

# A Guide to Evaluating Training Options for your EP Lab

Electrophysiology (EP) is a rapidly growing segment within the healthcare industry. According to the CDC, anywhere from 2.7 to 6.1 million people in the U.S. are affected by atrial fibrillation and that number is expected to grow to 12 million by 2050. For hospitals this provides an opportunity to serve more patients. However, there is a shortage of lab professionals. In a fast-paced environment full of technology changes many get frustrated with the lack of education opportunities and leave the field. This leads to high turnover and an influx of new employees that can take its toll on EP lab performance.

A greater emphasis on training and education may help as it enhances the expertise of staff to better meet patient needs and improves retention. To help hospitals explore training options, below is a list of key considerations to keep in mind.

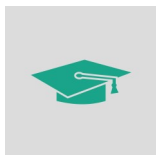


## Selecting a Curriculum

Choosing the right curriculum is critical. A training that's built on the expert EP knowledge, proven academic practices and industry certification standards can help prepare lab professionals for certification exams such as the Registered Cardiac Electrophysiology Specialist (RCES) certification, International Board of Heart Rhythm Examiners (IBHRE) and Certified Electrophysiology Specialist (CEPS). Training that's geared toward a particular certification and provides exam matrix guidelines, multilevel assessments and practice tests may achieve the most success.

## Exploring Training Options

Many training options exist and each come with their own set of pros and cons. The most important thing is to select the training option that works best for your staff, budget and schedule. The options include:



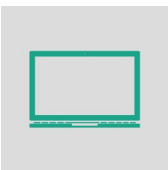
**Accredited schools** --Only two accredited schools exist in the U.S. and both offer full-time programs that require two years to complete. Two-year programs often provide more general education, are costly at \$25,000-\$36,000 per student and logistically prohibitive for the full-time employee.



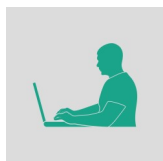
**Offsite lecture-based training** -- This option can be spread out over a few weeks to months depending on the level of education desired. Many labs choose to send employees to the offsite location for training a few days at a time so it doesn't impact the lab schedule too much. However, this sometimes proves difficult for busy labs, places a limit on the learning time and can make an ongoing education model more challenging.



**Customized onsite training**—This type may provide a good option for labs who desire more intensive, personalized training in a shorter time frame. Customized training provides a staff knowledge assessment and then tailors the teaching to best meet the needs of all levels and licenses. Typically, training is delivered by an EP expert during one-on-one and group sessions over a period of a few months. For greater knowledge building, look for a program where the educator can work side-by-side with the staff to conduct training during and in between cases. To reinforce learning and provide ongoing education opportunities beyond the onsite training an online tool should be considered.



**Online training** – Many online training tools tend to offer lecture-only style teaching with an emphasis on the basics and no interactivity. However, it's best to look for an online tool that combines video lectures with interactive tools such as 3D images and illustrations, practice tests, references and other resources. A tool that leverages technology such as a Learning Management System (LMS) and makes the curriculum accessible across multiple platforms encourages self-study and ongoing education. With digital access, including mobile, lab employees can access educational content from anywhere, review material before a case, listen to online lectures on the go or watch an advanced case review video for more traditional classroom-style training. Additionally, digital training provides flexibility, allowing for updates to the curriculum as new techniques and technologies emerge.



**Combination of on-site and online** – Many organizations find that a combination approach of on-site training and an online component works best. Customized on-site training can provide can quickly engage and immerse employees in learning. However, an online educational tool goes beyond any training provided in-person and supports ongoing learning opportunities and knowledge retention.

## Achieving results

Evaluating training options to best meet your labs needs may seem like a daunting task at first. However, the right training can really pay off as it improves morale, engages employees and creates excitement around career advancement. It can also enhance teamwork between physicians and staff, reduce turnover and improve overall lab efficiency.

**As you explore training options and consider the benefits for your lab, check out the training available from SpringBoard Healthcare at [www.springboardhealthcare.com](http://www.springboardhealthcare.com).**

