

Comprehensive Program Review Report
Academic Program Name: BSRT Completion
School: Health Sciences
Department: Respiratory and Health Sciences
CPR Review Schedule AY24-25

Provosts Response:

The BSRT Completion Program (Respiratory Therapy Bridge) continues to exceed expectations in enrollment, retention, and graduation trends, particularly when benchmarked against peer institutions. MGA's model offers a streamlined, high-quality academic experience for currently credentialed Respiratory Therapists seeking degree advancement. This contributes directly to workforce upskilling and aligns with national efforts to elevate educational standards in the profession.

The program remains highly viable and mission-aligned, as demonstrated through sustained student interest, meaningful learning outcomes, and faculty engagement in scholarship and service. Continued investment in recruitment and marketing is encouraged to maintain this trajectory and broaden the program's national reach.

Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

☐ Program MEETS Institution's Criteria

X Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.

☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

☐ Program PARTIALLY MEETS Institution's Criteria and will be re-evaluated in

☐ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria

☐ Program will be placed on a 1 year monitoring status.

☐ Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.

☐ Program will be deactivated.

☐ Program will be voluntarily terminated.

☐ Other (identify/add text):

Provost or VPAA Signature:

Date:



9/10/25



Comprehensive Program Review

AY 2024 – 2025

Institution: Middle Georgia State University

Academic Program: BS Respiratory Therapy AS to BS Completion/Bridge Program (RETH)

College or School: Health and Natural Science

Department: Respiratory Therapy and Health Science

CIP Code: 510908

Date of Last Internal Review: 2020

Faculty Completing Report: Teri Miller

Current Date: 3/31/25

5 Year Enrollment by Campus and Graduation Trends *(data available in Deans and Chairs Dashboard)*

Enrollment (Data from MGA Administrative Dashboard)

Campus	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	5 YR Growth	Fall 2020 compared to Fall 2024 only
Macon	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cochran	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Warner Robins	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dublin	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Eastman	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Online	41	43	48	54	52	238	26.83% increase
Off Campus	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	41	43	48	54	52	238	26.83% increase

Graduates (Data from MGA Administrative Dashboard)

- For data consistency, the fiscal year is in which the degree was awarded. For examples, Fiscal year 2020 includes degrees conferred in Summer 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020. *(data available in Deans and Chairs Dashboard)*

FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025*	5 YR Growth	FY2020 compared to FY2025 only
11	10	12	11	6	18*	50	63.64% increase *

*Note: Graduates for May 2025 have been included in the FY 2025 data, which was confirmed with MGA Office of Data Management and Registrar.

Introduction

In 2006, the Associate of Science in Respiratory Therapy entry-level degree program Advisory Committee, made up of regional stakeholders, requested the department consider expanding course work to offer a Bachelor of Science degree. Also, during the program accreditation site visit in 2006, the lead site visitor advocated for such a program. The degree proposal was researched, developed, proposed, and approved by the Board of Regents (BoR) for initiation in 2008 following support of the Task Force on Health Profession Education at the BoR. The Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy degree completion program was instituted in the fall semester of 2008, at what was then Macon State College.

Structure and Concentration

The BS completion program was developed to meet the needs of the working Registered Respiratory Therapists (RRT) which had graduated with an AS or associate of AAS from a regionally accredited respiratory therapy program. The structure of the curriculum focuses on the specialty areas of respiratory therapy in which additional certifications are available through the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC), as well as focusing on research, education, and leadership in respiratory therapy. The curriculum is designed to expand the therapists' knowledge base, explore evidence based best practices in respiratory care and instill a thirst for professional advancement in students. The majority of courses are taught by full-time MGA Respiratory Therapy faculty who teach across the bridge program as well as the entry-level program, with one retired faculty member also teaching online.

Accreditation Requirements

The Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) offers voluntary accreditation for degree advancement/completion programs. Every entry-level respiratory therapy degree program in the U.S. is accredited by CoARC and meets a common standard matrix for curriculum content for RT training; thereby, allowing any graduate of these programs to sit for credentialing exams to demonstrate a common competency. Students admitted to the BS Completion/Bridge program

have completed such a program and are credentialed with the advanced credential of “RRT.” The BS completion/bridge degree is awarded by the institution. “Credit by Validation” applies to graduates of these programs who have earned the RRT credential and completed all BS Completion program coursework. The RRT credential allows 21 credit hours to apply towards lower division courses in the degree. This credit transfer is accomplished through portfolio development and application for Prior Learning Credit (PLA) using the RRT credential, current licensure verification, resume, and any additional certifications the applicant includes. Credential verification is completed via the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) verification and proof of licensure is also verified.

Campus Locations and Method(s) of Delivery

The respiratory therapy entry program and faculty are located on the Macon campus of Middle Georgia State University. At the end of 2019, the university transitioned this program to fully online through MGA Direct, MGA’s online system, with 8-week course structure for major courses and most needed core courses also available online. This allows students outside of our local region to enroll for degree advancement. All RESP courses are offered once per year during the same semester to optimize student plan of study scheduling. Brightspace/Desire 2 Learn (D2L) is the current learning management system utilized for the coursework. Face to face advisement, as well as virtual advising, is offered with faculty as well as an academic advisor assigned for core needs advisement. The transition to fully online was fortuitous in timing due to the COVID-19 pandemic when RTs needed more flexibility for movement/travel for patient care. It also allows RTs from outside of local area to be recruited to the program.

Program Purpose and Mission

The mission of the Respiratory Therapy program in the Department of Respiratory Therapy and Health Sciences is to provide a quality education that prepares competent respiratory care professionals to serve the health care community. The program aligns its mission with the school and institution by:

- Attracting and retaining students into our affordable, convenient, and challenging degree program and graduates students in a timely manner.
- Offering a curriculum that supports the needs of the health care industry.
- Producing competent graduates prepared to meet the needs of the healthcare community.
- Developing and maintaining strong ties with alumni, the respiratory therapy professional community, and the healthcare industry
- Collaborating with the profession, the university, and the community in professional development.
- Effectively and efficiently managing the resources of the institution.

Respiratory Therapy Program Goals

- *Attract and retain students into our affordable, convenient, and challenging degree program offerings and graduate them in a timely manner.* This program of study is one of the most affordable

for degree advancement, is convenient for the RT to complete online and maintains rigor related to the professional specialty focus areas in the curriculum.

- *Offer a curriculum that supports the needs of the health care industry. The professional movement toward more degree advancement aligns with this program of study.* It also aligns with local management clinical ladder programs which promote degree advancement and specialty credentialing.
- *Produce competent graduates prepared to meet the needs of the healthcare community.* Graduates of this program of study have professional development in the specialty areas of Respiratory Therapy including neonatal/pediatrics; adult critical care; pulmonary functions; polysomnography; research, education, and management, adding value to workforce.

Strategic Initiatives and Alignment with Professional Workforce Need

The profession of Respiratory Therapy is at a crossroads, one in which the profession is strategically evaluating its role in healthcare and assessing how the Respiratory Therapist may continue to be a vital caregiver as changes in healthcare increasingly impact this role. One of the recommendations that came from professional summits and issue this study is that the profession begins transition toward bachelor-level entry programs and the development of AS to BS completion/bridge programs, as well as developing articulation agreements with technical colleges. Currently most Respiratory Therapy programs nationally (and in Georgia) are offered at the associate of science or associate of applied science level. The focus is now increasingly on increasing the development of BS entry, BS completion, and graduate degree programs nationally to meet training demand and professional preparation needs and the development of programs and articulations to assist with that goal. MGA's program, with its online platform, is well-positioned to grow its BS completion program, and has demonstrated growth since its inception, although a drop in enrollment did occur during and immediately following the COVID 19 pandemic, largely due to the heightened need for RTs at the bedside for patient care and the resulting workforce shortage following the pandemic. Information regarding the strategic planning initiative for the profession can be found at <https://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/issue-paper-entry-to-respiratory-therapy-practice-2030.pdf> .

Viability

With a five-year average of greater than 10 graduates per year, enrollment sustained growth over time and approximately 34 students currently enrolled in major coursework with more being admitted weekly, the Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy Completion/Bridge program continues to have strong community support and growth. As a faculty, we are working diligently to attract, retain, and progress respiratory therapists through the program. The program is one of three within Georgia, unique in design and delivery. We continue to attract students from across the state, many of which are from the Atlanta area. We market this program via social media, visiting RT technical college AAS RT programs, developing articulation agreements with existing AAS RT programs, and attending events as vendors such as the Georgia Society for Respiratory Care (GSRC) student meetings and conferences to connect personally. We also visit local hospitals to share with RT staff. Hospital RT departments are increasingly implementing Clinical Ladder

programs which support degree advancements and professional growth. The degree program aligns well with these initiatives.

We have students enrolled in this program from across the nation, with more out of state applications in the past year. The availability of the program also allows AS graduates a means in which to advance their degrees while also working. The potential growth of the BS completion program is demonstrated by the current enrollment trajectory. With the profession's pursuit of Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy degrees being the preferred degree level and with employers seeking more advanced degrees for their workforce, it is anticipated that more therapists will return to advance their degrees.

Surveying graduates and community stakeholders are areas for development if we move to seek CoARC accreditation. We currently accept continual enrollment within this program of study rather than annual cohorts, allowing maximum flexibility for students to progress through the program, and are not currently limited in enrollment. The current design would need to be adjusted should we seek CoARC accreditation. We currently have three articulation agreements in place with technical colleges, and development of more with other regional AS and AAS programs could improve recruitment as well, although our process of PLA allows for smooth RT credit transfer. The program seeks to advance its marketing nationally, as current enrollment numbers for the BS completion program are not limited by accreditation, do meet a regional and national need, and have growth potential for the institution. Funding toward marketing this program to the broader, national stage could have a significant impact on program growth.

Using IPEDS data, list the supply of graduates in the program and related programs in the service area:

Similar or Related Degrees/Programs	CIP Code	Supply* (Graduates/Completers)	Competitor Institutions**
Respiratory Therapy RT to BSRT	51.0908	7 for FY24 (6 for FY 23)	Dalton State College

**Supply = Number of program graduates last year within the study area*

***Competitors = List other USG institutions that offer this program of a similar program in the area*

*** Note: Dalton State College is the only other BSRT Bridge program in Georgia that differentiates its graduates in the bridge program from entry-level BS programs. USG Dashboards align with IPEDS.

Labor Market/Career Placement Outlook/Salary:

The Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy AS to BS Bridge/Completion program is viewed as a degree advancement program in the profession of respiratory therapy. As previously discussed, there is urgency for the RT workforce to advance degrees, making degree advancement programs such as this an important part of the profession's strategic plan. (See "Elevate 2C of the American Association for Respiratory Care's Strategic Plan : <https://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/strat-plan-skinny-for-initial-use-new-web.pdf>). Employment

opportunities for the Respiratory Therapist are robust, with a regional and national shortage of RTs. Degree advancement is supported through clinical ladder programs within hospitals and provides salary growth for those who complete degree advancement programs. When compared to other similar programs/professions, Respiratory Therapy has growth opportunity.

Occupation	O*Net¹	Current Employment <i>(O-Net data)</i>	% Growth <i>(O-Net data)</i>	Average Salary <i>(O-Net data)</i>	Future Earnings Potential <i>(O-Net data)</i>
Respiratory Therapist	(Outlook) Bright	133,900 (US) 4,190 (GA)	13% (faster than the average) - US 36% (GA)	\$77,960 (US) \$78,490 (GA)	8,200 (Annual openings US) 380 (GA)
Critical Care Nurses (Same data for "Registered Nurse")	(Outlook) Bright	3,300,100 (US) 73,180 (GA)	6% (US) 18% (GA)	\$86,070 (US) \$83,620 (GA)	194500 (Annual openings US) 5460 (GA)
Occupational Therapist Assistant	(Outlook) Bright	47,500 (US) 1080 (GA)	22% (US) 64% (GA)	\$67,010 (US) \$71,210 (GA)	7,200 (Annual openings US) 240 (GA)
Physical Therapy Assistant	(Outlook) Bright	108,500 (US) 2,570 (GA)	25% (US) 58% (GA)	\$64080 (US) \$73120 (GA)	20800 (US) 540 (GA)

¹National Center for O*NET Development. *O*NET OnLine*. Retrieved [include date] from <https://www.onetonline.org/>

In conclusion, the Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy AS to BS Completion/Bridge program aligns with local, regional, and national workforce needs, provides a valuable degree to students who wish to advance within the profession of Respiratory Therapy, and has opportunity for programmatic growth, all aligning with MGA's mission to educate and graduate inspired lifelong learners whose scholarship and careers enhance the region and the state.

IEB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

Date Reviewed: 4/25/25

Program Reviewed: BS Respiratory Therapy AS to BS Bridge Program

Contextual Notes: Summarize any demographic or environmental factors described in the introduction that might significantly impact assessment of the program

Area of Focus	Exemplary Area	Satisfactory Area	Area of Concern	No Evidence	Notes
Enrollment	<i>This program has significantly positive enrollment trends and robust credit hour production</i>	<i>This program has stable or moderately positive enrollment trends and healthy credit hour production</i>	<i>This program has negative enrollment trends and weak credit hour production</i>		
Graduation Trends USG benchmark:	<i>Three year rolling average greatly exceeds USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred</i>	<i>Three year rolling average meets or exceeds USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred</i>			Rebound in numbers from 2024 to 2025 is impressive.

IEB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

Bachelor's Degrees: 10 graduates/year					
Graduate, Associate's or Certificates: 5 graduates/year					
Programs falling under these benchmarks are designated as "low performing"					

Program Strengths of Note:

Evidence of growth in enrollment to meet job market demands. Faculty appear to be very engaged with student learning and success. Keeping the program online has been a good strategic move. Very competitive program for the region.

Areas of Concern:

Other Comments:

Excellent details in the report.

Comprehensive Program Review Report

Academic Program Name: BS Respiratory Therapy AS to BS Bridge Program

College or School: School of Health & Natural Sciences

Department: Respiratory Therapy & Health Sciences

Date of Last Internal Review: 7/22/2020

Outcome of Previous Program Review (brief narrative statement, if applicable):

Current Date: 5/29/2025

Executive Summary: *Provide a summary related to the academic program's **quality, viability, and productivity of efforts** in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution's mission. If this is the initial review of the program address how the program is/is not meeting the enrollment and credit hour projects contained in the original program proposal.*

The quality of this program meets the needs of current Registered Respiratory Therapists across the nation as they work to achieve the next level of their education. This program continues to be very viable with a high level of productivity as indicated in the enrollment and graduation trends in the latest CPR report. In the areas of teaching and learning, scholarship, and service, the RT Bridge program is in alignment with MGA's mission of "educating and graduating inspired, lifelong learners whose scholarship and careers enhance the region and the state". The program is uniquely designed to address the aspects of these areas. During the students' matriculation through the curricula, they are taught and introduced to various pedagogical scenarios that pertain to patient care and evidence-based best practices for pulmonary care issues.

Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program. *Include a statement of plans for action based on the overall categorical summation contained in this section.*

XX Program MEETS Institution's Criteria (also indicate 1 subcategory below)

XX Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.

☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

Required statement of plans for action: Continue recruitment and marketing efforts to grow enrollment as needed.

☐ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria (also indicate 1 subcategory below)

☐ Program will be placed on a monitoring status.


☐ Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.

☐ Program will be deactivated.

☐ Program will be voluntarily terminated.

☐ Other (identify/add text):

Required statement of plans for action: _____

Academic Dean Signature: 

Dean of Graduate Studies Signature (when applicable):

Date: 5/29/2025