



# EXPANDING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE:

Delgado Community College's Successful Radiography Program Expansion

## 2025 BELLWETHER FINALIST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*Delgado Community College is a diverse, dynamic, open-admissions community college providing high-quality education through innovation and excellence in teaching and learning. The College offers a variety of academic and workforce programs through the Associate degree and is committed to nurturing and sustaining an inclusive culture to support student success.*

**Delgado**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Step Closer  
to Unstoppable.







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## Delgado Community College

Delgado Community College stands as a cornerstone of New Orleans, fueling the city's growth and development. As a premier institution of higher education, Delgado provides accessible pathways to success for countless individuals, offering a wide range of academic programs and workforce training opportunities. By cultivating skilled professionals and fostering innovation, Delgado plays a vital role in shaping the future of New Orleans, empowering its residents, and strengthening its economy.

### Critical Issue

The American College of Radiology and its leadership have recognized the critical workforce shortage currently affecting the radiologic field. (Fornell, 2024). Medical imaging professions, like all other allied health professions, are struggling to meet the needs of today's demands.

A recent survey conducted by the American Society of Radiologic Technologist (ASRT) found that the vacancy rate for radiology technologists has reached 18.1%, a significant increase from 6.2% three years ago. (RSNA, 2024).

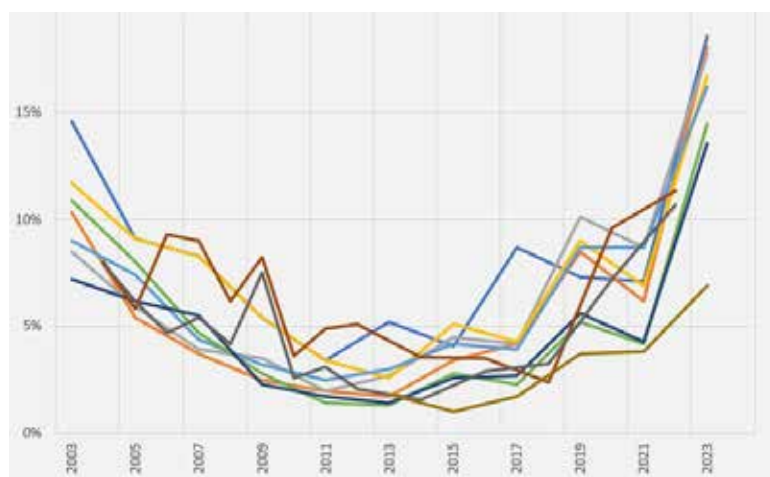


Figure 1. Changes in vacancy rates in medical imaging and radiation therapy disciplines during the period from 2003-2023. Reprinted from Research Report for the Consensus Committee on the Future of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy. Abbreviations: CVIT, cardiovascular-interventional technology; R, radiography; CT, computed tomography; S, sonography; MR, magnetic resonance imaging; NMT, nuclear medicine technology; M, mammography; MD, medical dosimetry; T, radiation therapy; BD, bone densitometry. 2024 ASRT. All rights reserved. 2024 Consensus Committee on the Future of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy (ASRT, 2024) (Appendix A)

## Factors That Have Affected the Shortage

- The growing size of the aging population, which leads to increased demand for imaging to detect, diagnose, and assess diseases (Glassbeam Inc, 2023).
- The advances in imaging technology in Computer Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) have created a higher demand for more skilled technologists (Glassbeam Inc, 2023).
- Technologist burnout, due to shortages, which leads to imaging professionals leaving the field (Fornell, 2024).
- Post COVID-19 burnout which caused technologists to leave the field (Fornell, 2024).
- Retired (Fornell, 2024).
- Fewer trainees entering the healthcare field (Casey, 2024).
- A decrease in the number of people taking the American Registry of Radiologic Technologist (ARRT) radiography certification exam (Casey, 2024).

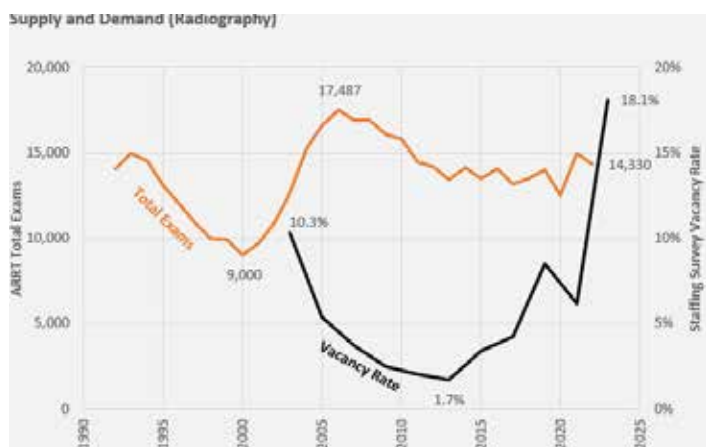


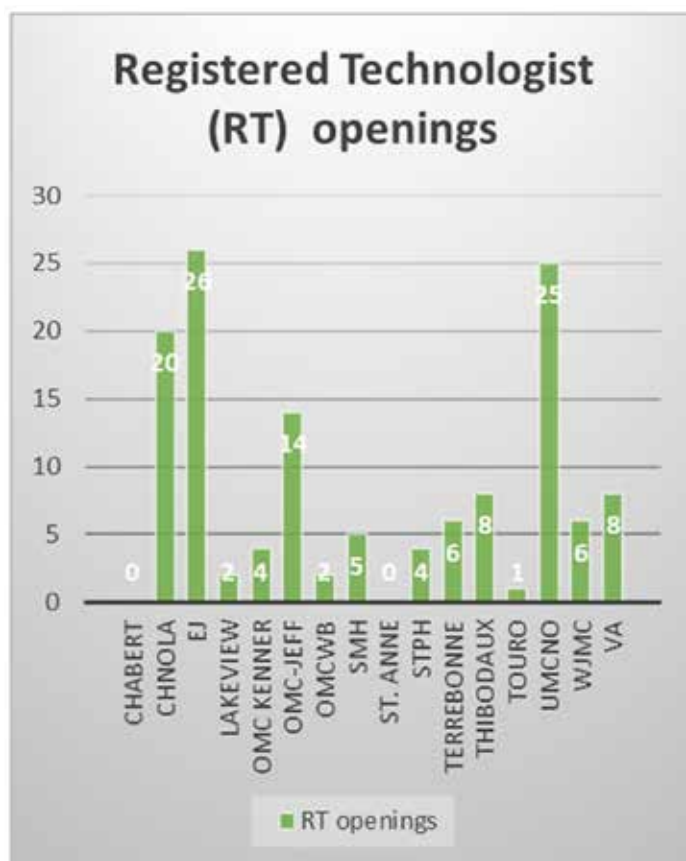
Figure 2. Total number of radiography certification exam takers compared with the job vacancy rate for radiographers over time. Reprinted from Research Report for the Consensus Committee on the Future of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy (ASRT, 2024) (Appendix B)

## Impact on Radiology Practices and Patients

- The shortage disrupts the delivery of diagnostic imaging exams and interventional procedures (Glassbeam Inc, 2023).
- It delays the diagnosis and treatment of patients which could negatively affect their outcomes (Glassbeam Inc, 2023).
- For inpatients, increased wait times for imaging can cause longer hospital stays and delayed discharges (RSNA, 2024).

A survey was taken in October 2024 to identify the needs in the New Orleans metro and surrounding areas. A total of 131 full-time jobs were identified.

In response to a pressing shortage of radiologic technologists in the New Orleans metropolitan area and the surrounding southeast Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Delgado Community College launched a comprehensive five-year plan



to bolster its Radiologic Technology program. The initiative aimed to double the size of each cohort and expand clinical education sites, thereby increasing the number of qualified technologists entering the workforce.

Before the program's expansion, Delgado's Radiography program faced limitations, including a relatively small cohort size and a restricted number of clinical sites. To address these challenges, the College forged a groundbreaking partnership with Ochsner Health, a major healthcare provider in the region. This collaboration, which marked a historic shift in the relationship between the two institutions, involved Ochsner agreeing to provide six new

clinical sites for Delgado's Radiography students. Additionally, Delgado partnered with other healthcare facilities in the Northshore and Bayou regions to further expand its reach.

To support the program's growth, Delgado hired additional full-time and adjunct faculty members in Radiography. The College also made necessary changes to accommodate the increased enrollment and ensure a high-quality educational experience for all students.

Throughout the five-year initiative, Delgado has worked closely with the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) to increase enrollment in each clinical education site. The College has also collaborated with community partners to assign students across different clinical sites and adjusted clinical schedules to optimize the educational experience for all students.

### Ability to Address Issue

The expansion of Delgado Community College's Radiography program involved a multi-faceted approach that spanned several years. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the College successfully increased enrollment and expanded clinical sites.

### Student Recruitment

The College implemented aggressive recruitment strategies, including weekly and monthly outreach efforts, to increase the applicant pool. Not only did our program partake in school-wide open houses and community outreach, but we also developed a more personalized recruitment effort. "Tuesday Tours" (Appendix C) were implemented specifically for our program. This is a program specific open house that is hosted every third Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m.

The number of attendees has increased over time. Social media, flyers, emails, and word of mouth have made this recruitment event a huge success. When we began the tours, we averaged five attendees per session and now we average 30-40 attendees each session.

### Increase Cohort Sizes

Beginning in the months preceding the pandemic, Delgado initiated efforts to recruit more students and secure additional clinical placements. In the fall of 2020, the program achieved a significant milestone by admitting a cohort of 55 students. This marked a substantial increase from the previous cohort size of 35 students. Subsequent cohorts in 2021 and 2022 also saw a steady rise in enrollment, with 60 students admitted in each year. In 2023, the program reached a new high with 70 students accepted, and the most recent cohort in 2024 welcomed 80 students.



### Increase Program Faculty

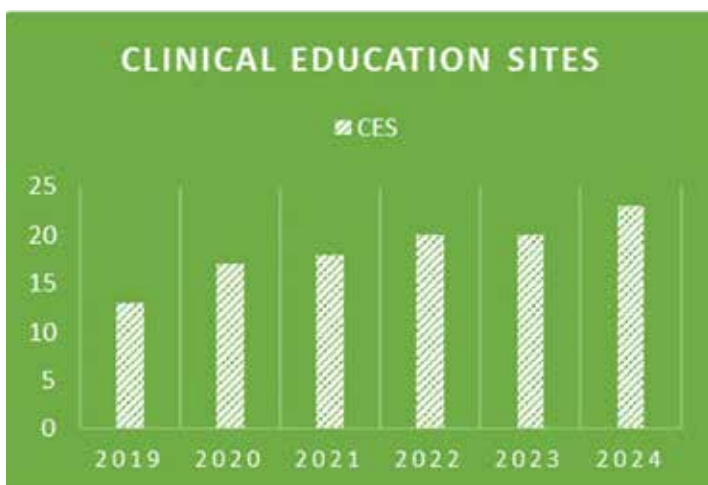
With the program growing, the College supported the growth of additional faculty members to help handle the program size. The program went from four full-time faculty members in 2019 to now six full-time faculty members and one adjunct faculty member. Our full-time faculty hired have the responsibility

of teaching didactic courses as well as overseeing assigned clinical sites. Our adjunct faculty hired has the responsibility of overseeing our rural sites.



### Additional Clinical Sites

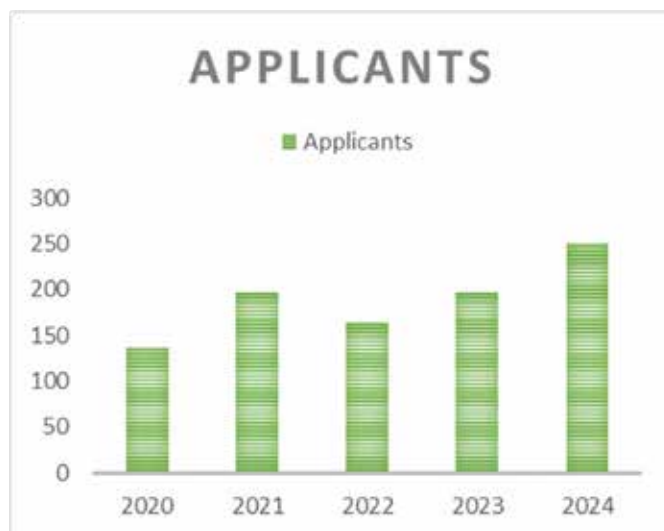
The program collaborated closely with the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) to increase enrollment in each clinical education site, while also expanding by adding new sites. Over a five-year span, our program went from 13 sites in January of 2019 to 23 sites as of December 2024.



### Streamlined Admissions Process

To streamline the admissions process, Delgado also modernized its online application and admissions procedures.

In the fall of 2022, the program transitioned to a fully online application system. (Appendix D) This change reduced issues related to paper, mailing, and accessibility. With the new streamlined online process, applicants can complete their applications from any internet-enabled device. This improvement makes it easier for students to upload documents, save their progress, and receive confirmation that their application has been successfully submitted.



### Documented Outcomes

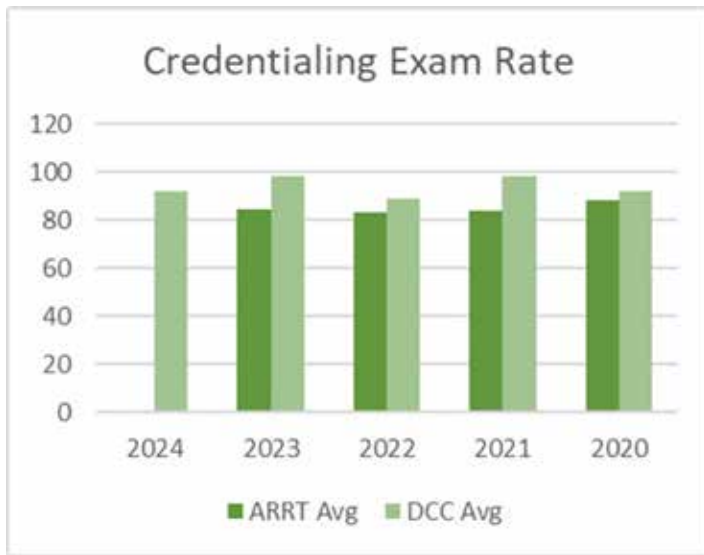
Delgado Community College's Radiography program has proven to be a resounding success, producing well-prepared graduates who are highly sought after by healthcare employers in the New Orleans area. The program's commitment to rigorous academic standards, coupled with hands-on clinical training, has resulted in consistently high job placement



rates and positive feedback from local healthcare providers.

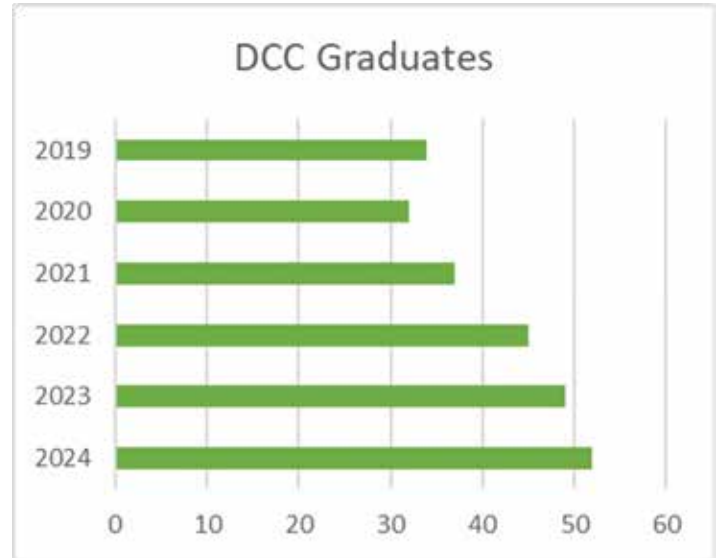
Key Performance Indicators Include:

**Credentialing Examination Rate:** Delgado Community College’s Radiography program plays a crucial role in addressing the growing demand for qualified radiographers in the healthcare industry. The program’s consistently high credentialing examination rate ensures a steady supply of well-prepared graduates who are ready to contribute to the delivery of quality patient care. By maintaining a strong commitment to academic excellence and student success, the program helps to strengthen the healthcare workforce in the greater New Orleans area.



**Graduate Numbers:** By increasing the number of graduates from 34 in 2019 to 52 in 2024, Delgado Community College’s Radiography program is making a significant contribution to the healthcare workforce in the greater New Orleans area. This growth reflects the program’s commitment to providing opportunities for individuals to obtain

valuable skills and certifications, ultimately improving access to quality healthcare services for the community.

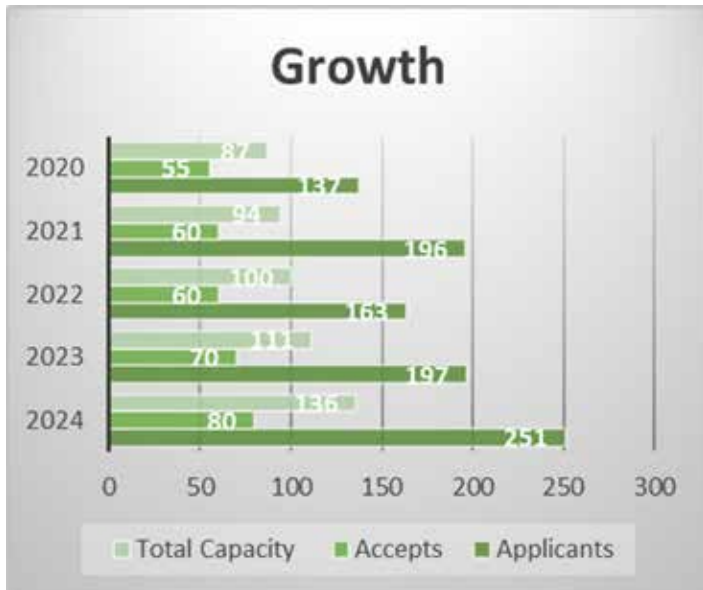


**Annual Completion Rate:** Delgado Community College’s Radiography program’s high annual completion rate of 85% demonstrates the program’s efficiency in utilizing resources and maximizing student outcomes. By minimizing student attrition and ensuring timely graduation, the program optimizes the use of faculty, staff, and facilities. This, in turn, allows the program to serve more students and meet the growing demand for skilled radiographers.



**Annual Applicants, Accepts and Total Capacity:**

Delgado Community College’s Radiography program has demonstrated its ability to adapt to the evolving needs of the healthcare industry. By increasing its capacity to accommodate more students, the program is effectively addressing the growing demand for skilled radiographers in the greater New Orleans area. This responsiveness to community needs ensures that the program remains a vital resource for healthcare providers and patients alike.



**Access and Scalability:**

Delgado Community College’s Radiologic Technology program is committed to providing access to quality education and training. In recent years, we have made significant strides in expanding our program to accommodate increased enrollment and enhance student success.

Key Initiatives:

Increased Program Capacity: To meet the growing demand for skilled radiographers, we have expanded

our program capacity, allowing us to enroll more students each year.

Enhanced Curriculum and Instruction: Our curriculum has been continuously updated to reflect industry standards and best practices. We have also invested in innovative teaching methods and technologies to improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

Expanded Clinical Partnerships: We have forged strong partnerships with local healthcare facilities to provide students with diverse clinical experiences, ensuring they are well-prepared for the workforce.

Student Support Services: We offer a range of support services, including academic advising, tutoring, and financial aid counseling, to help students overcome barriers and succeed.

By implementing these initiatives, we have been able to increase enrollment while maintaining high standards of excellence.

Our goal is to continue to provide access to quality education and training for all students, regardless of their background or circumstances.

We are proud of our accomplishments and look forward to continuing to make a positive impact on the healthcare community.

The program’s scalability is evident in its ability to accommodate significant growth in enrollment while maintaining high standards of quality. The expansion of clinical sites and the addition of faculty resources have been instrumental in supporting the program’s growth. As the demand for radiographers continues to increase, Delgado may consider further expanding the program to meet the needs of the region.

## Shared Lessons

### Finding the Right Size

Throughout the process of increasing enrollment, one of our primary goals was to foster growth while ensuring continued student support. This objective has significantly influenced our strategic decisions and approach to program expansion.

Over the past three years, we've encountered a challenge: while our enrollment growth goal remains consistent, the diverse needs of each individual student increase as the cohort size expands. This realization highlights the impact that increased enrollment can have on both the cohort as a whole and its individual members.

To address this, we've recognized the need to further tailor our program to meet the specific requirements of each cohort and its constituent students.

### Support Has to Begin at the Top

Delgado Community College's Radiologic Technology Program stands as a testament to the power of institutional support. Under the visionary leadership of College Chancellor Dr. Larissa Littleton Steib, the program has experienced remarkable growth, garnered national recognition, and become a model for increasing enrollment to meet community needs.

Even the most promising programs, without adequate resources, attention, and institutional commitment, cannot reach their full potential. Dean Harold Gaspard of the School of Allied Health, with his 50+ years of dedicated service to the College and strong healthcare partnerships, played a pivotal role in ensuring that growth would not compromise the quality of the program.

### Student Success Is an Investment

Throughout the growth of the Rad Tech Program, we have celebrated numerous successes while navigating significant challenges inherent to expansion. While our primary focus remains student retention, it's equally important to critically examine how staff retention, or attrition, may influence the ongoing success of our student-centered initiatives. As our data consistently demonstrates, strong relationships are paramount. The sustainability of these relationships will ultimately determine the long-term viability of the program.

### Create Sustainable Growth

Delgado Community College's experience in expanding its Radiography program offers valuable insights for other colleges considering similar initiatives.

One of the most significant challenges encountered during the program's growth was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student engagement. Many students faced personal difficulties that affected their ability to focus on their education, leading to higher attrition rates due to personal reasons rather than academic failures.

Another key lesson learned was the importance of maintaining a robust applicant pool. While selecting 35 qualified students for a Radiography program is relatively straightforward, predicting success becomes more challenging when dealing with larger cohorts of 60, 70, or 80 students. This was done through recruiting and information sessions.

The success of Delgado's Radiography program is largely attributed to the dedication and commitment of its faculty. Their "all-in" attitude and unwavering

support for students played a crucial role in the program's achievements. Additionally, the backing of college administrators was instrumental in providing the necessary resources and support for the program's expansion.

Colleges considering replicating this initiative should be prepared to address the potential challenges posed by external factors such as pandemics and ensure that they have a robust applicant pool to draw from. Investing in a dedicated and supportive faculty, as well as securing administrative backing, is essential for the success of such an endeavor.



# REFERENCES

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# APPENDICES



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## Appendix A:

### Longitudinal Tracking of Estimated Percent Vacancy Rates

Note. MD and T are through 2022

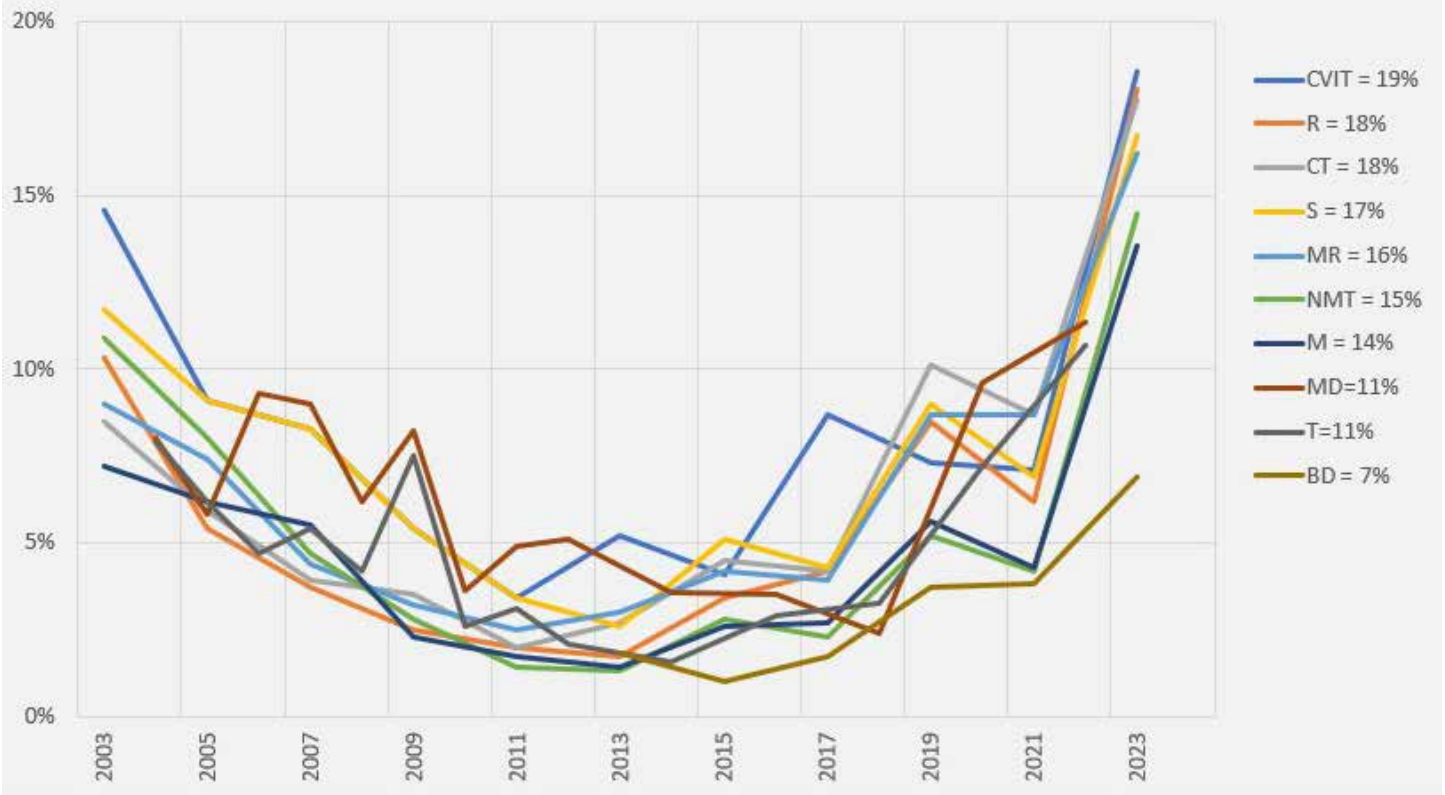


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# APPENDICES

## Appendix B:

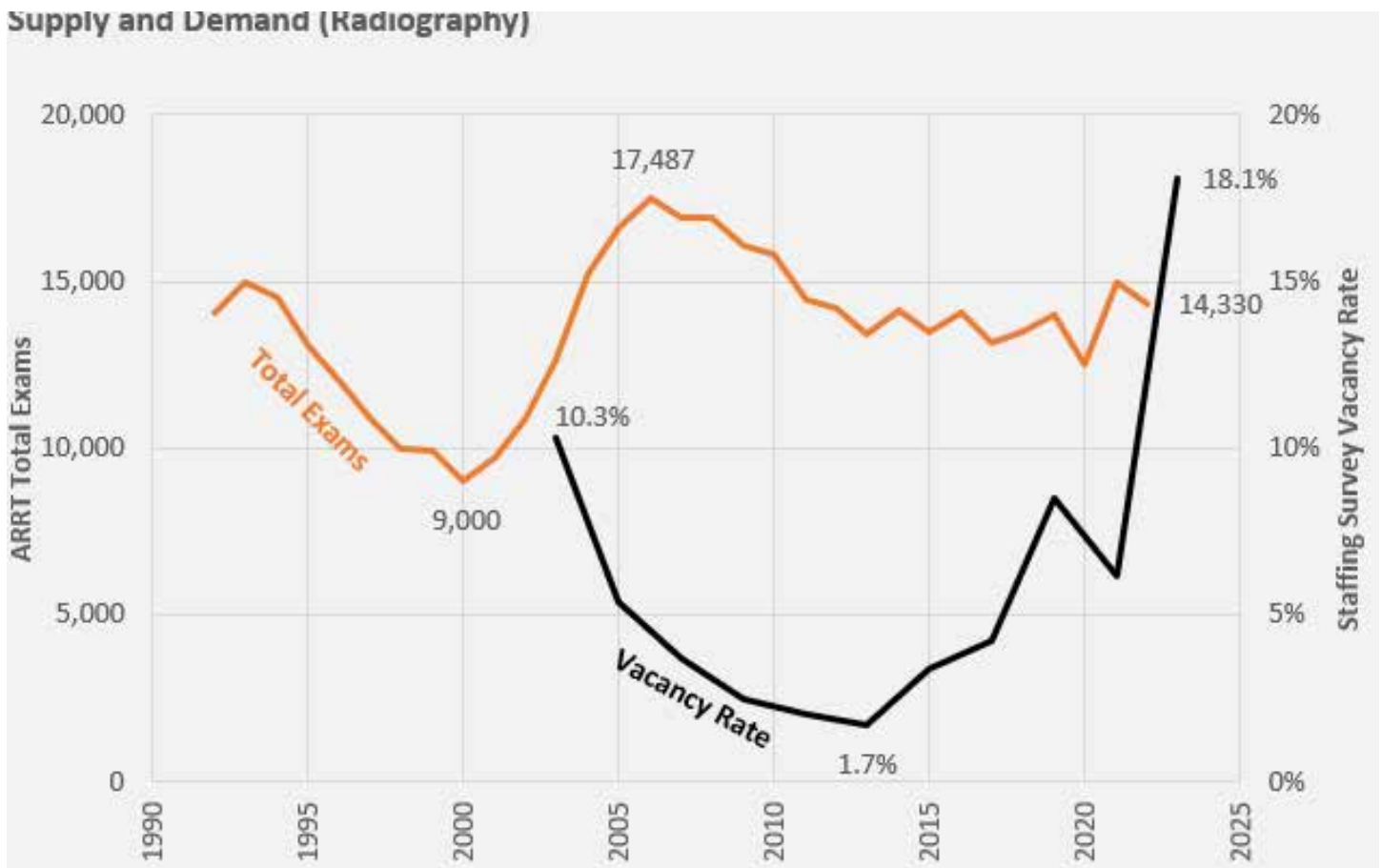


Figure 2. Total number of radiography certification exam takers compared with the job vacancy rate for radiographers over time. Reprinted from Research Report for the Consensus Committee on the Future of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy



# APPENDICES

## Appendix C:



**SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH**  
**Radiologic Technology**  
**TUESDAYS**

**SPRING 2025**

Learn about the exciting field of radiography and all it has to offer you!

Visit our radiologic technology suite and meet our faculty in person.

**DATES:**

- January 28 at 1 p.m.
- March 18 at 1 p.m.
- April 22 at 1 p.m.

**LOCATION:**

Delgado Community College  
 Building 1, Room 312E  
 City Park Campus  
 615 City Park Avenue  
 New Orleans, LA 70119

**CONTACT US**

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[www.dcc.edu/go/allied-health](http://www.dcc.edu/go/allied-health)

**Delgado** | School of Health Sciences  
 COMMUNITY COLLEGE | School of Allied Health

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix D:

<https://www.Delgado.edu/academics/allied-health/programs/radiologic-technology/admission-form.aspx>

## Appendix E: Delgado Radiography Student Policy & Procedure

<https://www.dcc.edu/documents/academics/allied-health/rad-tech-student-handbook.pdf>



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