HR come in and tell them, you know, there's pension plans. Um, there's great opportunity. And they just, you know, getting them involved in that part of it to know about retirement and that side of it is very huge. I never had that. So I just think that's a great thing for them to be able to do for the students.

S2: This program truly seems like it's crafted to set students up for lifelong success. On the topic of money, what kind of salary can a student expect to earn after graduation?

S3: So right now the market is really, really good. You know, Covid sent us into a spiral and imaging and, you know, nursing together hand in hand like we were the eyes and and able to being able to diagnose those patients during Covid through CT and x ray. And a lot of techs got burnout in the profession. They left and there was a lot of jobs that were created. And we have students that graduated this past December, and they're making anywhere from 28 to \$34 an hour, starting out in x rays so that, you know, could be Monday through Friday, 8 to 5 job. That could be evenings, weekends. You know, you add shift differential in there so you can make a little extra money if you work those evening shifts and those weekend shifts.

S2: Wow, that sounds like a great salary right out of graduation. Definitely a fantastic investment. So what's the cost of the program?

S3: Yes, absolutely. And, you know, and it's about \$10,000 to go through our program from start to finish. That's books, tuition, uniforms, everything that you need. So it definitely is a great return for such a small investment in going through the program here.

S2: Now, I know \$10,000 sounds like a lot, but it really seems like money well spent. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the program?

S3: They're amazing, you know, they get you out there, they get you in the workforce like it is such a great investment. Because even if this isn't really what you want to do at this level, it's laying that foundation and starting those starting those stepping stones to whatever you want to do and grow in the future.

S2: Okay, now I want to ask you about the launch of a new, exciting program, the Mammography Program. What was the impetus for starting this program in the first place? When and why did you see the need? Who was involved in the decision to move forward?

S3: There's currently a shortage of mammography technologists locally and nationally, so it's been a topic of discussion for the past few years. Kind of been on the table on the radar that we needed to get something and help with the community to know that, you know, we needed technologists out there to help with this shortage. Many programs offer computed tomography and MRI classes, which is magnetic resonance imaging. They offer those post-secondary certificates after graduation from radiography programs. But chat tech wanted to offer something that not many other programs were offering at the time. So we wanted to do something that would be unique to us as a school. Um, the radiography program and the administration at Chat Tech initially coordinated the logistics of the program with Northside. And later we had the support of Wellstar, Floyd Atrium and Piedmont in moving forward. So it was definitely a community of interest that made this happen.

S2: What's the timetable for opening?

S3: The program will launch spring 2025. Registration is currently open until January 6th and classes will begin on January the 13th.

S2: Our students are required to hold other degrees or certificates first before being considered.

S3: Yes they do. All students must be a registered Radiologic Technologist through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists, which is also known as the A.R.T., to be eligible for admission to the program.

S2: What's your planned initial capacity?

S3: Being that this is a new program, the demand will most likely dictate the capacity for us as the program begins to grow and the interest that we have in the program. Currently, we have a maximum capacity of 20 students to start spring semester. Um, so that gives us enough clinical capacity so that we have enough places that we can place students for that clinical component to it.

S2: How long is the program, what's required for graduation?

S3: So the program is one semester, January through May. Students will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the semester. Students are required to complete a didactic and a clinical portion to meet the program requirements. This course will only be offered in spring each year, unless we see that there is a need to offer it during other semesters.

S2: Is there already a job placement assistance plan in place, or are you working with area hospitals or clinics?

S3: So we are currently collaborating with stakeholders in the local health care community to ensure that job opportunities for graduates are available within our service area. Clinical placement for students will provide working interview opportunities for potential employment after completion of the program.

S2: Jamie, thanks for joining us today. That was great information. Now let's hear from Abby Carter, a former student and teacher at Shattuck. Abby, what's your current role at Chat Tech?

S4: So when I started back in 2021, Jamie Bailey, the program director, she asked me to do lab. And back when I was a student, I loved lab. It was my favorite part of the program, so I was kind of excited to get asked to do that. And I had a lot of ideas and things I wanted to kind of throw into the program. So she kind of let me run with that, and we've added

a bunch of different things. I make them these in-depth packets that kind of summarize the textbook positions, because the textbook gives you way more information than you need, of course. And we also do these little draw out of the hat positioning things to kind of get them ready for the practical exam at the end of the semester. So a lot of things that I wanted as a student, I kind of incorporated that in for these students, and they seem to like it, and it helps them better prepare for the practical exam.

S2: What makes Chat Tech's radiology program better than other programs?

S4: So I like the way we do our program, the way the order of the way we go, the competencies for their x rays. They get a lot of other schools. I mean, I'm sure everybody does their own thing and it works for them, but I don't like how other schools have their program lined up. I feel like the way we do it makes them the most successful and kind of prepares them the best. And I feel like doing the competency exams, other schools don't have them do certain things. Like, of course we have to do bare minimums and we all know those are not fun. Other schools aren't required to do that. So of course when you get into the field, you're expected to do that. And they're like, wait, but I never did one of those. So I feel like we kind of over prepare them in a way. And other schools maybe don't do that.

S2: Being over prepared is better than being unprepared. What can chat tech students do to get ahead in the program?

S4: So of course, we always say, if you want to read the book before the class, go for it. But also it's it's a lot. The program is rigorous, it's tough. But if you stay on top of things and you kind of study ahead of time. I was always a student that kind of took do a little bit of time each day in each class. You don't want to overdo it, because of course, there's also such a thing as over studying. So you don't want to do that either. But if they prepare ahead of time and look at things and practice, the biggest thing is practicing like in lab. I really encourage them while you have this tube in front of you to practice with. Take advantage of that. So I just say take advantage of the time you have.

S5: Do you have.

S2: Any advice to a potential student?

S4: I would just say if you're wanting to get into the program, I would definitely say work really hard in your prereqs, get as many points as you can, and take advantage of the observation hours that are given. And if you're in the program advice, I would say also to work really hard, stay on top of things, enjoy every clinical rotation you have because you it's like a job interview. You may end up wanting to work there, so you always want to be on your best game for sure. Well, just enjoy every moment because I miss being a student sometimes. It was a lot of fun.

S2: I think we all miss being students sometimes. Thanks for joining us, Abby. Now let's hear from current student Brock Stewart. Brock did Chatham's reputation for a 100% pass rate on the national registry exam influenced your decision to join?

S6: Oh, absolutely. It just states that they know what they're talking about. They know the material that they're teaching is working and they haven't, like, strayed away from that. And so I was able to have great instructors teach me. And it has led me here. And we're almost done. And I feel very confident going into that registry from what they have taught me.

S2: I mean, I know that would factor into my decision if I were a potential student. Are you currently working in the radiology field?

S6: So right now I'm working as a student tech in Rome. So upon graduation, depending on where you're at, there's some places that could. There's these things called modalities, which is like CT, MRI, nuke, med. Some places will offer you to go into that position as soon as you start working. So you'll kind you'll kind of be going back to school because you'll be studying again for another registry. So depending on what you want to do, there's many different paths and openings. Once on graduation, you'll be seeing.

S2: How can students get a hit in the program?

S6: So I want to shout out one person. Everybody in our class knows who they are. Ashley Vild is her name. She was a few classes above us or before us. She was like Covid class maybe, but she made a quizlet and everybody in the class, I don't think nobody didn't go over that. Quizlet and everybody so far has done really well on exams. So if you want material like book material, that is a good place to start kind of giving an overview, stuff like that. But I'd say just stay on top of your stuff. It gets a little hectic here and there, but as long as you're on top of it, you should be good.

S2: So we all owe Ashley a huge thank you. Now here's the big question. Everyone wants to know what are the salary expectations for this field and is there a room for growth?

S6: Upon graduation? It depends where you're at. I believe within the Marietta area, like Wellstar, they usually start around 2526. I'd say that low 50,000 a year is what you're kind of expected. But there are some places, if you go into a modality, say, CT, that's a little extra money. MRI that's more money and more money. So there's a ton of room for growth wherever you go. Like if you kind of get burned out on x ray, you can see a pretty solid salary.

S2: Our next guest is Crystal Henderson. She's the imaging lead for American Health Imaging. Crystal, tell us about your collaboration with Chat Tech.

S7: Their radiology program is great. I'm really proud of the recent graduating class of the Chattahoochee program, the one from 2023. In December, we were fortunate enough to hire seven of those graduates. And so far, five of them have been able to pass their registry within five months. We're waiting on two more to take their registry. It's really inspiring to see to see them. I mean, just a few months ago, they were walking the stage to receive their diplomas and at Chattahoochee Tech, and now, five months later, they're already registered MRI technologists, and they're achieving great success in their careers. Over the years, we've hired many Chattahoochee Tech graduates, and they've grown to become a lead technologist at their own centers, learning different modalities. Cross train. It's been wonderful, the collaboration between the two of us.

S2: It makes sense why tech would want to partner with your organization. Do you think chat tech students are more qualified than others?

S7: Oh, yes. Definitely. Our collaboration with Chattahoochee Tech has been the driving force behind many of the successes we have. They have the exceptional guidance and instruction provided by their professors, have equipped those students to be not only knowledgeable in their field, but also practical with the hands on experience. And as we move ahead in the future, we look forward to extending our opportunities to the graduating class that's coming up in 2024. We're really excited for all of them and it's a great class from what I'm hearing.

S2: Speaking of new graduates, I bet they're all wondering what kind of job a chat tech student could land at American Health Imaging, right?

S7: Well, we offer. We have Arthur Graham. We have CT, MRI. We also have ultrasound. So we have different modalities. There's, um, right now for our technology academy. We're expanding it to a program to include CTE. So we're excited to offer even more opportunities for growth and skill development. So we know that our collaboration with Chattahoochee is just unquestionable how they are the premier program in North Georgia. They produce competent, award winning technologists, and they're very skillful and they make an invaluable contribution to our health care field. So we're really happy about the collaboration between the two schools and what we have to offer them when they graduate, the different opportunities that American Health imaging.

S2: Well, it sounds like there are plenty of growth opportunities at American Health. Do you have any advice for students in the program?

S7: I would say just do your best in your clinicals and with the technologies that you're meeting. Learn from all of them. You'll learn their way, and then you'll be able to put all that all together to learn your own way, to be able to do it. If you want to do more, if you want to do something different and jump into a modality. CT, MRI, whichever. Learn all you can. Take notes. Be the best that you can in your skill. And then you can hone those things down and really get

customize your craft. So we really want them to just just to push themselves to be able to, you know, be a very essential participant in the field that we have.

S2: That's fantastic advice, Crystal. Now let's hear from our next guest, Shonda Hardwick. Shonda is the imaging manager at Atrium Health. Shonda, what's Atrium Health's relationship with Chattahoochee Tech?

S8: Well, the Chattahoochee program reached out to us for, um, helping them with some observation hours, meaning letting the student come in prior to being accepted into the program to make sure that this is really the field they want to be in, because they have a certain number of seats that they can fill. Um, based on our based on clinical practice. It has to be a one on one ratio. So they want to make sure that the students they're accepting are truly in it for the long haul. So we're able to provide all Chattahoochee Tech students that reach out 12 hours of observation and lets their students come in and observe Cat scan, nuclear medicine, x ray, all the things so they can really see. And we have had some students say, wow, this this just I don't think this is for me, but for the most part it gets the students more excited, it gets them interested, and it gets them to see what a great facility Atrium Health is. To toot our own horn for a second. But at the same time, the way the program is set up at CTC, it's the director is fantastic. The clinical coordinators are fantastic, and they're there for the students to get them where they need to be to be able to graduate, pass their registry and come into a facility like Atrium Health and hit the ground running, and that's what we're looking for as well.

S2: Our Chattahoochee Tech students more qualified than others.

S8: Well, so far, absolutely. They are, like I said, very professional, eager to learn. I've had several students interested in being a student tech here, which is something that they can do while they're in school. It allows them to get some additional training as well as make a little money and still do their studies. And we really promote that. School comes first. If there's a shift, they can't work because they have a big test the next day or they just need some time. We're very understanding about that. We work closely with program director and clinical coordinator to make sure that there's an equal balance between the two, for sure.

S2: What personality traits do you look for in a candidate?

S8: You have to have the book smarts, right? Because imaging isn't you know, you have to know physics and you have you have to know specific things about, you know, this career, of course, but it's also having empathy and patient care skills and, and knowing, um, the right things to say and and being compassionate. So there is a definite fine line. And that's the kind of person we're looking for. Someone who's ready. Someone doesn't have to be a straight A student, um, to do imaging or to do this program, but they have to be dedicated and ready to study and ready to focus, and at the same time have that desire to take care of their patients, because that's what we're here for.

S2: Chat tech. The College of Real World Training on how our communities are stronger and better. Thanks to the thousands of tech graduates in our local workforce. For more information on the mammography and radiography programs at Chattahoochee Tech, visit [Chattahoochee.edu](http://Chattahoochee.edu). And thanks for listening to 98 seven tech, or 98.7% of our students earn a career.