



# **SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM INFORMATION PACKET**



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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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The Surgical Technologist is a vital member of the Surgical Team. Surgical technologists, also called operating room technologists, assist in operations under the supervision of surgeons, registered nurses, or other surgical personnel. Before an operation, surgical technologists help set up the operating room with surgical instruments and equipment, and sterile solutions. They assemble, adjust, and check non-sterile equipment to ensure that all is working properly. Technologists also prepare patients for surgery by washing, shaving, and disinfecting incision sites. They transport patients to the operating room and help position them on the operating table. Technologists also observe patients' vital signs and check charts. The technologist helps the surgical team don sterile gowns and gloves and apply the sterile surgical "drapes" before the start of the surgical procedure.

During surgery, technologists pass instruments and other sterile supplies to surgeons and surgical assistants. They may hold retractors, cut sutures, and help count sponges, needles, supplies, and instruments. Surgical technologists help prepare, care for, and dispose of specimens taken for laboratory analysis and may help apply dressings. They may operate sterilizers, lights, or suction machines, and help operate diagnostic equipment. After an operation, surgical technologists may help transfer patients to the recovery room and clean and restock the operating room.

This program provides classroom education and supervised clinical experience. Students take courses in anatomy and physiology, microbiology, pharmacology, professional ethics, medical terminology, speech, computers and psychology. Other studies cover the care and safety of patients during surgery, aseptic techniques and surgical procedures. Students also learn to sterilize instruments, prevent and control infection, and handle special drugs, solutions, supplies and equipment.

Surgical Technologists must possess manual dexterity to handle instruments efficiently and quickly. They also must be conscientious, orderly, and emotionally stable to handle the demands of the operating room environment. Technologists must respond quickly and have a full understanding of the procedures so that they may anticipate the needs of the surgeons without having to be asked for instruments or supplies. They are expected to keep abreast of new developments in the field.

Technologists advance by specializing in a particular area of surgery, such as orthopedics, neurosurgery, or open heart surgery. They may also work as circulating technologists. A circulating technologist is the "unsterile" person during the procedure who interviews the patient before surgery, keeps a written account of the surgical procedure and answers the surgeon's questions about the patient during the surgery. With additional training, some technologists advance to first assistants, who help with retracting, sponging, suturing, cauterizing bleeders, and closing and treating wounds. Some surgical technologists manage central supply departments in hospitals or take positions with insurance companies, sterile supply services, and operating equipment firms. Most surgical technologists work in hospitals. They spend much of their time on their feet.

This program is a hybrid program offered only during the day. A combination of online didactic instruction and face-to-face lab/clinical training is provided.

### **Surgical Technology Program Contact Information**

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## **CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS**

The Surgical Technology program requires successful completion of the courses listed under the program description. The Surgical Technology courses are sequential and build upon previous learning.

<b>Semester 1</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
BIOL 2301 Anatomy & Physiology I (lecture)	3
BIOL 2101 <b>and</b> Anatomy & Physiology I (lab)	1
BIOL 2401 <b>or</b> Anatomy & Physiology (lecture+lab)	4
ENGL 1301 Composition	3
ACGM X3XX Gen. Ed Humanities/ Fine Arts Elective	3
PSYC 2301 General Psychology	3

<b>Semester 2</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
BIOL 2302 Anatomy and Physiology II (lecture)	3
BIOL 2102 <b>and</b> Anatomy and Physiology II (lab)	1
BIOL 2402 <b>or</b> Anatomy and Physiology II (lecture+lab)	4
HPRS 2302 Medical Terminology	3
BIOL 2320 Microbiology for Non-Science Majors (lecture)	3
BIOL 2120 <b>and</b> Microbiology for Non-Science Majors (lab)	1
BIOL 2420 <b>or</b> Microbiology for Non-Science Majors (lecture+lab)	4

<b>Semester 3</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
SRGT 1405 Introduction to Surgical Technology	4
SRGT 1409 Fundamentals of Perioperative Concepts	4
SRGT 1491 Special Topics in Surgical/OR Technician	4

<b>Semester 4</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
SRGT 1541 Surgical Procedures I	5
SRGT 1461 Clinical –Surgical Technology/ Technologist	4
Math XXXX Gen Ed Mathematics Elective	3

<b>Semester 5</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
SRGT 1542 Surgical Procedures II	5
SRGT 2462 Clinical –Surgical Technology/ Technologist	4
SPCH X3XX Speech Elective	3

## **SCHOLASTIC CRITERIA**

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A student must receive a "C" or better in all courses to be retained in and graduate from the program. To receive a passing grade of "C" or better in any Surgical Technology course, a student must maintain a 78 or higher grade average in didactic classes and must have a satisfactory clinical evaluation based on the standards stated on the clinical evaluation form. The student grading policy used in assigning a semester grade is as follows:

**A = 100-93%      B = 86-92%      C = 78-85%      D = 77-70%      F=69 and below**

### **COURSE TRANSFER**

Students may transfer equivalent courses from other colleges and apply them to their certificate or degree plan. Course transfers are not automatic. The student should consult with the program chairperson about the transfer of courses. All courses to be transferred into the degree plan from another institution must be evaluated and approved by the Instructional Department responsible for the course. It is the student's responsibility to verify with admissions on a continuous basis that all transfers have been documented and credit has been awarded to avoid delays with graduation. The Surgical Technology program requires all transfer credits to have a grade of "C" or better.

### **COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS**

Students desiring to substitute courses for courses in their degree plan must contact the departmental Chairperson and fill out a formal request for course substitution.

### **ADVANCE STANDING**

Due to the nature of the program and the standards of the program, only those persons accepted to the program and completing each course may be awarded an Associate of Applied Science Degree. There are no advanced standing examinations given, nor is there a method to challenge ST courses or Anatomy & Physiology I & II. This does not apply to support courses.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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All students entering the Surgical Technology program must meet certain criteria. Students must complete the following steps:

1. Complete the [TSTC admission](#) process.
2. Schedule an appointment to meet with the ST Enrollment Coach
  - Register for academic course requirements

### **Steps to be a candidate and apply for the ST Program**

- To apply, students must complete semester 1 and semester 2 pre-requisite courses.
- Applicants must have a minimum of a 2.0 Grade Point Average and have a minimum of a "C" or better in academic courses to be accepted.
- Applicants must have a Social Security Number to obtain employment and admission into the program.
- The following steps must be completed prior to the close of the application.

- Step 1: Register and attend a [Surgical Technology program information session](#).
  - The program application requirements listed below will be discussed in the information session.
- Step 2: Register to take the [Surgical Technology HESI A2 with Critical Thinking Entrance Exam](#)
  - Register for on-campus testing at [tstc.edu/Testing-Hgn](http://tstc.edu/Testing-Hgn)
- Step 3: Submit an online application to the Surgical Technology Program.
  - An invitation to apply with the application link will be provided once prospective students attend an information session and meet the minimum course requirements and a 2.0 GPA
- Step 4: Complete Criminal Background Check
  - The ST department will email applicants a link once the student has submitted their application.
  - Prior and present felony convictions may restrict admission into the program, depending on the specific nature of the crime. Each circumstance will be reviewed on an individual basis. The background check will be the responsibility of the student.

*Dates and times for information sessions, HESI testing, and applications can be found in the Surgical Technology program website: <http://tstc.edu/surgicaltech>*

- Students who apply to the fall cohort and are not accepted, but meet the qualifications, will have the opportunity to be selected for the spring cohort without re-submitting an application. Students will be accepted to the cohort based on the highest points achieved on the HESI, experience, and GPA. Students can choose to retake the HESI exam for a higher score or keep their original score.
- The applicant must be in good physical and mental health. The applicant must be able to meet the physical requirements of the educational program, as detailed in the technical standards and essential functions (see pp. 8-10). Applicant's signature denotes the ability to meet the essential physical and mental requirements. If an applicant cannot meet the requirements at any time throughout the entire course, he or she must voluntarily withdraw from the program.

## **SELECTION PROCESS FOR APPLICANTS**

1. The program director and selection committee will review all submitted applications to make sure all forms have been received, are properly completed, and the minimum requirements have been met.
2. Students will be selected to enter SRGT 1405/1409/1491 based on the GPA, the results of the HESI test, completion of required academic courses, completion of required immunizations (see pg. 12-13), and completion of a criminal background check. Students will be ranked accordingly and will be accepted into the program (see admission rank form criteria below).
3. Students will be notified of their acceptance or non-acceptance via email.
4. The admitted candidates will be notified of a mandatory meeting to complete class registration forms and other related forms. Students who do not attend the meeting will automatically be disqualified and not allowed into the SRGT courses.

### **Student Admission Rank Criteria**

- Up-to-date Immunization Record: Hepatitis B Series, MMR, Varicella, TDAP
- Background Check Cleared
- HESI Composite Score: \_\_\_\_\_ Points Awarded
  - 90 05
  - 80 04
  - 70 03
  - 60 02
  - 50 01
- Cumulative GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ Points Awarded
  - 3.5-4.0 15
  - 3.0-3.4 10
  - 2.0-2.9 05
- Allied Health Experience: Qualifying work experience in the medical field (maximum of 5 points)
  - Must submit proof of experience
- Post-Secondary Education: AAS/BA or qualifying medical degree (maximum of 5 points)
  - Must submit proof
- Early Application Submission: 2-6 bonus points

### **Once accepted to the program, the following will be required:**

1. All required immunizations will be verified by the clinical coordinator.
2. The TB test must be done one week prior to the start of the program. Results must be submitted on 1<sup>st</sup> class day.
3. Current physical examination from your healthcare provider. Physical forms must be submitted to the clinical coordinator.
4. Drug screen test (test fee \$ 25.00 est.). Testing dates will be set up by the ST department prior to the start of SRGT courses. If a student fails the drug screen test, they will automatically be disqualified and not allowed into the SRGT courses.
5. Current seasonal flu shot. When submitting your flu shot record, it must contain the following information: (Expiration Date, Manufacturer, and Lot Number).

## TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

All students in the Surgical Technology program are expected to meet certain technical standards, which are essential for the successful completion of all phases of the program and which reflect industry requirements and standards. To verify the student's ability to perform these essential functions, students may be required to demonstrate the technical standards below.

Meeting these technical standards does not guarantee employment in this field upon graduation. The ability to meet the program's technical standards does not guarantee a student's eligibility for any certification exams or successful completion of the program. *These requirements apply to admission and continuation in the program.*

The student must demonstrate the following abilities:

Technical Standard	Definition of Standards	Examples
Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ability is sufficient for clinical judgment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify cause-and-effect relationships</li><li>Plan/control activities (organizational skills)</li><li>Anticipation of a surgical sequence of events.</li><li>Ability to make decisions quickly.</li><li>Ability to respond to the appropriate surgical need in emergency situations.</li><li>Collect data, prioritize needs, and anticipate reactions.</li></ul>
Interpersonal Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Abilities are sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish rapport with clients, instructors, staff, colleagues, and groups.</li><li>Employ appropriate ethical, professional, and respectful values while providing care to diverse populations within the healthcare system.</li><li>Exhibit ethical behavior and exercise good judgment.</li></ul>
Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Abilities are sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and written form.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ability to enunciate clearly with all surgical personnel.</li><li>Ability to comprehend surgical team directives.</li><li>Ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so that others will understand.</li><li>Read, write, comprehend, and speak the English language to facilitate communication with instructors, patients, and their family members, and other health care professionals.</li></ul>
Coping Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ability to cope with stressful situations.</li><li>Possesses coping skills sufficient to maintain composure in stressful situations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adapt rapidly to changing environments and/or stress.</li><li>Ability to maintain emotional composure.</li><li>Ability to perform despite the difficulty of the situation at hand.</li></ul>

Mobility/Motor Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical abilities are sufficient to move in one's environment with ease and without restriction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to lift and carry up to 50 pounds.</li> <li>Ability to maintain a minimum of 18 inches from furniture and non-sterile personnel in confined spaces.</li> <li>Able to move around without assistive devices.</li> <li>Able to assist with and/or lift, move, position, and manipulate a patient who is unconscious with/without assistive devices.</li> <li>Digital dexterity, e.g., able to handle surgical instruments with both left and right hands at an extremely rapid pace, able to supinate and pronate at the wrist</li> <li>Ability to load and pass sharps (scalpel, suture, needles) and power tools to another individual without causing injury to oneself or others.</li> <li>Ability to stand or sit for prolonged periods of time, without breaks during surgical procedures (4-6 hours or longer).</li> <li>Be able to refrain from nourishment or restroom breaks for prolonged periods of time (4-6 hours or longer).</li> </ul>
Auditory Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auditory abilities are sufficient to monitor and assess the needs of the surgical team and the patient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ability to focus on a single source of sound in the presence of other distracting sounds.</li> <li>Ability to hear a muted or low-pitched conversation from several feet away.</li> <li>Normal hearing - a surgical technologist needs to be able to hear and clearly understand masked surgeons and surgical team members</li> </ul>
Visual Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment is necessary in perioperative care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normal vision glasses or contact lenses are acceptable</li> <li>Ability to prepare and implement perioperative care.</li> <li>Demonstrate sufficient visual acuity to differentiate between suture strands and suture needle tips, track needles smaller than an eyelash, discern increments on hypodermic syringes for medication handling and management, and visualize hand signals.</li> <li>Demonstrate sufficient peripheral vision to anticipate and function while in the sterile surgical environment.</li> </ul>
Tactile Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tactile ability is sufficient for physical assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate between monofilament and multifilament suture strands, tissue types, and sense potential nicks from sharps through surgical gloves.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manipulate instruments, supplies, and equipment with speed, dexterity, and good eye-hand coordination.</li> </ul>
Olfactory Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olfactory ability sufficient to detect significant environmental and client odors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be able to detect odors sufficient to maintain environmental safety and patient needs and to tolerate various odors.</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possess the ability to tolerate environmental stressors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tolerating the proper use of protective equipment (e.g., mask, gown, gloves, glasses, laser, and radiation)</li> <li>Safely work with potentially harmful chemicals used in health care settings.</li> <li>Practice Standard Precautions in the clinical setting.</li> <li>Anticipate exposure to communicable diseases, body fluids, unpleasant sights/odors, and toxic substances.</li> </ul>
Emotional/Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possess emotional stability sufficient to maintain composure in stressful situations and assume responsibility/accountability for actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to assess a situation rationally and respond accordingly.</li> <li>Ability to accept constructive criticism and show behavioral change.</li> <li>Demonstrate honesty and integrity beyond reproach.</li> </ul>

In the case of an otherwise qualified individual with a documented disability, appropriate and reasonable accommodations will be made unless doing so would fundamentally alter the essential training elements, cause undue hardship, or produce a direct threat to the safety of the client or student. If there are any reasons why a student may not be able to perform these functions with or without reasonable accommodations, she/he must follow the chain of command.

Students who are identified as having a possible latex allergy must be medically evaluated about potential risk, and are strongly urged to consider another field since latex is prevalent in the healthcare environment. Students with confirmed latex allergy continue in the program at their own risk. The College assumes no responsibility for exposures and possible resulting student health problems.

A change in your ability to perform any of the Essential Functions must be reported to Mrs. Yolanda Ramirez, Program Team Lead of the Surgical Technology Program at (956) 364-4808 immediately.

## OCCUPATIONAL RISKS

As a student in the Surgical Technology program, you may be exposed to various levels of workplace hazards. Hazards for potential exposure include but are not limited to:

- Needle sticks
- Sharp injuries
- Communicable disease
- Chemicals
- Blood and body fluids
- Unpleasant odors
- Electrical hazards
- Hazardous waste materials
- Biological hazards
- Radioactive material
- Infection
- Loud and unpleasant noises

## **ADA STATEMENT**

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“Texas State Technical College Harlingen will abide by the Americans with Disability Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Because the duties of this program are vigorous, if you have a disability, Texas State Technical College Harlingen encourages you, the applicant, to disclose your disability that may necessitate academic accommodations, policy modifications, and/or adaptive equipment that may allow you to participate on an equal basis in the functions set forth by this program. The Access and Learning Accommodations Office is the indicated office in which applicants can disclose and obtain information regarding accommodations. The Access and Learning Accommodations Office is located in the EK building and can also be contacted at [adarequest@tstc.edu](mailto:adarequest@tstc.edu) for accommodation requests. Applicants are encouraged to self-disclose in a timely manner.”

## **TITLE IX PROGRAM**

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Texas State Technical College (TSTC) seeks to provide an environment that promotes equal opportunity free from discrimination and harassment.

If you have been a victim of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or any other form of protected class discrimination, we encourage you to make a report. If you report to a faculty member, she or he must notify TSTC’s Title IX Coordinator about the incident. You may also make a confidential report to TSTC’s Counselors.

### **PREGNANCY**

All students (including pregnant and parent students), regardless of their legal status are entitled to protections under TSTC’s policy.

For more information about Title IX or sexual misconduct, as well as your options, please visit [the Academic Catalog section on Title IX](#).

For information about equal opportunity and civil rights policies, visit <https://www.tstc.edu/student-life/student-policies/student-code-of-conduct/>.

## STUDENT HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

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"Health science students should be aware that many of the facilities where they will receive clinical training require each student to be covered by various forms of insurance. The required insurance could be Health, Accident, Needle Stick and Liability insurance, but many facilities do not require all four kinds. Students are covered with Accident, Needle Stick and Liability through TSTC; however, TSTC does not provide the ability to purchase Health Insurance. TSTC may request proof of coverage before enrollment or prior to placement at a clinical site, and clinical site personnel may ask for proof of coverage at any time. Students may be denied access to clinical experience if not covered by the required insurance. Failure of students to obtain required insurance will prevent students from attending some facilities, which will probably prevent students from completing the program or cause them to fail the program. Should a student be denied clinical experience due to lack of insurance coverage, TSTC cannot adjust grades or credits or make any other adjustments."

The TSTC Surgical Technology program utilizes CastleBranch services to process and record students' personal documents for clinical placement. Documentation is stored in a secure database accessible to the individual student and the SRT Clinical Coordinator. The records are accessed by the Clinical Coordinator for compliance verification required by clinical contracts. Your clinical site requires you to access myCB to complete your background check, drug screening, and other core requirements.

### A. Health Care Insurance

- Each student is responsible for his/her own health care insurance during enrollment in the Surgical Technology Program. All Surgical Technology students will be required to show proof of personal medical health insurance coverage. Students must obtain this at their own expense and maintain it for the duration that the student is in the program. Students who fail to provide proof of health insurance will be removed from the program.
- The student assumes full responsibility for any emergency care administered during any injury sustained while in clinical practice or laboratory practice.

### B. Immunizations

- Students must submit proof of the following prior to the start of clinical experience:
  - Hepatitis B vaccine (3 doses)
    - All students must have completed the Hepatitis B vaccine series prior to their enrollment of the program. This is a hospital requirement, and you must submit proof to the hospital education department before clinical privileges can be approved. Any student who fails to complete their 3-dose series will not be allowed to participate in clinical activities, consequently resulting in dismissal from the program.
  - Measles/Mumps/Rubella (2 doses)
  - Tdap (renewed every 10 years)
  - Varicella (2 doses)
  - Tuberculin Skin Test (renewed yearly; if positive, must submit Chest X-ray results)
  - Flu Vaccine
- Please note: Clinical facilities may require additional vaccines. These may include **COVID and the yearly flu**. Students should work with their **campus Program Team Lead** if an exemption is needed; however, TSTC cannot guarantee that a third-party facility partner will grant an exemption.

### C. Physical Exam -

The student must submit a complete copy of their physical form prior to their enrollment into the program.

### D. CPR -

Students will be required to obtain CPR Certification by the American Heart Association

**E. Drug Screen Policy**

In order for clinical affiliates to comply with Joint Commission accreditation standards pertaining to due diligence and competency assessment of all individuals whose assignments bring them in contact with patients or employees, employee pre-screening requirements, such as criminal background checks and drug screens, are extended to clinical students. All allied healthcare students must have a negative drug screen before starting clinical rotations.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY**

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### **Purpose**

Community Standards for criminal background checks were developed in conjunction with the Valley Health Industry Committee to meet clinical agency compliance with The Joint Commission standards pertaining to human resource management. The Joint Commission requires verification of competency of all individuals who have direct contact with patients or employees; this includes students doing clinical rotations in the facility. Competency extends beyond technical skills to an individual's criminal history.

Successful completion of a criminal background check and drug testing is required for admission into the Surgical Technology Program. Background checks and drug testing will be honored for the duration of the student's enrollment in the clinical program if the participating student has not had a break in enrollment at the college/school. A break in enrollment is defined as non-attendance for one full semester or more. The above information must be verifiable through the college/school.

### **Criminal Background Check**

Criminal background checks should review a person's criminal history seven (7) years back from the date of application. The check should include the cities and counties of all known residences, not just the Rio Grande Valley area. The following histories will disqualify an individual from consideration for the clinical rotation:

1. Registered sex offenders
2. Health and Human Services- Office of Inspector General List of excluded individuals, U.S. General Services Administration excluded parties list, Employee Misconduct Registry, U.S. Treasury- Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN), Texas Health and Human Services Commission, excluded providers in Medicaid and Title XX provider data.
3. Felony convictions
4. Felony deferred adjudications involving crimes against persons
5. Theft- Class B or above
6. Weapons violations
7. Violence- Class B or above
8. Drugs- Class B or above
9. Abuse and Neglect

### **Disclaimers**

Successful completion of a criminal background check does not ensure future employment. Clinical agencies can establish more stringent standards, if they so desire, to meet regulatory requirements for their facility. Clinical agencies can conduct additional background checks and drug testing at their discretion. If a student is found to be ineligible for clinical placement any time during the program, the student is unable to meet clinical learning objectives and will be withdrawn pending resolution of the situation. DWI-Multiple offenses could affect the ability to obtain or retain employment in a health care setting. The student has the right to challenge reported discrepancies upon review; however, the student must request in writing to the Surgical Technology program in order to review completed background reports and to verify discrepancies. The student must be cleared of all discrepancies one week before the commencement of the program of study in order to be eligible for class admittance.

### **Allocation of Cost**

The cost of the criminal background check and drug testing will be the responsibility of the student. Completion of Criminal Background Check to be conducted by Group One. The cost will be \$69.00

## **STUDENT GUIDELINES: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK PROCEDURES**

### **I. SCOPE & PURPOSE**

A comprehensive criminal background check will be performed on students prior to acceptance to the Surgical Technology Program. Background verifications are required for the primary purpose of safeguarding the well-being of patients and to ascertain the students' eligibility to maintain program enrollment and to participate in clinical rotation experiences.

### **II. RATIONALE**

All students must consent to, submit to, and satisfactorily complete a criminal background investigation as a condition of participation in clinical rotations in the Surgical Technology Program. Any positive findings may be subject to review by the clinical affiliates and could prevent the student from completing clinical requirements. All expenses associated with the CBC are the responsibility of the student. Students who do not consent to the required background check, who refuse to provide information necessary to conduct the background check, or who provide false or misleading information regarding the background check will not be accepted into the program.

### **III. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

This procedure will be implemented, monitored, and enforced by the Program Director of the Surgical Technology Program.

#### **A. Criminal Background Check Procedure**

Program materials will include instructions for completing the online application process and a release/consent form that authorizes GroupOne (the vendor), on behalf of the Surgical Technology Program at TSTC, to conduct a comprehensive criminal background investigation on all prospective surgical technology students. Students who refuse to complete these inquiries, do not answer truthfully and completely, or refuse to consent to a criminal background check, will not be allowed to enter the program. Information available/sought through the background screening/investigation process. The following databases are examples of those that may be examined as part of the comprehensive criminal background check (CBC).

##### **i. County Criminal Research**

Specific inquiries into county court records for felony and misdemeanor charges require hands-on research of physical and digital courthouse records. These searches are performed at more than 3100 county criminal courts across the United States and still remain the most accurate form of criminal background checks available today.

##### **ii. Federal Criminal Research**

Because violations of federal law are not usually found in county records, GroupOne will search through federal records that can span statewide or nationally. Our research taps into the criminal and civil cases of 94 federal and judicial districts, including all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and three territories-the U.S Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, where federal and bankruptcy cases are heard.

##### **iii. Multi-State Criminal and Sex Offender Database Check**

To support county searches, GroupOne can perform multi-state investigations that scrape the criminal databases of several states at once.

##### **iv. Statewide Criminal Database Checks**

Many states maintain repositories of criminal information submitted by county courts and local law enforcement. GroupOne uses these sources to supplement county criminal research to produce a more comprehensive background.

v. **Sex Offender Registry**

Not all states maintain a registry of convicted sex offenders. GroupOne searches the National Sex Offender Public website to find the current address of convicted offenders registered in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and U.S Native American Tribes.

**B. Consideration of Criminal Background Activities**

The existence of a felony conviction alone does not automatically disqualify a student from entering clinical rotation experience. Relevant considerations may include, but are not limited to: the date, nature, and number of convictions; the relationship the conviction bears to the duties and responsibilities of the position; and successful efforts toward rehabilitation. Any decision to allow a student to enter a clinical rotation with a conviction is solely at the discretion of the clinical affiliate.

**C. Examination of Information Obtained Through Criminal Background Investigations**

The criminal background check will include a record of all arrests, convictions, and dismissals. For this policy, a conviction is considered to be a guilty plea, a guilty verdict, an Alford Plea, or a Nolo Contendere (“No Contest”) plea.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all maiden names and aliases are reported and to ensure that any misinformation in the initial criminal background check report is corrected, and to ensure that a written statement with supporting documentation indicating the correction is submitted to the College.

All positive findings will be reported, as required by clinical affiliation agreements, to each local hospital whose Human Resources department will review the initial criminal background check report results for all conditionally admitted students.

A positive report may affect students’ progression in the program. Any student who disagrees with the accuracy of information found in the background investigation process should seek independent legal counsel in their efforts to obtain a clear report.

**IV. BACKGROUND CHECK REVIEW PROCESS**

The Program Director and Clinical Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing all relevant materials related to any adverse background check report containing information that pertains to the student’s suitability for participation in clinical rotations.

A student with a positive background check may be asked to write a letter of explanation that may be sent to the human resources departments of the clinical affiliates, along with the background check findings, to assist in their fair review of the student’s screening results. Factors involved in the individual case review by the clinical affiliate may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- nature, circumstances, and frequency of any reported offense(s);
- length of time since the offense(s);

- available information that addresses efforts at rehabilitation;
- accuracy of the information provided by the applicant in their application materials; and
- The relationship between the duties to be performed as part of the educational program and the offense committed.

## V. COLLEGE PRACTICE FOR REVIEW OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

- A. The Program Director and Clinical Coordinator will report any positive student background check findings (in a non-identifying manner) to clinical affiliates as required by clinical affiliation agreements, to obtain an individual decision, determined on a case-by-case basis, as to the clinical facility's consideration of the student's eligibility for on-site rotations. If the Program Director receives a denial of entrance into clinical rotations based upon the student's background check records, and is unable to successfully place the student in required clinical rotations, the student will be notified in writing that their enrollment in the program will not continue because of ineligibility for completion of clinical requirements of the program.
- B. It is NOT the responsibility of the College or any member of the College to actively resolve any issue for the student. If the student has questions about the report, feels the report contains erroneous information, or includes other factors such as a guilty plea or conviction that has been expunged, the burden is on the student to resolve the issue(s). There is an appeal process available through the GroupOne website: <https://gp1.com/consumer-info/>. The student may wish to contact a personal attorney to address the issues with the appropriate legal authorities. If a resolution is reached, the student may provide the Program Director with an updated report following the procedures outlined previously.

## VI. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Information obtained for the purpose of and during the criminal background check will be retained by the Surgical Technology program, separate from other student educational and academic records. Confidentiality will be maintained consistent with FERPA guidelines.

## VII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### Applicants and/or admitted students must be aware that:

- The expense for the background check must be borne by the student and will be paid directly to GroupOne. An individual criminal background check fee is \$49. Such costs are subject to change and beyond the control of the Surgical Technology Program.
- At this time, the NBSTSA, the National Board of Surgical Assisting, does not require a criminal background check to be eligible to take the National Certifying Exam.
- **If a student fails to pass a criminal background check, he or she may be ineligible to participate in clinical courses, ineligible for program completion/graduation, and therefore ineligible to continue in the program. The student understands that voluntary withdrawal from the program will be required.**
- **Students who are currently serving probation or parole are considered ineligible candidates for the program.**
- **\*Students with unresolved criminal charges or who have been convicted of a crime of moral turpitude (i.e., Murder, Voluntary Manslaughter, Felony hit and run, Family violence, kidnapping, Drug crimes, Kidnapping, Fraud, Theft, Robbery) will be ineligible to enter the program.**

- Texas State Technical College and the Surgical Technology Program does not accept responsibility for any student being ineligible to participate in clinical experience, owing to failure to pass a criminal background check.
- Students who provide any false information regarding criminal offenses in any documents may be subject to immediate dismissal from the program pending confirmation via a hearing body convened as provided in the student disciplinary policy due process rights.
- **Any student arrested while enrolled in the program must report that offense to the Program Director in writing within 5 days of arrest. Based on the nature of the offense, a decision will be made by the Program Director to determine if the student is able to continue with clinical practice.**

## **VIII. ON-LINE BACKGROUND CHECK APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

### **A. Background Check as a Requirement of Clinical Affiliation Agreements**

These background checks will be conducted by one private vendor (GroupOne). Each student must complete the comprehensive criminal background check online through <https://gp1.com> by providing their personal information for the background check.

### **B. GroupOne**

GroupOne is a background check service that allows students to apply for their background check. The results of a background check are posted to the [group one.com](http://groupone.com) website in a secure and tamper-proof environment. The Program Director is the only authorized person to view the results upon completion. Any negative findings will be shared with the student. The student can request a PDF copy of their background results from the program director. The results will be available in approximately 1-2 weeks.

## DRUG TESTING POLICY

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All students selected for admission to the Surgical Technology Program must have a drug screen test at their own expense and must be drug-free in order to be eligible for admission.

- Drug screen tests will be conducted before the first semester of SRGT courses. Students will be notified by the Program in advance of the date and time for the initial screening.
- All student drug screen reports will be submitted to the Surgical Technology Program Department.
- Allied health students entering any of the valley area hospitals must meet the community standards criteria to participate in clinical.
- Any student found to have illegal or unauthorized drugs in their drug screen test will be automatically dismissed from the program. The student will need to reapply for readmission to the program depending on their status. Subsequent approval to attend will depend on a clean drug test.
- Hospitals requesting a drug screen test after a needlestick or injury in the clinical setting must comply with the request. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program. Subsequent approval to attend will depend on a clean drug test.
- A random drug screen test may be conducted during SRGT 1461 or SRGT 2462. Please be advised that any concern or allegation of drug use will require further investigation and may result in automatic dismissal from the program if a student refuses to take a drug test.
- Any student who does not complete the drug screening procedure during the prescribed time will be dropped from the program.
- [TSTC Drug and Alcohol Policy](#)

## **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

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The student's clinical experience is gained at various medical facilities. Presently, the Surgical Technology Program is affiliated with many different entities such as hospitals, surgery centers, and eye clinics. The student functions under the instructor's supervision, working with Surgical Technologists and Registered Nurses in performing as a member of the operating room team. The student should recognize that the clinical rotation of the Surgical Technology program demands that attitude, work habits, communication skills, and manual dexterity are developed and evaluated along with academic readiness. The required courses, with course descriptions, may be found in the current Academic Catalog of Texas State Technical College.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Texas State Technical College Surgical Technology Program students will be responsible for providing their own transportation to attend labs, clinical, and hospital orientations. The clinical rotation placement can be from Mission, Texas, to Brownsville, Texas, and points in between. Failure to comply will result in the student not advancing to the next semester.

### **STUDENT EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

All student activities associated with the curriculum, especially while students are completing clinical rotations, will be educational in nature. Accreditation Standards do not prohibit paid clinical experience for students enrolled in CAAHEP-accredited surgical technology programs. Students will not be substituted for staff personnel within the clinical institution in the capacity of a surgical technologist.

Clinical Internships are not a requirement of the Surgical Technology degree. Students who choose to accept an internship with a local facility will hold a separate obligation with that employer. Students are reminded that employment outside of program hours should not interfere with student educational requirements.

## **GRADUATION, CERTIFICATION, EMPLOYMENT**

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### **GRADUATION**

The Texas State Technical College System offers an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Surgical Technology Program to students who complete graduation requirements. The student is responsible for knowing and meeting the requirements for graduation as set forth by the college and the S.T. department.

#### **To graduate, a student must:**

1. Complete all courses described in the Surgical Technology Associate degree plan.
2. Complete their curriculum with a minimum of 2.0 GPA,
3. Complete each Surgical Technology course plus all required academic prerequisites with a minimum grade of a “C”.
4. Completion of clinical case requirements as stated on the AST Core Curriculum
5. Completion of the CST Exam upon completion of the program. The Certifying exam (CST) will be administered by NBSTSA after graduation. The program must have a 70% pass rate on all students taking the national exam in order to comply with accreditation standards.

### **NATIONAL CERTIFICATION**

Graduates from TSTC will take the National Certifying Exam (CST) upon graduation. If successful in passing the CST exam, they may then use the designation Certified Surgical Technologist, or CST. Continuing education or re-examination is required to maintain certification, which must be renewed every two years or obtain 30 CEUs in a 2 year cycle. Texas graduates must be certified in order to get employment.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Most surgical technologists work in hospitals full time. Others are employed in clinics, surgical centers, and in the offices of physicians and dentists who perform outpatient surgery. They spend much of their time on their feet. Surgical technologists employed in hospitals may work or be on call during nights, weekends, and holidays. They may also be required to work shifts lasting longer than 8 hours.

### **JOB OUTLOOK**

Employment of surgical technologists is projected to grow 6 percent from 2023 to 2033, 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. Job opportunities will be best for technologists who are certified and for those who are willing to relocate.

### **EARNINGS**

The median annual wage for surgical technologists, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is \$62,830 in May 2024. Benefits provided by most employers include paid vacation and sick leave; health, medical, vision, dental, and life insurance; and a retirement program. A few employers also provide tuition reimbursement and child care benefits.

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Visit the following websites to learn more about Surgical Technology:

- Association of Surgical Technologists ([www.ast.org](http://www.ast.org))
- The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) ([www.nbstsa.org](http://www.nbstsa.org))
- Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting ([www.arcstsa.org](http://www.arcstsa.org))

## TUITION AND EXPENSES

Students should refer to the [TSTC Catalog and Student Handbook](#) to determine tuition and fees for the current semester.

The actual cost of attending Texas State Technical College includes tuition and fees, books and tools, in addition to the cost of transportation and/or campus housing. Tuition and fees are based on the number of credit hours taken and whether in-state or out-of-state tuition is paid. Most students take from 8 to 12 credit hours per semester.

Estimated Cost: \$18,420

### **Surgical Technology Program Fees**

HESI Entrance Exam	\$79.00
Criminal Background Check	\$69.00
Drug Screen Test	\$25.00
Physical Exam	See your Physician
CPR	\$40.00
Surgical Technology Uniforms X 2	\$130.00
ST Program Polo shirt	\$29.00
Approximate cost for all textbooks	\$500.00
CBSPD Exam	\$128.00
AST Membership, CST Exam Eligibility Fee	\$250.00
Immunizations required: Hepatitis B series, MMR, Tdap, Varicella, PPD (TB Test), and Flu	See your Physician
Please be informed that students are required to travel to area hospitals from Brownsville to Mission for SRGT 1461 - Clinical I and SRGT 2462 - Clinical II, 3 days out of the week from 6:30 am-3:00 pm. Clinical experience is required to meet the 120 clinical cases required to graduate from the program. Gas and meal expenses will vary depending on student travel assignments.	Gas & meal expenses
<b>TOTAL *Estimates only - prices may vary from semester to semester</b>	<b>\$1250.00</b>