

University-Level Training in Radiation and Nuclear Technology

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In 1964, cooperation between the United States Public Health Department and Oklahoma State University resulted in the initiation of a university-level, technician-training program. The program has been built within the framework of a 27-year-old technical institute at Oklahoma State University and awards an Associate Degree for two years' study. The program was designed to supply part of the nation's anticipated need for technicians trained in the principles of radiation.

The philosophy of the program development demanded that the training be fundamental and of considerable breadth. On a university campus, preparation for a specialized employ or instruction in predominately manual skills is out of place. Therefore, the program is designed to provide adequate basic understanding of the many facets of the radiation-related fields for the graduate to handle any technician-grade position with just brief, on-the-job, training.

The curriculum that has been developed fits into the existing structure of the technical institute and prepares the student with both a sound understanding of radiation and a more-than-casual acquaintance with the necessary manual skills. Sixty-eight semester hours are required for graduation, and of this more than 50% is earned in radiation-centered courses.

All but one of these courses has associated with it a laboratory allowing the student to get a more practical feeling of the subjects which have been discussed. In several of the laboratories, there is room for selection of individual projects from a variety of topics so the student can pursue the line of study most interesting to him. Thus, on an undergraduate level, he may follow up a more advanced experiment or build some operating circuit of his own design.

Two classes of radiation technicians have graduated at Oklahoma State University and these individuals are finding ever-widening opportunities in the field. About one-fifth of these 29 graduates have gone on to further their education and another quarter have entered the military. Eighteen graduates are presently employed in eight different states from coast to coast. The increased interest in these people is indicative of the need for trained radiation and nuclear technicians to fill the needed service positions in the rapidly growing radiation industry.