What is a Surgical Technologist?

A surgical technologist works directly with the surgeon in the OR to handle instruments, supplies and equipment, and to assist the surgeon as needed. The surgical technologist provides direct patient care and is responsible for maintaining sterile and safe conditions during surgery. A surgical technologist may work in surgery, in medical sales, or several other fields. Starting salaries are around $16 per hour. Learn more about the career at www.ast.org.

Length of Program

3 semesters (not including prerequisite courses); Program courses must be taken in sequence within the prescribed time frame

Semester Program Begins

Fall and Spring Semesters; Full time; Day classes only

Application Process

1. Apply to Gwinnett Technical College at www.gwinnettech.edu and submit all transcripts from high school and previous college work, or take the COMPASS test.
2. Applicants are initially accepted into the Healthcare Science Certificate – Pre-Surgical Concentration program while completing the prerequisite courses.
3. TEAS V Exam must be completed prior to the program application deadlines.
4. Fall 2015 Program application must be turned in by June 1, 2015. Spring 2016 Program application must be turned in by September 1, 2015. Please download an application packet at: http://www.gwinnettech.edu; go to forms and documents, scroll down to program applications; select Surgical Technology Application.

Program Prerequisites

New Applicants for the Degree Program

(morning 2.5 GPA)

All of the following: ENGL 1101, ENGL 1102, PSYC 1101, ALHS 1090*, MATH 1111 or MATH 1101, BIOL 2113* and 2113L*, BIOL 2114* and 2114L*, BIOL 2117* and 2117L*, FYES 1000.

One of the following: HUMN 1101, ARTS 1101, MUSC 1101, ENGL 2130

Current Certified Surgical Technologists Applying to Complete the Degree Program

• Submit proof of current Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) certification
• Submit transcripts showing successful completion of a Technical College System of Georgia Surgical Technology program
• Have completed all of the following courses: ENGL 1101, MATH 1111 or 1101, BIOL 2113* and 2113L*

*These courses cannot be more than 5 years old at time of program application.

Program Deadlines

Fall 2015 admission, all prerequisites must be completed by the end of 2015 Summer semester. Spring 2016 admission, all prerequisites must be completed by the end of 2015 Fall semester.

Competitive Admissions

A mandatory meeting will be held after the deadline for all applicants who have completed the prerequisites. Competitive admissions will be based on attendance at the mandatory meeting, GPA for prerequisites, level at which prerequisites were taken (degree vs. diploma), TEAS V Exam score (test of essential academic skills), personal interviews, and manual dexterity testing.

Program Costs & Requirements

$300 per semester lab fee in Fall and Spring; uniform scrubs, shoes, lab coat, GTC patch & ID; books; liability insurance; criminal background check; drug screening; immunizations for clinicals; club dues (decided by class). Costs are approximated and subject to change.

For more information, contact: Cecilia Fuentes, Program Support Specialist at cfuentes@gwinnettech.edu or call (678) 226-6966. Building 200, Room 212. For admission and enrollment, contact: Enrollment Support Center in Building 100 or at healthteam@gwinnettech.edu
Surgical Technology

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Nature of the Work

Surgical technologists assist in surgical operations under the supervision of surgeons, registered nurses, or other surgical personnel. Surgical technologists are members of operating room teams, which most commonly include surgeons, anesthesiologists, and circulating nurses. Surgical technologists are trained to maintain the sterile field, preventing the risk of infection during surgery. Before an operation, surgical technologists help prepare the operating room by setting up the sterile field with surgical instruments and equipment, drapes, medication, and supplies. Technologists also help the surgical team put on sterile gowns and gloves.

During surgery, technologists anticipate the needs of the surgeon by passing instruments; holding retractors; preparing sutures; counting instruments, sponges, and sharps; and helping apply dressings. After surgery, surgical technologists assist with room turnover procedures in order to prepare for the next patient. They also decontaminate and prepare surgical instruments for sterilization.

Work Environment

Surgical technologists work in clean, well-lit, cool environments. They must stand for long periods and remain alert during operations. At times, they may be exposed to communicable diseases and unpleasant sights, odors, and materials. Most surgical technologists work a regular 40-hour week, although they may be on call or work nights, weekends, and holidays on a rotating basis.

Employment

Surgical technologists held about 98,500 jobs in 2012. About 69 percent of jobs for surgical technologists were in hospitals, mainly in operating and delivery rooms. Other jobs were in offices of physicians or dentists who perform outpatient surgery and in outpatient care centers, including ambulatory surgical centers. A few technologists, known as private scrubs or first assistants, are employed directly by surgeons.

Job Outlook

Employment of surgical technologists is expected to grow 30 percent between 2012 and 2022. The number of surgical procedures is expected to continue to rise as the population grows and ages. In addition, technological advances, such as fiber optics, robotics, and laser technology, have permitted an increasing number of new surgical procedures to be performed and also have allowed surgical technologists to assist with a greater number of procedures. Job opportunities will be best for technologists who are certified and for those who are willing to relocate.

Earnings

Median annual wages of wage-and-salary surgical technologists were $41,790 in May 2012. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $29,710, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $60,240. Wages of surgical technologists vary with experience and education, the responsibilities of the position, the working hours, and the economy of a given region of the country.

Research the Career

http://www.ast.org/  
http://nbstsa.org/