



# CARRINGTON COLLEGE

## Surgical Technology Program Handbook



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## OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

### Welcome, Future Surgical Technologists!

Welcome to the Carrington College Surgical Technology program! You are entering a dynamic and rewarding field, and we're excited to partner with you on this journey. Our faculty and staff are committed to providing you with a high-quality education, hands-on learning experiences, and the support you need to succeed both academically and professionally.

This Program Handbook is designed to guide you by outlining the policies, procedures, and expectations specific to your training. It is an important resource that will help you navigate your daily responsibilities and long-term goals. Please review it carefully, as your success depends on active participation, accountability, and engagement throughout the program.

You are responsible for following the policies and procedures outlined in this document, the academic catalog, and the student handbook.

We are proud to support you every step of the way and look forward to your growth and success in the program!

## Introduction to the Program

The Surgical Technology (ST) program at Carrington College is a 64-week curriculum designed to prepare you for an exciting career as a surgical technologist. Throughout the program, you'll build a strong foundation in anatomy, physiology, medical terminology, aseptic technique, and patient care in the surgical setting. You'll also learn about surgical procedures in a variety of specialties, instrumentation, sterile processing, and operating room protocols.

Your training will combine classroom instruction, hands-on lab practice, and a supervised clinical externship, giving you the chance to apply what you've learned in real healthcare environments. This balance of knowledge and experience will prepare you to graduate with confidence and pursue certification through the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) to become a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST).

## Program Goal

The goal of the Surgical Technology program is to prepare competent entry-level surgical technologists in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains. The Surgical Technology program provides students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for employment as entry-level surgical technologists.

This is accomplished by meeting the criteria of the Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (ARCSTSA) and by maintaining a curriculum that ensures achievement and is true to Carrington College's institutional program and course learning outcomes.

## Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Surgical Technology program, graduates will be able to meet the following learning outcomes and technical standards:

### Cognitive (Knowledge)

- Explain the eligibility criteria required to successfully complete the National Certification Exam for Surgical Technologists.
- Apply the knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, microbiology, and pharmacology as it relates to a variety of surgical procedures.

### Psychomotor (Skills)

- Practice the correct solutions in applying aseptic techniques in a variety of clinical environments.
- Apply safe practice techniques with the handling of instruments, surgical supplies, and direct patient care in the surgical and sterile processing environment.
- Demonstrate the consistent application of surgical consciousness in the clinical setting.

### Affective (Behavior)

- Explain the value of accountability, competence, and character in a surgical technologist
- in the healthcare environment.
- Demonstrate the importance of critical thinking and communication in the surgical setting as a member of the healthcare team.
- Connect the impact of social competence, professionalism, and ethical values to display respect and advocacy for the surgical patient, healthcare team, and the college as expected from entry-level healthcare professionals.

## Program Goals and Outcomes are Assessed in the Following Ways:

- Advisory Board Meetings – Held annually to gather valuable insight from industry professionals on current standards, trends, and employer expectations. Feedback helps shape curriculum, teaching strategies, and overall student learning outcomes.
- Student Advising – Individual meetings may be scheduled to review your progress in the program. If areas for improvement are identified, you may be referred for tutoring and will receive ongoing follow-up from the Program Director.
- Laboratory (Mock Surgical Setting) – Instructors provide direct feedback on your performance in a simulated surgical environment. This allows faculty to assess skill development and identify areas for improvement. Lab tutoring may be recommended or required as needed. Please see your Program Director for lab availability.
- Clinical Setting – Daily evaluations are completed by your clinical preceptor to document progress. The Clinical Coordinator or Program Director also conducts site visits to follow up on your performance and ensure you are meeting program expectations.
- Graduate and Employer Surveys – After program completion, you will receive a graduate survey, and employers are surveyed once you are hired. This feedback is used to guide program improvements and ensure graduates are well-prepared for the workforce.
- Certification Pass Rate – The program is committed to maintaining a 100% participation rate in the certification exam and achieving a 70% or higher first-time pass rate. To support this goal,

students receive ongoing test preparation, skills practice, and additional support during clinical courses.

## **Association of Surgical Technologists Code of Ethics**

Adopted by the AST Board of Directors, 1985

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

## **AST Professional Membership**

Becoming a member of a professional organization is an excellent way for students to further their knowledge of the profession and to stay abreast of current and emerging trends and requirements. The Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) is your professional organization. The AST was established in 1969 by members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), the American Hospital Association (AHA), and the Association of Peri-operative Registered Nurses (AORN). As the oldest and most widely recognized professional organization for surgical technologists and surgical assistants, AST's primary purpose is to ensure that surgical technologists and surgical assistants have the knowledge and skills to administer patient care of the highest quality.

Benefits of membership include:

1. Association with other students and other practicing Surgical Technologists
2. Surgical Technologist - a monthly scientific publication
3. Discounted registration fees at AST-sponsored educational programs
4. A forum for voicing your concerns for the profession
5. A discounted fee for taking the National Certification Examination

### **Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) Contact Information**

6 West Dry Creek Circle, Suite 200

Littleton CO, 80120

(800) 637- 7433

<https://www.ast.org>

Carrington College does not endorse any one organization, nor does it require students to become

members. The information provided above is purely for informational purposes.

### **Credentialing and Professional Certifications**

Graduates of this program earn an Associate of Science degree and the following certifications: CPR, HIPAA, and Blood Borne Pathogens. Graduates are also eligible to apply to the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) to sit for the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) national certification exam. Graduates who pass the certification exam are authorized to use the credential Certified Surgical Technologist (CST). Carrington Colleges prepares students to take appropriate certification and licensure exams related to their individual majors. The College does not guarantee students will successfully pass these exams or be certified or licensed as a result of completing the program.

#### **National Board for Surgical Technology and Surgical Assistants (NBSTSA):**

The NBSTSA is the sole qualifying organization to the exam and is solely responsible for all decisions regarding certification and for determining eligibility to obtain, maintain, denying, granting and renewing the designation.

#### **NBSTSA Contact Information:**

3 West Dry Creek Circle,  
Littleton, CO 80120  
800-707-0057  
[mail@nbstsa.org](mailto:mail@nbstsa.org)

## PROGRAM POLICIES, STANDARDS, & PROTOCOLS

### Student Responsibilities

As a Surgical Technology student, you are responsible for:

- Taking ownership of your learning and skill mastery.
- Maintaining professional behavior in all settings.
- Actively participating in program assessments and surveys.
- Following Carrington College and clinical site policies.
- Communicating promptly and professionally with faculty and staff.

### Student-Faculty Communication

- Email – You are required to use your Carrington College email account when communicating with instructors or classmates. Check your email daily for updates and notifications. You can access your account via Outlook at <https://myapps.microsoft.com/> (look for the Outlook envelope icon). We strongly encourage you to set up email on your smartphone. For help, contact the IT Help Desk.
- Microsoft Teams – Students will set up a Teams account for communication with instructors. You are expected to check Teams messages daily.
- Canvas – Instructors post important course updates and announcements in Canvas. Be sure to check Canvas regularly to stay current with class information.

### Attendance

- Didactic and Lab Courses – You are expected to attend all classroom sessions. Missed in class assignments will not be able to be made up unless otherwise arranged with course faculty. See the Academic Catalog for the full policy.
- Absences – Students who are approaching a 15% absence rate in any course or cumulative term will be required to meet with the faculty and/or Program Director to develop a Student Success Plan (SSP) to identify any factors that may improve the student's attendance. Absenteeism exceeding over 15% of any course may result in removal from the program.
- Clinical Rotations – Attendance at all scheduled clinical hours is mandatory. Missed hours must be made up before the end of the term. Excessive absences may result in termination. When attending clinical rotations:
  - You must arrive on time.
  - If you will be absent or late, notify your Clinical Coordinator/Program Director and the clinical site at least one hour before your scheduled shift. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the site.
  - Completion of all required hours and cases is required for graduation.
  - Students are required to attend all scheduled clinical rotations throughout the term.
  - If a clinical day falls on a holiday, you may be required to make-up those hours if the site is closed.
  - No attendance can be tracked between terms. Please work with your Clinical Coordinator/Program Director when scheduling make-ups.

### Standards for Professional Appearance

Professional dress prepares you for expectations in the workplace. Carrington College requires all students to follow uniform standards as outlined in the **Student Handbook**. Clinical sites may have additional requirements regarding jewelry, covering tattoos, piercings, hair coloring, or other aspects of professional appearance. You are expected to comply with all site-specific policies while on assignment. Failure to follow dress code while on campus or at clinical sites may result in removal from the clinical site, and disciplinary action.

### Assessment Retake Policy

In addition to the college's Late Assignment Policy the following are the ST program's policies regarding missed assignments:

- Students will NOT be allowed to make-up missed quizzes.
- If a student is going to be absent on a day of an examination the student must notify the course faculty and the program director prior to examination time of their absence. Students will NOT be allowed to make up a missed exam unless the faculty has been notified of the absence prior to the start of the class.
- Make-up work is at the discretion of the faculty and Program Director.

### Laboratory Skills

The skills lab simulates an operating room environment and allows you to practice essential roles (first scrub, second scrub, circulating assistant). Students are expected to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared to participate.
- Notify the instructor if you will be late.
- Take responsibility for skill mastery and active participation.

### Laboratory Guidelines

- No food or drinks.
- PPE required at all times.
- No cell phones unless permitted by the instructor.
- Handle all equipment carefully; report spills/breakage immediately.
- Maintain clean and organized lab spaces.
- Report any injuries immediately.
- Be prepared for competency check-offs.
- Request additional practice if needed.
- Accept constructive feedback and stay focused.

### Risks and Hazards of the Profession

Students in the Surgical Technology program may be exposed to hazards during laboratory and clinical training, including:

- Bloodborne and airborne pathogens
- Medications and chemical agents



- Sharps and surgical instruments
- Surgical smoke and gases
- Radiation exposure
- Musculoskeletal strain from lifting/moving items over 50 lbs., standing for long periods, bending, reaching, pushing, or pulling
- Noise and bright lights in the operating room

The role of a surgical technologist is physically and mentally demanding. The fast-paced, high-pressure nature of surgery increases the risk of back, neck, shoulder, and wrist strain if proper body mechanics are not followed.

To reduce risks, students must consistently:

- Use required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Follow universal precautions and infection control standards
- Apply safe ergonomic and body mechanics practices

Students are encouraged to consult their healthcare provider about these demands prior to and during enrollment. Participation in the program indicates acknowledgment and acceptance of these risks.

## CLINICAL ROTATIONS

### Clinical Education in Surgical Technology

Clinical education is an essential component of the Surgical Technology program at Carrington College. While each clinical affiliation site has its own specific expectations, the overall objective of clinical education is to provide students with the opportunity to apply and integrate knowledge and skills gained in the classroom and laboratory into real-life surgical settings.

Clinical experience allows students to:

- Participate directly in surgical procedures under supervision.
- Apply sterile techniques and instrumentation skills in real operating rooms.
- Develop confidence in assisting surgeons, anesthesiologists, and circulating nurses.
- Improve time management, adaptability, and teamwork in a fast-paced environment.
- Refine communication and professional behavior within a multidisciplinary healthcare team.

Although many competencies are introduced and practiced in the laboratory setting, true mastery can only be achieved through direct clinical participation. Externship assignments enable students to validate their approach as future surgical technologists, enhance critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, and gain exposure to the expectations of the surgical team in professional practice.

### Clinical Placement

Clinical placements are designed to provide progressive, hands-on training in a variety of surgical specialties. Students must successfully complete all prerequisite coursework and be in good academic standing to advance into clinical rotations.

The Clinical Coordinator and Program Director reserve the right to require additional preparation or remediation as necessary to support student success in the clinical environment.

### Student Responsibilities Prior to Attending Clinicals

Before beginning clinical rotations, students are required to establish and maintain required clinical progression documentation. Students will work with the Clinical Coordinator to ensure compliance.

These items may include the following based on clinical site requirements:

- Background check (must be clear)
- Drug screen (must be negative)
- All required immunizations and documentation

Refer to your clinical coordinator regarding required timelines and deadlines. These deadlines ensure timely clearance for clinical placement.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in one of the following:

- A delayed clinical start, or
- The clinical site being reassigned to another student.

Students who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to begin clinical rotations until compliance is achieved.

### Clinical Requirements

To meet graduation requirements, students must complete all scheduled clinical hours as published in the catalog for each clinical course. Any missed clinical hours must be made up by the end of the term. Failure to complete the required hours will result in the inability to progress to the next term or graduate. Excessive absences may result in dismissal from the program.

Students must complete Total of 120 cases (including general and specialty cases as required by ARC STSA)

### Goals of Clinical Education in Surgical

Technology Clinical education aims to:

- Provide opportunities for students to practice and apply surgical skills and sterile techniques.
- Expand academic knowledge through real-world surgical cases.
- Develop confidence in perioperative roles, including first scrub, second scrub, and assisting positions.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration with surgeons, nurses, and anesthesia providers.
- Promote professional behaviors consistent with surgical technology standards.
- Foster problem-solving and critical-thinking skills under real surgical conditions.
- Expose students to a variety of surgical specialties to prepare them as well-rounded entry-level surgical technologists.

### Student Responsibilities in Clinical Education

- Transportation: Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from clinical sites.
- Compensation: Clinical rotations are learning experiences; students are not employees and will not be compensated.
- Professional Conduct: Students must adhere to Carrington College policies as well as all clinical site

rules, including dress code, attendance, confidentiality, and professional behavior.

- **Clinical Assignments:** Students may not complete clinicals at facilities where they have been employed, volunteered, or shadowed prior to admission.
- **Schedule Compliance:** Students must follow the clinical schedule provided. Adjustments may only be made with approval from the Clinical Coordinator and site preceptor.
- **Patient refusal:** Patients retain the right to refuse care by a student, and students must immediately notify their clinical instructor if such a request occurs.
- **Punctuality and Attendance Expectations:**
  - Arrive on time for all scheduled clinical externship shifts.
  - Notify both the Clinical Coordinator or Program Director and the clinical site if you will be absent or late. Failure to provide proper notice may result in dismissal from the clinical site.
  - Students are required to attend their assigned clinical site for the full duration of the course, regardless of whether clinical hours or skill requirements have been completed early.
  - If a clinical day falls on a holiday, you may be required to make-up those hours if the site is closed.

### Evaluation and Remediation

Clinical performance is evaluated by site preceptors and monitored by the Clinical Coordinator and Program Director.

Failure to meet course objectives or clinical site expectations may result in:

- Remediation, with additional learning activities or lab practice.
- Extension of clinical hours (up to one week) to demonstrate improvement.
- Reassignment to a different site, if available.
- Failure of the externship course, which could result in program withdrawal.

Criteria for remediation or failure include:

- Failure to maintain safe practice standards.
- Non-compliance with program or site policies.
- Inability to apply surgical knowledge and skills to patient care.
- Excessive absenteeism.

### **Clinical Professionalism Standards**

Carrington College expects all students to demonstrate professionalism, punctuality, and appropriate behavior at clinical sites. Reports of unprofessional behavior, repeated tardiness, or other concerns from a clinical site will be addressed promptly to ensure patient safety and a productive learning environment. The clinical site reserves the right to refuse to allow the student to return at this stage.

### First Violation

- If a clinical site reports a student for any concerns, including but not limited to behavioral, skills, punctuality, or professionalism concerns, the student will immediately meet with the Clinical

Coordinator.

- During this meeting, the student will participate in the development of a Student Success Plan (SSP), outlining corrective actions, goals, and expectations for improvement.
- The Clinical Coordinator will collaborate with the clinical site to determine if the student may continue rotations under the SSP, which may include more frequent check-ins with the clinical coordinator, additional remediation, or other coursework.
- The student may continue at the site with the understanding that any further incidents could result in removal.

#### Second Violation

- If a second violation occurs, the student will immediately be removed from the clinical site.
- The student may be required to continue check-ins with the Clinical Coordinator, complete additional remediation, or participate in other coursework as directed.
- Removal from the site will result in the student being unable to complete the required clinical hours for the course, which will result in failure of the course.

If a student is removed from a site for any reason, the student will be unable to complete the required clinical hours for the course, resulting in a failure of the course. Clinical hours from a failed course do not transfer but completed case requirements will transfer. The student will be placed on the list for a clinical site placement at the start of the following term, with no guarantee of immediate placement.