Plaza College
Surgical Technology

Informational Packet for Admissions Applicants

Surgical Technology
Associate of Applied Science

Surgical Technology Associate of Science Degree Program
66 Semester Credits

The Surgical Technology Program at Plaza College is designed to provide students with the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning domains necessary to be employed as entry-level surgical technologists. Surgical technologists work under the supervision of a surgeon to facilitate the safe and effective conduct of invasive and non-invasive surgical procedures, ensuring that the operating room environment is safe, that equipment functions properly, and that the operative procedure is conducted under conditions that maximize patient safety.

The curriculum is designed to provide instruction in healthcare sciences, professional practice, technological science concepts and core surgical technology concepts, including equipment, instrumentation, supplies, asepsis and sterile technique, sterile processing, perioperative case management, preoperative, intraoperative, postoperative, assistant circulator duties, and surgical procedures by specialty. The program consists of core liberal arts and sciences coursework and surgical technology courses. As the student progresses through the curriculum, classroom theory is applied to clinical practice in the operating room setting.

All graduates hold a national certification credential, Certified Surgical Technologist (CST).

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Admission of students into the Surgical Technology program is based on specific written criteria, procedures and policies. The following are requirements for application:

- Complete an application for admission
- Provide documentation of a high school diploma or other official proof of graduation from an institution providing secondary education, or the equivalent of such graduation, as recognized by the State of New York
- Provide college transcripts for any courses the student is requesting transfer credit
- Complete financial aid forms
- Take the Wonderlic SLE exam
- Take the Accuplacer exam

To ensure that the College is selecting students who have the potential for successfully completing the program, the following process is followed:

- An applicant must achieve a minimum score of 18 on the Wonderlic SLE exam.
- An applicant must achieve the following minimum scores on the Accuplacer exam:
    - Mathematics (230)
    - Writing (235)
    - Reading (250)
- All applicants who meet minimum scores will be required to submit a writing assignment, a personal statement detailing why they want to earn a degree in surgical technology. A standardized rubric will be utilized to score candidates on the writing assignment.

- All applicants must provide two letters of recommendation, as well as a professional resume detailing their work experience.
- All applicants who meet minimum scores will be offered an interview with the ST Admissions Committee. The Committee comprises the Director of Admissions, the Director of Enrollment Management, the director of the Surgical Technology Program, and an ST faculty member. Other members may include a General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty member or a member of the administration. A standardized rubric will be utilized to score candidates on the interview.

Applicants to the Surgical Technology program must have completed the following prerequisite courses. Courses marked with asterisks* must have been taken within the past 5 years and earned grades of B or better:

- Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab* (4 credits)
- Medical Terminology* (3 credits)
- Academic Writing & Professional Research (3 credits)
- Mathematical Applications (3 credits)

PROGRAM MISSION, PURPOSE, AND PHILOSOPHY

Program Mission

The AAS Surgical Technology program at Plaza College is dedicated to providing students with a high-quality professional education. Our comprehensive approach, infused with essential values and knowledge, aims to ignite a passion for learning among our students. We strive to cultivate skilled surgical technologists who collaborate effectively with surgeons, nurses, anesthesiologists, and other healthcare practitioners. This will contribute to optimal care for surgical patients before, during, and after surgery and serve the broader community.

Program Purpose

The purpose of the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree program in Surgical Technology is twofold. It aims to equip students with the technical skills and academic credentials necessary to enter the perioperative field and to inculcate the virtues of compassion, care, responsibility, and leadership. This dual focus ensures that graduates are well-prepared to contribute substantially to community health initiatives, serving as frontrunners in implementing and improving surgical care protocols.

Plaza College's Surgical Technology program emphasizes the development of strong critical thinking abilities to make well-informed decisions during surgery. The program involves classroom instruction, laboratory simulations, and hands-on clinical experiences. Students acquire practical knowledge and skills through gradual scaffolding training, integrating written work, verbal communication, and demonstrative performance.

Program Philosophy

The Surgical Technology Faculty at Plaza College believes:

- The profession of Surgical Technology is a specialized field that prioritizes patient care as the central focus of their practice. It operates on the foundational belief that everyone, regardless of race, creed, gender, social disadvantage, or physical limitations, possesses intrinsic dignity and worth. Consequently, the program is designed to offer inclusive and equitable services for all.
- The curriculum emphasizes three critical dimensions of professional development: the cognitive base, psychomotor skills, and the behavioral domain. This holistic approach ensures that Surgical Technologists are well-rounded in their training, balancing technical competencies with emotional intelligence and analytical capabilities.
- Upon completing our program, graduates are expected to have attained a high level of technical proficiency in the various aspects of Surgical Technology, along with a robust comprehension of the scientific principles underpinning this field. This competence should extend to the ability to make sound, independent clinical judgments, albeit within the scope of their professional responsibilities as Surgical Technologists.
- Graduates are encouraged to uphold strong ethical standards in their professional conduct and attitudes. This moral framework is considered indispensable for effectively navigating the complexities of healthcare delivery and acknowledging that skilled Surgical Technologists are integral members of the healthcare team, contributing significantly to the efficacy and quality of surgical care. Their role is not merely supportive but actively influences patient outcomes, thus emphasizing the importance of their specialized training and ethical comportment.(suggest ‘behavior” instead.

Program Goals

The Plaza College Surgical Technology Program aims to prepare competent entry-level surgical technologists in the minimum required competencies in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains. To meet the needs of employers and the community while ensuring public safety by producing highly competent and ethically sound healthcare professionals. The program’s curriculum is designed to meet the criteria outlined in the current CAAHEP Standards and Guidelines for Accreditation of Educational Programs in Surgical Technology.

Definitions and Expected Learning Outcomes by Domain

Cognitive Domain*:* The program emphasizes basic sciences and theoretical knowledge, aiming for students to excel in the cognitive domain related to surgical technology. It covers scientific principles such as aseptic techniques, surgical equipment, medical terminology, anatomy, physiology, procedures, instruments, and pharmacology, while also adhering to the ethical and legal standards of the profession.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- The student will incorporate concepts of fundamental human anatomy, physiology, and surgical sciences in the perioperative setting.
- Communicate effectively with the surgical team, patients, and their families. Integrate the principles of aseptic techniques into the operating room.

- Organize routine instrumentation, supplies, and surgical equipment in a way that is efficient when preparing for surgery.
- Exhibit a strong understanding of pharmacology and mathematical calculation principles that are relevant to surgical settings.
- Efficiently collaborate with surgical team members to provide high-quality patient care by utilizing distinct psychological and social concepts specific to each patient's demographic.
- Recognize potential hazards in the operating room.

Psychomotor Domain*:* The program focuses on developing motor skills through hands-on training in a modern lab. Students will learn surgical techniques, sterile protocols, and equipment handling through simulations and real-life scenarios. Emphasizing safe patient care and infection control, the program prepares students to be skilled and qualified for the workforce.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate mastery of the intricacies of aseptic techniques applied to the preparation of the operating room, mechanics of surgical equipment, setting up for multiple surgical procedures, and managing procedures during the pre-, intra-, and post-operative process.
- Students will develop hands-on surgical skills and an understanding of the underlying principles to ensure patient safety and surgical effectiveness.
- Accurately apply fundamental knowledge, principles of asepsis, and surgical techniques across the spectrum of common surgical experiences in the clinical setting.
- Apply surgical consciousness, standard precautions, and other recognized safe practice guidelines to every surgical procedure at the clinical site.
- Demonstrate analytical thinking to solve problems that arise in real-life surgical scenarios.
- Exhibit proficiency in applying all surgical protocols while complying with HIPAA, OSHA, and infection control protocols.

Affective Domain*:* the program prepares students to communicate effectively and interact professionally with patients, families, and surgical team members. Key skills developed include emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning, a positive attitude, strong work ethics, soft skills, moral values, respect, support, and appreciation for the field. These skills are crucial for success as a surgical technologist.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- Students are expected to communicate clearly and compassionately with team members and patients, thus enhancing teamwork and patient care.
- Students will demonstrate, through their professional conduct, an understanding of the moral implications surrounding healthcare decisions, informed consent, patient confidentiality, and the legal boundaries that surgical technologists operate within.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically and make informed decisions to solve problems, particularly in high-stakes, time-sensitive situations common in surgical settings.
- Students are expected to become adaptable and committed to continuous professional development.
- Students will demonstrate emotional intelligence by providing superior patient care, exhibiting stress management, and interpersonal relations within the surgical team.
- Students will exhibit professionalism, punctuality, reliability, strong work ethics, leadership skills, passion, and respect for the surgical profession.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The program's course curriculum leading to the A.A.S. degree is comprised of 66 credits of core liberal arts, sciences coursework, and surgical technology courses. Students who graduate from Plaza College's Surgical Technology Program will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in alignment with the established learning domains: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. This holistic approach will provide students with a comprehensive educational experience, focusing on key learning objectives essential for developing the competencies needed to be clinically competent and function as level-I Surgical Technologists.

Course Outline

To graduate from the Surgical Technology Program at Plaza College, students must complete and pass the following coursework sequence.

PRE-REQUISITES	LS195	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	3	**13 credits**
	LS195a	Anatomy and Physiology Lab I	1	
	LA155	Allied Health Terminology	3	
		Mathematics Elective	3	
	LL65	Academic Writing and Professional Research	3	
Semester One	SUR100	Introduction to Surgical Technology	2	**14 credits**
	SUR101	Introduction to Perioperative Services	5	
	LS6000	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	3	
	LS6000a	Anatomy and Physiology Lab II	1	
	LS196	Microbiology	3	
Semester Two	SUR105	Surgical Procedures I	5	**14 credits**
	SUR220	Pharmacology & Anesthesia	3	
	SUR107	Advanced Perioperative Services	4	
	SUR200	Surgical Technology Practicum I	2	

Semester Three	SUR110	Surgical Procedures II	4	**13 credits**
	SUR201	Surgical Technology Practicum II	3	
	LS260	Pathophysiology for Allied Health Sciences	3	
		Psychology Elective	3	
Semester Four	SUR205	Surgical Technology Practicum III	3	**12 credits**
	SUR230	Professional Development for the Surgical Technologist	3	
	LL52	Interpersonal Communications	3	
	LA1000	Medical Law & Ethics	3	
		Total Credits	**66**	

Grade/Progression Requirements

In order to graduate, students must complete all didactic, laboratory, and clinical competency evaluations, requirements, and seminar assignments successfully with a minimum grade of 78% (C+). Lab and practicum components of applicable courses are pass/fail. Failure of any portion of the course (didactic, lab, or clinical) will result in failure of the entire course. Due to prerequisite requirements from future courses, all courses must be successfully passed in order to progress toward graduation.

Surgical Technology Grade Scale				
Grade Letter	**Description**	**Lower Limit**	**Upper Limit**	**Points**
A	Superior	95	100	4.0
A-	Excellent	90	94	3.7
B+	Very Good	86	89	3.3
B	Good	82	85	3.0
B-	Above Average	80	81	2.7
C+	Acceptable/Pass	78	79	2.5
C	Fail	72	77	2.0
C-		69	71	1.7
D		65	68	1.0
F		0	64	0.0

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If a student fails a single core course at any time, it will result in a discontinuation of the student status within the Surgical Technology program. The student will be notified by the Program Director, in writing, regarding their removal from their cohort and would be given the option to petition to the Program Director to re-enter the program in a subsequent cohort if a spot is available and retake the course in a later semester. A second grade of less than 78 "C+" in any SUR course will result in dismissal from the Program.

Clinical performance must be at a satisfactory level to remain in the program. Students who have failed a course during a clinical semester cannot be readmitted unless they pass qualifying examinations in the previously completed courses and demonstrate knowledge and clinical competency.

Readmission after failure of a course: Should a student receive a final failing grade in a single core course, they will be permitted to petition to the Program Director to retake the course in a later semester. Students that wish to petition for re-admission must be in compliance with all other facets of the program and have no violations of the student code of conduct. Petitions consist of a written letter explaining why the student feels s/he failed the course, what they will do differently if granted the permission to re-enter, and any other information pertinent to understanding the nature of the student's situation. All petitions must be received by no later than 5 days from receiving notice of discontinuation. If granted, the Program Director will make the necessary arrangements to accommodate the student, including if necessary, communicating to the Admissions Department that a seat is formally reserved for the petitioning student to retake the class. Due to the cohort-based structure of the program, timing will be based on the availability of seats in the active cohorts and/or enrolling cohorts. ***Students will be permitted only one failure of a core course during their enrollment in the Surgical Technology program. A grade of B (82%) or higher must be earned in the repeated course in order to progress in the program. If a student fails the repeated course, their enrollment in the program will be terminated.***

Graduation Requirements

To graduate from Plaza College Surgical Technology Program, students must *FIRST* complete all **66 credits**, including didactic and clinical competency evaluations, requirements, and capstone assignments, and successfully pass all courses. *SECOND*, upon completing all program requirements, students will be eligible to take the National Certification Exam (CST), administered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA). The exam is arranged by the Program Director and hosted at Plaza College. ***Students must sit for the exam to graduate.***

CLINICAL ROTATIONS

The practicum or clinical externship is essential to the Surgical Technology Program. It is designed to offer students a comprehensive and hands-on learning experience, allowing them to gain exposure to a wide range of surgical procedures and techniques and to develop the skills and knowledge required for successful practice in Surgical Technology.

Furthermore, students shall not be compensated for the work performed during the completion of clinical rotations. Students will not be substituted for hired staff personnel within the clinical institution in the capacity of a surgical technologist.

Clinical Responsibilities

The clinical experience provides students with hands-on exposure to real-world surgical procedures, enabling them to apply theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom to practical scenarios. It aims to equip students with the necessary competencies to function efficiently and safely in the perioperative environment. Students are required to complete no less than a minimum of 120 surgical cases or more in various surgical specialties, including but not limited to general surgery, orthopedics, plastics, gynecology, urology, and thoracic, cardiovascular surgery, neurosurgery, ophthalmology, under the supervision of experienced surgical technologists, surgeons, and perioperative nurses.

Placement Sites

Clinical placement is a crucial part of the Surgical Technology program.

Clinical site placements and assignments are not negotiable. Students are obligated to adhere to applicable policies and procedures of the clinical agencies they are assigned. Students are required to know and comply with all policies and procedures.

The clinical coordinator is responsible for arranging clinical placements for students. Students may be required to travel up to 50 miles each way for a clinical site. Students who decline to report to an assigned clinical rotation site will be deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn from the program.

Clinical Clearance

Students are permitted to begin a clinical placement after the Clinical Coordinator ensures that the student has successfully completed the health clearance process, required background checks, mandatory training, and passed the clinical calculation examination by the stated deadline. Students will not be considered for a clinical placement until they have satisfied all pre-requisites. If a student does not submit all requisite documents required for a clinical placement by the deadline, the clinical placement may not be granted.

Each student enrolled in the Surgical Technology program must comply with all medical clearances outlined below to participate in clinical experiences.

Students must understand that clinical affiliates are strict about health clearances, background checks, and drug screenings. Any potential "red flags" that may arise during the background check/health clearance process will prevent them from progressing in the program and participating at a clinical site. Therefore, students need to disclose any relevant information before beginning the program. Plaza College takes the privacy and confidentiality of our students seriously, and all information provided will be kept strictly confidential.

Students should visit www.castlebranch.com and create an account, which will be used to maintain all medical documents, background check results, and drug testing results for the duration of the program. Students are responsible for ensuring compliance with all outlined requirements and addressing any "flagged" issues in *Castlebranch* or as notified by a program administrator.

Drug Testing/Criminal Background Check

Students in the Surgical Technology Program must submit to and pass a urine toxicology screening and criminal background check every six (6) months. These processes are completed through Castlebranch, and all instructions provided must be followed for scheduling appointments, providing appropriate documentation, and completing screenings.

Students may be required submit additional background and drug screening tests throughout the program to meet the requirements of clinical rotation sites and are responsible for the cost of performing the background check.

Students should note that a history of criminal convictions may prevent the student from attending or completing the clinical and experiential requirements of the program or may prevent his or her credentialing in the profession.

Additionally, if a clinical site determines that a student's participation in the rotation would not be in the best interest of the organization based on the results of these screenings, the student may be unable to meet course requirements and remain in the program.

Physical Exam

Students must have a Physical Exam every nine (9) months, including color blindness testing if applicable, every year in the program. The student's private health care provider should complete and sign the provided physical form, which the student will then upload into Castlebranch.

Titers (Bloodwork, not Vaccines!)

Students must have recent titers done for the following:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella
- Hep B (HbsAB and HbsAG)
- Hep C Antibody

These titer reports must be uploaded into Castlebranch, and outdated bloodwork will not be accepted.

Immunizations

Students must have immunization records for the following:

- Measles
- Mumps

- Rubella
- Varicella
- Hep B Vaccine Series or declination
- TDAP – valid for ten years
- PPD or QuantiFERON
- Flu – completed seasonally

The student must upload these vaccine records into Castlebranch.

COVID -19 Vaccinations
Students must have completed the COVID-19 vaccination series, including the most recent booster. COVID-19 vaccine cards must be uploaded into Castlebranch, and copies must be accessible for facilities upon request.

N95 Fit-Testing
Students are required to be annually fit tested for the N95 respirator.

Basic Life Support (BLS) and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

It is mandatory before students can attend clinical rotations where patients are present. Surgical Technology students must complete the Healthcare Provider-level BLS and CPR course. Only BLS and CPR courses approved by the American Heart Association (AHA) will be considered. You will need to complete an outside-of-class training session in Basic Cardiac Life Support (BLS) and provide a signed copy of the card issued to you upon completion to the Program Director for placement in your student file. Failure to comply with these policies will result in the inability to enter or continue the program. If a student already has a BCLS card that is due to expire during the program, it is recommended that it will be renewed it so that it is current during the clinical phase of the surgical technology course. BLS and CPR training is certified for a two-year period.

Medical Expenses

Students who participate in clinical education assume the risk of contracting a disease or incurring bodily injury due to activities in the clinic. Therefore, they are entirely liable for any medical expenses incurred in the clinical setting from any emergency medical treatment. All students are required to provide proof of enrollment in a health insurance plan, either independently or through their parents' or family's plan. By engaging in activities in clinical education environments, students acknowledge and accept the potential risk of experiencing health issues and understand that the College does not take responsibility for any harm that may occur because of their involvement in clinical education activities.

ABOUT THE SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY PROFESSION

History of Surgical Technology

The profession of surgical technology has evolved significantly due to technological advancements and historical circumstances. In the late 19th century, nurses were the primary assistants in surgical

settings, responsible for preparing instruments and even administering anesthesia. However, World War II marked a turning point; technological advances and a shortage of nurses led to the training of corpsmen to assist surgeons. These corpsmen, initially called Operating Room Technicians (ORTs), played roles previously filled only by nurses, such as administering anesthesia and assisting during surgery.

Post-WWII and during the Korean War, the need for specially trained personnel grew. Civilian hospitals began employing former corpsmen, and the role of nurses in the operating room started to shift. By 1965, civilian ORTs began receiving formal training. Organizational developments further professionalized the field. The Association of Operating Room Nurses (AORN) took early steps in standardizing training, which led to the establishment of the Association of Operating Room Technicians (AORT). The first certification exam was administered in 1970, and the profession later became independent with its own professional body, the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST), changing the title of the certified professional to Certified Surgical Technologist (CST).

The profession has undergone dramatic changes, driven by technological advancements, wartime exigencies, and the evolution of healthcare needs and practices. It has moved from an ad hoc role filled by nurses to a specialized and certified field with its own guidelines, responsibilities, and training programs.

Role of the Surgical Technologist

Surgical technologists are integral operating room team members, working with surgeons, anesthesiologists, and circulating nurses. Their primary role is as the "first scrub," responsible for preparing the operating room with sterile instruments, equipment, and supplies. They also assist surgeons in donning gowns and gloves and creating a sterile field around the patient.
During surgery, surgical technologists anticipate the surgeon's needs, pass instruments, and provide necessary supplies like sponges. They are also responsible for maintaining counts of sponges, sharps, and instruments to ensure patient safety. They handle tissue specimens and ensure the sterile field is uncompromised to prevent surgical site infections.

In some cases, surgical technologists may also serve as assistant circulators. In this role, they help transport and position the patient, prepare incision sites, and obtain additional supplies during the procedure. They also assist in post-procedure tasks like applying sterile dressings and transferring the patient to the recovery room. Their roles may vary based on state law and hospital policy.

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics for Surgical Technologists is a seminal document that codifies the ethical norms, responsibilities, and professional standards expected of individuals in surgical technology. The original adoption of the Code of Ethics in August 1985 by the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) Board of Directors was a significant milestone in the profession's maturation. It demonstrated a collective commitment to integrity, patient care, and professional conduct, thus elevating the profession's status and credibility within the healthcare industry. The updates to the Code of Ethics, first in November 1993 and then in January 2013, reflect the dynamic and evolving

nature of the surgical technology field and shifts in societal expectations and advancements in medical technologies and practices.

These revisions ensure that the code remains current and responsive to the changes in the surgical technology landscape, which often involve emerging technologies and increasingly complex surgical procedures, and warrant that the profession continues to adapt and excel in rapidly changing standards of patient care and safety.

CODE OF ETHICS (last update January 2013)

- To maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and patient care.
- To hold in confidence, with respect to the patient's beliefs, all personal matters.
- To respect and protect the patient's legal and moral rights to quality patient care.
- To not knowingly cause injury or any injustice to those entrusted to our care.
- To work with fellow technologists and other professional health groups to promote harmony and unity for better patient care.
- To always follow the principles of asepsis.
- To maintain a high degree of efficiency through continuing education.
- To maintain and practice surgical technology willingly, with pride and dignity.
- To report any unethical conduct or practice to the proper authority.
- Adhere to this Code of Ethics at all times in relation to all members of the healthcare team.

Professional Credentialing

Students who enroll in the Surgical Technology program are granted the exclusive opportunity to join the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST). This membership offers an array of benefits designed to enhance both academic and professional development in the field of surgical technology. Over the duration of the program, application forms for this membership will be made readily available to students, streamlining the process of becoming part of this esteemed organization.

Association of Surgical Technologists
6 West Dry Creek Circle, Ste. 200
Littleton, CO 80120
P: 800.637.7433
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www.ast.org

Certification from the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) is a tangible endorsement of a surgical technologist's competencies, ensuring employers, peers in healthcare, and the public that the individual has met the established national benchmarks for expertise in surgical technology practice. Those who have attained this certification have successfully navigated a comprehensive examination, proving their mastery in various knowledge domains, including surgical procedures, aseptic techniques, and patient care. NBSTSA certification enjoys national recognition, further accentuating its significance as a credible validation of professional competence. ***The applications for certification will be distributed during the semester.***

The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting
6 West Dry Creek Circle, Ste. 100
Littleton, CO 80120
Email: info@arcstsa.org
https://arcstsa.org/
www.nbstsa.org

Areas of Employment

Surgical Technologists are healthcare professionals who play an integral role in the surgical unit, assisting surgeons throughout all surgical procedures in the operating room. Their workplaces span hospital operating rooms, birthing rooms, cast rooms, outpatient care units, and central supply divisions. They are also employed in various settings, including clinics and the offices of ophthalmologists, physicians, and dentists, product innovation, research, laser technology, medical sales, tissue banks, and biomedical engineering. Thanks to their comprehensive educational foundation and specialized clinical expertise, surgical technologists are highly adaptable and find roles in disparate fields. Benefits of this career include competitive salaries and the latitude to choose from various geographical locations for employment.