



The Alliance of Medical Student Educators in Radiology (AMSER) Distinction in Radiology Track (DIRT) Program Medical Student Guide

Overview

The AMSER Distinction in Radiology Track (DIRT) is open to all medical students interested in gaining a deeper understanding of radiology, regardless of their intended specialty choice. The program supports the development of imaging literacy, clinical reasoning, and professional skills, while offering opportunities to engage in service, leadership, and scholarly activities. Students in the track will:

- Complete foundational radiology modules and case-based exercises.
- Learn to interpret common imaging studies and understand radiology reporting.
- Gain exposure to patient safety, contrast use, and sustainability in radiology.
- Participate in a mentored scholarly or educational project.

The track is built around high-quality educational resources developed by the American College of Radiology (ACR) and AMSER and includes assessments that provide you with a nationally recognized framework for radiology knowledge.

Learning Objectives

By completing the AMSER DIRT, students will be able to:

1. **Understand the Role of Radiology in Patient Care**
 - Explain how imaging contributes to diagnosis and management across medical specialties.
2. **Apply Imaging Guidelines**
 - Use ACR Appropriateness Criteria in clinical decision-making.
3. **Interpret Common Imaging Studies**
 - Recognize findings in chest, abdomen, musculoskeletal, neuro, and pediatric cases.
4. **Understand Safety and Sustainability**

- Learn best practices for patient safety, contrast use, and resource-conscious imaging.
- 5. **Engage in Scholarly or Educational Activities**
 - Complete a mentored project (case report, research, quality improvement, or educational initiative) and present your findings.
- 6. **Communicate Effectively**
 - Present cases and projects clearly, both in writing and orally, to peers and faculty.
- 7. **Explore Career Insights in Radiology (Optional)**
 - Learn about residency applications and career paths in radiology through mentoring.

Program Structure

Distinction Track Points System

To earn the AMSER Distinction in Radiology, students complete a minimum of 100 points through the following activities:

Distinction in Radiology Track Points Matrix		Points
Activity	Description	
Service & Leadership <i>Limit: 5 points maximum in this activity</i>	Involvement in local, state, or national radiology organization (e.g., medical school radiology student interest group, local or state radiological society, AMSER, Association of Academic Radiology, American College of Radiology, American Association for Women in Radiology, Radiological Society of North American, American Society of Neuroradiology, Society of Interventional Radiology, etc.). Membership in radiological societies/organizations are often free for medical students with opportunities to serve on committees or possible service roles.	5 pts
Scholarly Activities <i>Limit: 35 points maximum in this activity</i>	*Scholarly Product (required): Oral presentation, quality improvement initiative project, educational/scientific poster, or published manuscript related to radiology)	15 pts
	External Dissemination Bonus (<i>optional, which can reduce number of Applied Learning Modules required by 2 modules</i>).	
	• Poster presentation at local/regional/national meeting • Oral presentation or publication (peer-reviewed) at any level	+10 pts +20 pts
Courses (*Required)	*Clinical Radiology Elective/ Experience (2- or 4-weeks)	10 pts

***Core Knowledge (Foundation Course):**

AMSER DIRT Medical Student Radiology Curriculum

Covers fundamentals of imaging, radiation safety, and imaging appropriateness.

Deliverable: Completion of the AMSER DIRT Curriculum Questions (self-assessment). Completion of the end-of-course AMSER DIRT Exam (automatically scored, results emailed to Distinction in Radiology Track Instructor (DIRTI)). Must have reached a passing score of at least 70% upon one or more attempts.

***Applied Learning (Case-Based ACR Radiology TEACHES) Modules:**

- Family & Community Medicine (appropriate use of imaging in primary care) (5 pts)
- Contrast Safety (indications, contradictions, patient safety) (5 pts)
- Pediatrics (common pediatric imaging scenarios) (5 pts)
- Internal Medicine (acute imaging decisions) (5 pts)
- Sustainability in Radiology (resource use & environmental impact) (5 pts)
- Self-reflection essay: Student must submit a short (250-word) write-up on what they learned from one TEACHES module and how it applies to patient care. (5 pts)

Deliverable: Completion certificates (auto generated by TEACHES) + essay forwarded to the DIRTI.

***Assessment & Verification:**

The DIRTI notifies the DIRT Director when their student is ready to take the AMSER DIRT Exam. The exam covers chest imaging, gastrointestinal imaging, general radiology principles, neuroradiology, breast imaging, musculoskeletal imaging, pediatric imaging, head and neck imaging, ultrasound, vascular and interventional radiology, nuclear medicine, and imaging appropriateness. The exam will be automatically scored and results emailed to the student's DIRTI.

Deliverable: Completion report + score to the DIRTI as summative evaluation of comprehension. Must have reached passing score of at least 70% upon one or attempts.

30 pts
total

50 pts

Guidelines & Instructions for Students

Enrollment and Orientation

- Students should express interest in the distinction track during medical school Years 1–3. Students interested in pursuing the AMSER DIRT Program may contact: Biren A. Shah, MD Director, AMSER DIRT. Email: biren.shah@wmed.edu
- Upon enrollment, each student will be paired with a Distinction Track Instructor (faculty mentor) who will serve as their primary point of contact for the distinction track program.
- Students are responsible for reviewing program requirements and creating a personalized completion plan with their instructor.

Role of the Student

- Take ownership of tracking completed activities and point totals.
- Communicate proactively with the Distinction Track Instructor at least twice per year.
- Meet all deadlines for coursework, exams, and scholarly deliverables.
- Maintain professionalism in all interactions, presentations, and scholarly product.

Role of the Distinction Track Instructor (DIRTI)

- Help the student select an appropriate scholarly or educational project aligned with interests and feasibility.
- Assist the student in identifying dissemination opportunities (posters, presentations, publications).
- Review progress toward points and ensure all required components are completed.
- Verify completion of required activities prior to awarding distinction.

Scholarly Project Guidance

- Projects may include research studies, case reports, educational curricula, quality improvement initiatives (for more details click [here](#)), or informatics-based projects related to radiology.
- Projects that do not involve patient-identifiable data or direct patient interaction may not require IRB approval; students should confirm IRB requirements with their institution.
- Students should define project aims, timeline, and expected deliverables early, ideally by the end of Year 2.
- The DIRTI must approve the scholarly project to assure meeting the standards of the DIRT.
- Final scholarly products are encouraged to be presented locally or submitted externally whenever possible.
- It is not expected or encouraged that a DIRTI also serve as a student's research mentor, as doing so may require a level of time commitment beyond the intended scope of the DIRTI role. However, individual DIRTIs may choose to serve in both capacities at their own discretion.

Documentation and Submission

- Students must submit all completion certificates, exam scores, essays, and project documentation to the DIRTI.
- A final portfolio summarizing completed activities, verification of completion of the final annual survey, and documentation of at least 100 earned points must be submitted prior to medical school graduation to qualify for the AMSER Distinction in Radiology.

Suggested Timeline

- Years 1–2: Identify scholarly project mentor, begin scholarly project planning, engage in service/leadership activities.
- Years 2–3: Complete ACR Virtual Curriculum and TEACHES modules; continue scholarly project.
- Years 3–4: Complete the AMSER DIRT Exam, complete scholarly product, and finalize distinction track points matrix document.
- Year 4: Completed clinical radiology elective/experience, complete annual survey, and submit final distinction track portfolio for review.

Student Support & Progress Monitoring

- The DIRT I meets with students at least twice yearly to review progress.
- Faculty mentor(s) provide individualized feedback on scholarly projects/presentations.
- Students that have a conflict/concern regarding their DIRT I is advised to contact the AMSER DIRT Director (see contact information below).

Benefits of Participation

- Gain valuable imaging and clinical reasoning skills applicable to any specialty.
- Build a scholarly portfolio through research, education, or quality improvement.
- Strengthen leadership, communication, and professional development skills.
- Earn a nationally recognized distinction to enhance residency and career applications.

Continuous Improvement

- Student feedback is collected annually via mandatory surveys to improve teaching, learning experiences, and content.
- The program continually expands faculty involvement and educational resources.

Students with questions and/or are interested in pursuing the AMSER DIRT Program may contact:

Biren A. Shah, MD, AMSER DIRT Director

Email: biren.shah@wmed.edu