

MRVector

Newsletter of the:

American Registry of Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists

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Fall 2004

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NCCA Accreditation Process Update

ARMRIT continues to be one of the most forward-thinking smaller certification programs that I have encountered in the 21 years I have spent working with credentialing examinations. As evidence of this fact one can point to ARMRIT's obtaining of college "credit by examination" from the American Council on Education, obtaining of approval for reimbursement of testing fees for veterans from the New York Division of Veterans' Affairs, the decision implemented in 2003 to administer examinations via computer, and the decision to seek accreditation from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), a division of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA). This last point, program accreditation, is particularly important. Once achieved, NCCA accreditation will enhance program credibility and, therefore, the value of ARMRIT's credential to candidates and potential candidates, make the program more competitive in a market place where competing credentials may be available, and, necessarily, ensure higher quality examinations and examination processes by virtue of ARMRIT's adherence to the highest standards of testing program excellence.

The process of preparing for NCCA accreditation is underway. ARMRIT's President has assembled a large number of documents that will support the eventual application submission. These documents include particularly critical information pertaining to the examination (e.g.

psychometrics, job analysis, content specifications, and test administration), candidate eligibility, program policies and procedures, etc. However, a number of tasks remain to be completed before accreditation can be obtained. They include practice analysis and test specifications revision, item bank review and additional item development, examination development, and passing score determination.

Our first task will be to ensure that the ARMRIT examination is "practice-based" and that all of the questions that appear on examination represent "current best practice". That is, we must ensure that the examination only measures knowledge required for safe and effective practice. The key to achieving this is the establishment of the link between what happens "on the job" and the questions that appear on the examination. (Traditional examinations tend to be linked to educational or training curricula and are said to be "curriculum-based", rather than practice-based.) We will meet this requirement by performing a practice (job) analysis. It will be carried out in a one-day meeting conducted and facilitated by Dr. Rosen. The participants will be a diverse group of 6 to 10 subject-matter experts (SMEs) selected by ARMRIT. In the course of the meeting the SMEs will delineate the major areas of practice, tasks performed, and knowledge applied by magnetic resonance imaging technologists in the course of their professional practice. The areas of practice and tasks will have associated weights based on their relative importance. This document, the practice analysis along with the associated weights, will comprise the new examination test specifications or "blueprint".

Once the new practice analysis has been completed and validated we will reclassify

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the questions in the item bank to link them to the new test specifications. The remaining tasks will be to write additional test questions to fill in any gaps in the item bank, construct a new examination based on the revised test specifications, administer the revised examination, and statistically analyze the revised examination.

When an organization is updating a practice analysis, the foundation of its certification examination, it is also an appropriate time to re-visit other examination-related issues. Therefore, in the course of our work we will also consider examination length, i.e. the number of questions appearing on the examination, and make a new determination of the optimum number of items for evaluating candidates' practice-related knowledge. We will also reconsider the examination passing score and possibly employ one of several methodologies for re-setting it. When these tasks have been completed we will be ready to submit ARMRIT's application for accreditation to NCCA.

Dr. Gerald A. Rosen, Ed.D
Consulting Psychologist
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Certification of Competency: **Individual and Organizational**

The American Registry of Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists (ARMRIT) (established in 1991) certifies that individuals who successfully complete the ARMRIT Examination for MRI are qualified / competent Registered MRI Technologists.

The ARMRIT is a member (1998) of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) (established in 1977) (www.noca.org). The NOCA is a leader in setting quality standards for credentialing organizations. The National Commission for

Certifying Agencies (NCCA) is the accrediting body of NOCA.

The ARMRIT is applying for accreditation by the NCCA. The Mission Statement of the NCCA is to help to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public through the accreditation of a variety of certification programs / organizations that assess professional competency. The NCCA employs a peer review process to (1) establish accreditation standards, (2) evaluate compliance with the standards, (3) recognize organization / programs which demonstrate compliance, and (4) serve as a resource on quality certification. The NCCA is an administratively independent resource recognized as the authority on accreditation standards for professional certification of organizations / programs.

The NCCA accreditation will demonstrate that the ARMRIT has been reviewed by a panel of experts who have determined that the Registry has met stringent requirements of competency. As an example, the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (ARDMS) is a member of NOCA and has received accreditation by the NCCA.

To facilitate the demonstration of competency, as evidenced in its Application, the ARMRIT requires consultation from a testing company and psychometrician – this consultation is expensive and the Registry would benefit from our financial support to obtain it and, thus, accreditation.

I recommend that we support the ARMRIT to obtain accreditation by the NCCA. Enclosed is my contribution of \$100.00.

James T. Patrick, MD, Ph.D, ARMRIT
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Visit www.armrit.org today and make your contribution to the ARMRIT/NCCA Accreditation Process. *Thank You.*