The Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools is recognized to accredit Surgical Technology programmatically. The program seeking or holding programmatic accreditation by ABHES must comply with the Accreditation Manual in its entirety, with the exception of Chapter IV, Evaluation Standards Applicable to Institutionally-Accredited Members, including Chapter V for all programs and Chapter VI for degree-granting programs and all appendices. This chapter contains additional specific requirements for a Surgical Technology program.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROFESSION

The surgical technologist is an operating room specialist who performs specific duties for pre-, intra-, and postoperative case management. Surgical technologists must be knowledgeable in asepsis and sterile technique, and must be able to properly care for instrumentation, equipment and supplies. Education includes the following: basic sciences: microbiology, anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology, and surgical pharmacology. Additionally this education includes: surgical procedures, case management, wound care and closure, and surgical patient care, and safety.

Preoperative case management duties include operating room preparation, gathering of supplies and equipment, case set-up, and preparation of the operative site with sterile drapes. Intraoperative case management duties include maintenance of the sterile field, passing instruments and medications to the surgeon and assistant, specimen care, and application of wound dressings. Postoperative case management duties include care and maintenance of equipment and instruments after use, and preparation of the operating room for the next procedure.

Surgical technologists’ employment includes: hospital operating rooms, central sterile processing departments, outpatient surgical units, medical companies as sales representatives, physicians in private practice, cardiac catheterization units or endoscopic departments.

CREDENTIALING

Credentia! in surgical technology is required by some states to work in the field, is often required by employers, and is encouraged for graduates of ABHES-accredited programs. Programs are expected to prepare students in necessary aspects of the curriculum included in the national credentialing examinations available in this field of study.
SECTION A – Curriculum, Competencies, Externship and/or Internal Clinical Experience

ST.A.1. The depth and breadth of the program’s curriculum enables graduates to acquire the knowledge and competencies necessary to become an entry-level professional in the surgical technology field.

The program’s goals are:

i. documented and written in a manner to ensure that the curriculum is current with industry standards,

ii. meeting the demands of the communities of interest (e.g., students, graduates, employers, physicians, and the public), and

iii. sufficiently comprehensive to ensure that students obtain appropriate hands-on training in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective learning domains that enables them to be competent, entry-level surgical technologists.

Competencies required for successful completion of the program are:

i. clearly delineated,

ii. commonly accepted, and

iii. adhering to the current Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology, produced by the Association of Surgical Technologists (www.ast.org).

Normally a minimum of 1,100 clock hours, including a 500 clock-hour clinical experience, is required for program completion. While each program will be assessed for its effectiveness in achieving program objectives and competencies, justification for deviations from the lengths identified above may require addressing such issues as student outcomes and employer satisfaction.

Students are advised, prior to admission and throughout the program, of any credentialing requirements necessary to achieve employment in the field. Focus is placed on credentialing requirements and opportunities to obtain employment.

The program administers to each student an examination, after completion of curricula content and prior to graduation, that:

i. is nationally recognized;

ii. only those first-time attempt scores are used to assess the program,

iii. is developed through an accredited testing agency in the field of surgical technology,

iv. is proctored consistent with the credentialing agency’s requirements, as applicable, and
serves as the program’s primary quality indicator by producing relevant and usable data that assesses curricular quality and overall achievement in the program according to the Core Curriculum.

ST.A.2. *A clinical experience is required for completion of the program.*

The following is considered in choosing, placing and maintaining externship site affiliations:

(i) Assignment

Clinical sites include placement at a facility that performs various types of surgical procedures that will expose the student to the necessary skills required for entry-level practice in the profession. Placements may include limited time at out-patient surgical facilities.

Students may not replace existing staff or be compensated while participating in clinical experiences and this fact is made known to the student. The student is clearly in addition to the team and not to substitution.

In all cases, the clinical site used is properly licensed and regulated.

(ii) Activities

_____ (no additional requirements beyond Chapter V.B.4.b.)

(iii) Supervision

_____ (no additional requirements beyond Chapter V.B.4.c.) An individual employed by the institution who meets the minimum qualifications of program faculty member is responsible for documenting routine on-site visits and weekly interaction, with both the student and facility, to evidence oversight and evaluation of student performance while at the clinical site.

(iv) Requirements for Completion

_____ Clinical assignments must allow the student to fulfill all of the requirements set forth in the current Core Curriculum for Surgical Technologists (herein referred to as the Core Curriculum), produced by the Association of Surgical Technologists (www.ast.org), including typical length as described in ST.A.1.

ST.A.3. **The program administers to each cohort of students an examination, after completion of curricula content and prior to graduation.**

The exam serves as the program’s quality indicator by producing relevant, first time attempt score data which assess curricular quality and overall achievement in the program. Programs must demonstrate 100% examination participation and a 70% pass rate.

The exam is:

i. developed through an accredited testing agency in the field of surgical technology; and, 
ii. proctored consistent with the credentialing agency’s requirements.
SECTION B – Program Supervision, Faculty and Consultation

Subsection 1 – Supervision

**ST.B.1. The program supervisor is credentialed and experienced in the field.**

Supervisors of a surgical technology program:

i. hold a credential in the surgical technology field from a nationally recognized and accredited credentialing agency (supervisors of a surgical technology program hired after July 1, 2010, hold the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) credential),

ii. possess a minimum of three (3) years of operating room experience in the scrub role within the last five (5) years or (3) years teaching in the field of surgical technology prior to employment,

iii. evidence continued education and training intended to maintain and enhance their professional knowledge of surgical technology instruction and administrative requirements as well as to promote–necessary education, standards, and credentialing required in the surgical technology field (e.g., pursuit of advanced academic degrees and active participation in related state and national membership associations), and

iv. may also serve as clinical coordinators but must be free of additional educational and administrative responsibilities that may impede them in effectively fulfilling their supervisory role.

The pursuit of advanced academic degrees and active participation in related state and national membership associations is encouraged. This promotes the necessary education, standards, and credentialing required in the surgical technology field.

Subsection 2 – Faculty Consultation

**ST.B.2.a. Faculty formal education/training and experience support the goals of the program.**

All faculty works under the direction of the program supervisor. Faculty teaching didactic and clinical core (found in the Core Curriculum) courses (i) hold the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) credential if hired after July 1, 2010, and (ii) have within the last five (5) years a minimum of three (3) years of operating room experience or teaching in the field, or a combination of the two prior to hire date.

**ST.B.2.b Faculty numbers and ratio support the goals of the program.**

Supervision during laboratory instruction is defined as student to faculty ratio of 12:1.

**ST.B.2.c. A clinical coordinator is responsible for supervision of clinical faculty and students and is employed by the program.**

Clinical coordinators meet the qualifications of faculty (see ST.B.2.a).
ST.B.2.d. A program is served by an advisory board of program-related specialists to assist administration and faculty in fulfilling stated educational objectives.

The program’s advisory board consists of at least one current faculty member, a representative from the institution’s administration, and at least one non-employee representative from each of the following communities of interest:

i. program student

ii. program graduate,

iii. currently credentialed surgical technologist,

iv. employer,

v. licensed physician with recent operating room experience, and

vi. the public (public member is to serve in the role of “potential patient” in assessing continued assessment of public health and welfare.)

An individual may not serve in more than one capacity as qualified. In determining committee composition, the program ensures some relationship to the clinical sites used in an effort to continually assess effectiveness.

SECTION C – Laboratory Facilities and Resources

ST.C.1.a. The institution’s laboratory facilities include:

(no additional requirements beyond CH V) A dedicated space to support the role of a surgical technologist in the scrub capacity and that meets the requirements of the current Core Curriculum.

ST.C.1.b. Equipment and instruments are available within the institution’s laboratory facility to achieve the program’s goals and objectives.

Equipment and instruments support the requirements of the Core Curriculum.

ST.C.1.c. The institution’s laboratory facilities are available for students to develop required skills with faculty supervision.

Students are made aware and have access to the institution’s laboratory facilities with faculty supervision during specific, posted times during regular institutional operating hours.