

What is the difference in work role between Respiratory Scientists and Respiratory Therapists?

Both Respiratory Scientists and Respiratory Therapists are members of health care teams who work with people having respiratory disorders, to assist in diagnosis, monitoring and therapy under the direction of Respiratory Physicians.

RESPIRATORY SCIENTISTS primarily work within respiratory function laboratories in Australia, New Zealand and the UK in public and private hospitals and health care settings. The focus of their work is laboratory based diagnostic testing and monitoring of lung function. They commonly perform spirometry and measure airway responsiveness, static lung volumes, transfer of gas across the lung (DLCO/TLCO), lung mechanics, cardiopulmonary exercise responses, blood gas concentrations and titrate supplemental oxygen requirements.

Respiratory Scientists are typically required to have a 3 year Bachelor of Science in physiology, or equivalent, and undergo workplace training, although there are some specialist undergraduate degree and postgraduate courses available.

A professional Certified Respiratory Function Scientist (CRFS) credential is available to those who achieve greater than 80% in a 100 multiple choice examination, which sets a minimum standard of knowledge appropriate to the competent performance of standard respiratory function assessment in Australia and New Zealand. This credential is offered by ANZSRS.

The following website provides a more comprehensive description:

<http://www.anzsrs.org.au/position01.pdf>

RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS work in respiratory settings including diagnostic laboratories and bedside therapeutic roles in Canada and the US in public and private hospitals and health care settings. They measure cardiopulmonary function to detect impaired function and analyse expired gas and sputum samples. The bedside therapeutic role generally takes on a larger component of the Respiratory Therapists work. They commonly perform roles in intensive care and ventilator support.

There are entry and advanced level practitioners with entry level practitioners completing a specific Respiratory Therapy, 2 year Associate Degree or Diploma qualification and advanced level practitioners holding a 2 year qualification with experience or 3 year degree.

The following website provides a more comprehensive description:

http://www.aarc.org/patient_education/whatarcp.asp

Successful completion of certification examinations is required for practice at a range of levels:

<https://www.nbrc.org/Examinations/tabid/70/Default.aspx>