

Frequently Asked Questions about Surgical Technology

Q. Is the surgical technology program offered on line?

A. Many of the required prerequisite courses are offered online. The surgical technology (SURG) classes are offered only at the Harrisburg campus.

Q. Can the surgical technology program be completed part time?

A. A full- time commitment is required for the clinical phase of the program (4 semesters)

Q. What is the difference between the certificate and the associate degree programs?

A. The main difference between the two is the number of required general education credits. Graduates of both HACC's programs are employable and eligible to sit for the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) national certification exam. The clinical portion of both programs is 4 semesters. The Association of Surgical Technology has identified the associate degree as the preferred degree.

Q. Is the surgical technology program at HACC accredited?

A. HACC's Surgical Technology program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), 1361 Park Street, Clearwater, FL 33756, Phone 727-210-2350, Fax:727-210-2354. www.caahep.org

Q. How competitive is the surgical technology program?

A. In 2010, 37 students applied for 12 positions. Check out the Admitted Student Profile at www.hacc.edu/healthcareers under Admission Criteria. We recommend that you see your advisor once each semester.

Q. Where are clinicals?

A. Many area hospitals are clinical affiliates. There are three semesters of hospital rotations during the clinical portion of the program. Students will be at a different clinical site for each of those semesters. Clinical sites are usually in Dauphin, Lancaster, York, Lebanon and Cumberland counties.

Q. Is there an exam I have to take in order to work after graduation?

A. Although licensure or certification exam is not currently required In Pennsylvania, legislation is currently being introduced that will require certification for all surgical technologists. Many employers are now beginning to want certified surgical technologists. Students preparing to graduate will take this exam prior to graduation and will be able to use the nationally recognized CST (certified surgical technologist) credential upon successful completion of the exam.

Q. Where do surgical technologists work?

A. Most surgical technologists work in the operating room setting in either an acute care hospital or an ambulatory surgery center.

Q. Do surgical technologists work in the Emergency Room?

A. No

Q. The surgical technologist just helps to prepare the operating room for surgery, right?

A. The surgical technologist assists in the preparation of the operating room for the surgical procedure, as well as being "scrubbed" at the field with the surgeon, anticipating the needs of the surgical team and safeguarding the patient throughout the surgery.

Q. Is the surgical technologist exposed to blood and body fluids?

A. Yes, every day, multiple times.

Q. The surgeon and the nurse are responsible for what happens in the OR, right?

A. Surgical technologists are responsible for their own actions, and for following facility policy in the care of every surgical patient.

Q. Part of the surgical technology career includes being “on call”. What does that mean?

A. Depending upon the facility, the surgical technologist will be required to carry a beeper and be called back to the department after hours, weekends and holidays. For example, if your shift ended at 3:30 pm, you could drive home and be beeped back to the hospital at 9 pm, return home to sleep and be beeped again at 3 am to return to the hospital and then you are still required to work at 7 am.

Q. Is the role of surgical technologist physically demanding?

A. Yes. You will be standing for your entire shift, except for a meal break. You will assist with transferring/lifting patients, and moving heavy pieces of equipment. Instrument trays can weigh up to 25 pounds and many surgical procedures require multiple trays of instruments.

3/9/11

ALK/vg