

# “Accreditation” “Certification”

## What Do These Words Mean? And Why Do They Matter?

### Accreditation = Practice Standards

Certification ensures that the ultrasound staff makes the grade. Accreditation by the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM) helps ensure that all of the other elements needed for high-quality ultrasound are in place.

Like certification, AIUM accreditation of any ultrasound practice is voluntary. To gain accreditation, the ultrasound group has to take the initiative to demonstrate that it meets or exceeds national standards in every aspect of ultrasound that is specified by the AIUM, including

- Proof that the physicians have received specialty training,
- A sound program for ensuring that all ultrasound equipment is medically safe,
- Documentation that ultrasound procedures are thorough and complete, and
- Evidence that the ultrasound equipment used is appropriate for the types of tests being performed, and that it is checked regularly to be sure it is in good working order.

### Certification = Professional Standards

Ever wonder why a hospital’s radiology, ob-gyn, or ultrasound department or this practice is “accredited”? And what does it mean when a sonographer says he or she is “credentialed,” “registered,” or “certified”?

To be “registered,” “credentialed,” or “certified” by the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (ARDMS) means a sonographer has consistently demonstrated professional standards, as well as achieved a level of competency in both technical procedures and patient care. ARDMS-certified sonographers must maintain their credentials by fulfilling continuing competency education requirements that serve to enhance their knowledge and keep their skills up-to-date. This ongoing education is critical because the field of ultrasound (sonography) is advancing so rapidly.

The American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (ARDMS) has been certifying sonographers for more than 25 years. To achieve ARDMS certification, an ultrasound professional must meet high standards, in terms of classroom learning, as well as clinical skills. In addition, he or she must pass a rigorous ARDMS examination that tests both theoretical and clinical know-how. Many of the questions are based on actual patient cases.

### Certification + Accreditation = Standards You Can Rely On

Many people will not invest the price of a movie ticket without checking the reviews. But, how can you tell if you are getting a good ultrasound examination? In a world that has become technically sophisticated, many people rely on the advice and guidance of experts in the field.

Certification of sonographers by the ARDMS, combined with accreditation of an ultrasound practice by the AIUM, provide you with peace of mind. Because of the ARDMS and the AIUM, you can be assured that the leading experts in ultrasound stand behind this practice or this hospital's radiology, ob-gyn, or ultrasound department, promoting lifelong learning for our sonographers and doctors, and constant improvements in quality control for each ultrasound procedure we perform.

To find out more about the ARDMS, visit <[www.ardms.org](http://www.ardms.org)>.

To learn more about the AIUM, visit <[www.aium.org](http://www.aium.org)>.

If you have specific questions about certified sonographers, contact the ARDMS Communications Department at 301-738-8401.

If you have specific questions about accredited practices, contact the AIUM Accreditation Department at 301-498-4100 or 800-638-5352.