



## Frequently Asked Questions

### ABOUT THE CCC SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

The Calhoun Community College Surgical Technology Program is designed to prepare graduates for employment and careers in this exciting and rapidly growing medical field. The program provides the student with the knowledge and skills to function as an integral part of the team of medical practitioners providing surgical care to patients in a variety of medical settings.

Students completing the program receive an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Surgical Technology and are eligible to sit for the NBSTSA Certified Surgical Technologist Exam.

#### **When does the program begin?**

Two classes of students are enrolled each year; one group begins the program fall semester and one group begins spring semester. Only students who have applied to the program, and have been accepted, are allowed to enroll in SUR courses.

#### **How many students are admitted to the program each year?**

Forty-four (44) students are admitted each year; 24 in the fall and 20 in the spring.

#### **What physical capabilities are required of a Surgical Technologist?**

Students enrolled in the surgical technology program are required to successfully complete both academic and clinical requirements. The program has adopted a list of **Eligibility Criteria** to delineate the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills deemed minimally necessary for admission, progression, program completion, and for the provision of safe and effective client care. The Alabama Community College System endorses the Americans' with Disabilities Act. If a student cannot meet the Eligibility Criteria, it is their responsibility to request appropriate reasonable accommodations through the Student Disability Services Office. The Eligibility Criteria are posted on the ST website.

#### **How many semesters are there in the ST program?**

The surgical technology coursework is 3 semesters in length. The general education classes required for the AAS degree require approximately 2 additional semesters, taken prior to beginning the ST program.

#### **\*What classes or courses must I first take in order to apply to the ST Program?**

Program applicants must have completed:

- English Composition I (ENG 101),
- Medical Terminology (EMS 106), and a
- Mathematics course (MTH 100, MTH 110, or MTH 112) prior to application

However, to promote success in the program, students are encouraged to take all or most of the general education classes prior to application. Completion of the foundational classes helps ensure student accomplishment in the rigorous ST program.

All general education and surgical technology courses (SUR) must be passed with a grade of C or higher in order to graduate from the program. The surgical technology courses must be taken and successfully completed in the order outlined in the curriculum plan. Three semesters are required even if all general education coursework has been completed prior to enrollment.

## Surgical Technology Curriculum Plan Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree

Spring Semester Start		Fall Semester Start	
General education requirements	credit hours	General education requirements	credit hours
ORI 110: Freshman Seminar	1	ORI 110: Freshman Seminar	1
*ENG 101: English Composition I	3	*ENG 101: English Composition I	3
*Mathematics Elective (MTH 100, 110, 112)	3	*Mathematics Elective (MTH 100, 110, 112)	3
*EMS 106: Medical Terminology	2	*EMS 106: Medical Terminology	2
BIO 201: Human Anatomy & Physiology I	4	BIO 201: Human Anatomy & Physiology I	4
BIO 202: Human Anatomy & Physiology II	4	BIO 202: Human Anatomy & Physiology II	4
PSY 200: Introduction to Psychology	3	PSY 200: Introduction to Psychology	3
PSY 210: Human Growth and Development	3	PSY 210: Human Growth and Development	3
Speech Elective (SPH 106, 107)	3	Speech Elective (SPH 106, 107)	3
Humanities Elective	3	Humanities Elective	3
<b>Total general education credit hours =</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Total general education credit hours =</b>	<b>29</b>
Surgical Technology Courses		Surgical Technology Courses	
Spring Semester		Fall Semester	
SUR 100: Principles of Surgical Technology	5	SUR 100: Principles of Surgical Technology	5
SUR 102: Applied Surgical Techniques	4	SUR 102: Applied Surgical Techniques	4
SUR 107: ST Anatomy and Pathophysiology	3	SUR 107: ST Anatomy and Pathophysiology	3
SUR 108: Pharmacology for the ST	2	SUR 108: Pharmacology for the ST	2
Summer Semester		Spring Semester	
SUR 103: Surgical Procedures	5	SUR 103: Surgical Procedures	5
Fall Semester		Summer Semester	
SUR 104: Surgical Practicum I	4	SUR 104: Surgical Practicum I	4
SUR 105: Surgical Practicum II	5	SUR 105: Surgical Practicum II	5
SUR 106: Role Transition in ST	1	SUR 106: Role Transition in ST	1
SUR 204: Surgical Practicum III	4	SUR 204: Surgical Practicum III	4
<b>Total surgical technology credit hours =</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>Total surgical technology credit hours =</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Total hours for AAS degree =</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>Total hours for AAS degree =</b>	<b>62</b>

### How do I apply to the CCC Surgical Technology program?

Click **"How to Apply"** on the ST website to find directions and the online application.

Spring Semester Start	Fall Semester Start
Application deadline September 30	Application deadline May 15
Manual dexterity assessments scheduled October 5-25	Manual dexterity assessments scheduled May 25-June 25
Admission notification email sent by November 1	Admission notification email sent by July 1

### What expenses are involved in the ST program?

In addition to tuition, health students have expenses related to the listed requirements below, plus textbooks and laboratory supplies. Approximate costs are discussed in information sessions and program orientation.

#### HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:

- Retain reliable transportation to and from the campus and assigned clinical education facilities.
- Comply with a dress code that includes an assigned uniform
- Undergo a health examination, TB screening, and validate immunity to infectious diseases
- Submit proof of current certification in basic life support (CPR) at the healthcare provider level
- Purchase low-cost malpractice insurance through the CCC Health Sciences division
- Submit to a background check by a designated vendor
- Undergo drug and alcohol testing by a designated vendor

#### Do I need a background check, physical examination, or have taken CPR to apply to the ST Program?

None are needed to apply. Faculty will instruct enrolled students when to proceed with these requirements. Do not undertake until directed to do so. A background check with findings or positive drug screen may render a student ineligible to participate in clinical experiences which may result in dismissal from the ST Program.

#### What are “clinical practicum experiences”?

Enrolled students participate in clinical experiences to practice and develop skills. The student is assigned a preceptor who oversees them in the operating room. The student begins by performing the role of the ST on simple procedures and, during the course of the rotation, advances to more difficult cases in a variety of surgical specialties. The experiences are 8 to 12-hour shifts. Expectations include standing in a surgical suite for up to 6 hours without bathroom or lunch breaks. Clinical facility assignments are based on the learning needs of the student, not geographical proximity to home, work, or family commitments. Students must have reliable transportation, flexibility in their personal schedules, and the willingness to commute to clinical sites throughout north Alabama.

#### Will I be able to work and attend the ST program?

The program requires commitment. Classes and clinical experiences are scheduled during the day, Monday through Friday and student attendance is required. Successful students report studying approximately two hours for each contact hour of lecture classes per week. Sound study skills and time management are critical to achievement. It is recommended students work no more than 20 hours per week.

#### The ST program application says the grading policy is different. Why is that?

The ST program grading policy is more stringent than the general college grading policy. In order to pass a SUR course, the student must receive a grade of 75% or greater. Students who do not receive a minimum of 75% as a final grade in a SUR course will not be allowed to progress in the program. It is the belief of the faculty that having a strict grading policy will help better ensure student knowledge and competency.

#### Is the CCC Surgical Technology Program accredited?

The CCC Surgical Technology Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), 9355 113<sup>th</sup> Street North #7709 Seminole, Florida 33775, phone (727) 210-2350, [www.caahep.org](http://www.caahep.org) upon the recommendation of Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (ARC/STSA), 6 West Dry Creek Circle, Suite 110, Littleton, Colorado 80120, phone (303)694-9262, [www.arcstsa.org](http://www.arcstsa.org).

Graduates of CAAHEP accredited programs are eligible to sit for the National Certified Surgical Technologist exam. The CST exam is managed by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA).

#### How can I find out more about the CCC ST program?

Begin with the ST website and attend a program information session. If you still have unanswered questions, please contact the department by telephone or email.

Allied Health Secretary:	Misty Greene	<a href="mailto:misty.greene@calhoun.edu">misty.greene@calhoun.edu</a>	256-306-2786
Program Director:	Grant Wilson	<a href="mailto:grant.wilson@calhoun.edu">grant.wilson@calhoun.edu</a>	256-306-2950

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ABOUT THE SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY PROFESSION

#### **What is the role of the surgical technologist?**

A copy of the job description for surgical technologists approved by the American College of Surgeons and the Association of Surgical Technologists can be found on the Association of Surgical Technologist Website at:

[https://www.ast.org/uploadedFiles/Main\\_Site/Content/About\\_Us/Surgical\\_Technologist\\_Job\\_Description.pdf](https://www.ast.org/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/About_Us/Surgical_Technologist_Job_Description.pdf)

#### **Is surgical technology a job with a future?**

Yes! It has a future due to the growth potential of the profession, which has been increasing in recent years. The "Occupational Outlook Handbook", published by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics states, "*Employment of surgical technologists is projected to grow 7% from 2019 to 2029, faster than the average for all occupations.*" Advances in medical technology have made surgery safer, and more operations are being done to treat a variety of illnesses and injuries. The number of surgical procedures is expected to rise as the population grows and ages. Technological advances, such as fiber optics and laser technology, permit an increasing number of new surgical procedures to be performed and allow surgical technologists to assist with a greater number of procedures.

#### **Where can I find information about surgical technology job earnings?**

The Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) provides a salary map on its web site:

[http://www.ast.org/professionals/professionals\\_about\\_prof\\_stats.aspx](http://www.ast.org/professionals/professionals_about_prof_stats.aspx)

#### **Is there an opportunity for advancement in the field of ST?**

Yes. Some health care facilities have "clinical ladders" which allow the certified ST (CST) to gain experience and move up the ladder to additional responsibilities. Some CSTs work in supervisory or management positions; some work in the medical supply field. CSTs may choose to learn surgical first assistant roles and duties, and achieve the CSFA credential. The National Board of Surgical Technology & Surgical Assisting ([www.nbstsa.org](http://www.nbstsa.org)) provides the routes for establishing eligibility to take this national certification examination. Accredited surgical technology and surgical first assistant programs are listed on the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs ([www.caahep.org](http://www.caahep.org)) website.

#### **How many hours a week do surgical technologists work? What about over time?**

Usually CSTs work a 40-hour week and the employer provides benefits including vacation. Overtime depends on the individual health care facility.

#### **Of all the subjects studied in school, which ones do surgical technologists use most on the job?**

This is a difficult question because all of the knowledge a ST student learns is integrated and put into use. Human Anatomy & Physiology courses must be fully understood and learning retained as it will be used during the entire career of a ST.

#### **What is most enjoyable about the job?**

If surgical technology is the right career choice, it can be very rewarding. You will assist on surgical procedures that few others even get to observe. Most days on the job you will learn something new. There is opportunity to challenge yourself by learning new cases and specialties and to prove yourself to be a valuable employee. You will develop your ability to think independently during fast paced and challenging situations. Most importantly, you have the opportunity to participate as part of a team providing quality care to surgical patients.

### **What personal characteristics are needed by the ST?**

The ability to perform under pressure in stressful and emergency situations is an essential quality of a surgical technologist. A stable temperament, a strong sense of responsibility, considerable patience, and good organizational skills are important. Manual dexterity and physical stamina are vital. The surgical technologist must be able to work quickly, but accurately, and must be oriented to detail, yet able to integrate a number of activities according to priority.

### **What type of people are encountered in the daily routine of a ST?**

Surgery is a high stress environment that tends to attract Type A personalities. There may be tense moments in the operating room. But, like any place of employment, individuals are required to show maturity and work out difficulties in a professional manner. Overall, everyone is there to work as a team to deliver quality patient care.

### **What are the primary locations of work for the surgical technologist?**

Most surgical technologists work in the operating room at health care facilities from small hospitals to large medical centers; physicians' clinics; or ambulatory surgery centers. There are surgical technologists that work in related areas of surgery including anesthesia technician and central sterile supply, as well as alternative areas of employment such as veterinarian technicians and medical sales representatives.

### **What is the average length of time individuals stay in the profession?**

Based on AST survey information, the majority of individuals remain in the profession an average of 10 – 12 years. However, there are indicators that the CSTs are starting to stay in the profession longer, up to 15 years on the average.

### **Are there specialties in the profession? Other career options?**

Some surgical technologists specialize in a surgical specialty such as orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, or ophthalmic surgery. For the most part, the majority of surgical technologists are expected to know how to assist the surgeon in all types of procedures.

Depending on the goals of the individual, there are career options which may require attaining a higher educational degree. These include educator/instructor in a surgical technology program; medical sales representative; surgical first assistant; or supervisor/manager such as for a central sterile supply department.

### **Are there other professional credentials that are of benefit to a surgical technologist?**

The CST and CSFA credentials are the primary credentials. Surgical specialty credentials are not offered. One other popular credential is the Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST) that is offered by the International Association of Healthcare Central Service Materiel Management (IAHCSMM; <http://www.iahcsmm.org>).

### **Are there other professional organizations that are of benefit to the CST?**

If the CST acquires the CRCST credential, he/she may also want to be a member of IAHCSMM since that is the professional organization that represents the central sterile supply technicians. Additionally, if the CST earns the CSFA credential he/she is encouraged to join the Association of Surgical Assistants (ASA), the partner organization of AST that represents the surgical first assistants.

### **What are the continuing education requirements to renew the CST credential? How is continuing education important to the CST?**

The certification cycle is 2 years; the CST must complete 30 continuing education (CE) credits during the cycle in order to renew the credential. The required CE credits can be earned by attending health care facility / surgery department in-services; attending AST live events such as the Annual National Conference; completing AST on-line CE articles; attending AST state assembly meetings; certain college coursework; and attending conferences offered by physicians' organizations such as the American College of Surgeons.

Continuing education is important in all health professions. It demonstrates to patients, peers, other health care professionals, and the public that the CST is maintaining, as well as advancing, their knowledge in order to provide quality and safe surgical patient care. With rapid changes and progress in technology and surgical procedure techniques, the CST should possess a sense of duty to remain current in his/her knowledge of surgery and patient care.

### How important is certification and AST membership?

Though certification is not required by every employer or state, it demonstrates accountability to the public and patients. Additionally, surveys demonstrate the CST generally earns a higher wage than a non-certified surgical technologist. Currently eight states have legislation in place requiring the CST credential as a condition of employment: Idaho, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. AST continues to work on its legislative efforts to have this legislation passed in more states, so it makes sense to get certified and not be left behind.

Just as with certification, membership in the Association of Surgical Technologists is important. The national organization represents CSTs on a daily basis to employers, legislators, the public, patients and other health care providers. Member benefits can be found on the AST website. AST continuing education offerings help by advancing the knowledge of surgical technologists with the goal of improving the members' ability to provide quality surgical patient care. The legislative efforts of the AST benefit the profession and members.