

# Surgical Technologist

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What does a Surgical Technologist (ST) do?**

A: STs are part of the surgical team generally within an acute healthcare agency or an ambulatory surgery center (outpatient procedures). STs work directly with surgeons and nurses. They gather and prepare the equipment and supplies needed for procedures and pass required items to the surgeon during operations. STs use aseptic technique and the principles of disinfection and sterilization to provide a safe environment for patients.

**Q: Is there a certification required to be a ST?**

A: Many employers prefer and some require employees working as Surgical Technologists (STs) to achieve the credential of CST (Certified Surgical Technologist). At the conclusion of the one year program, students take the CST exam as part of the final program assessment.

**Q: What if I already have a certificate, diploma or degree?**

A: Students who have already completed college level work may be eligible to transfer credits for use in this program. Most commonly, students transfer courses such as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology or other general education courses. If you already have an associate's degree or higher, you may be eligible to transfer all your general education courses. Please note that some general education courses may still be required as they are program specific.

**Q: Why are there two steps to the admission process?**

A: There are two steps in the admissions process for Surg Tech because we would like to allow students to begin taking some of their general courses as soon as possible. By completing step one of the admissions process and becoming conditionally accepted to the program, students may begin taking some of the general education courses and work toward the completion of Step 2 requirements. After being conditionally accepted (by completing Step 1), students may also be eligible for financial aid.

**Q: What is the Intent to Enroll form?**

A: The final requirement of the Step 2 admissions process is to complete the Intent to Enroll form. This lets the College know that you have completed all the Step 2 requirements and are ready to start your core program classes (those numbered 31-512-3xx). Be sure to attach any documents required as evidence of completing the Step 2 requirements with your form.

**Q: Is there a waiting list for ST?**

A: As of April 2011, students are being admitted to the ST core program classes for the fall of 2012. Please note that students often change their plans, so enrollment in the core classes may occur earlier.

**Q: Do I need to go to the Marshfield Campus for this program?**

A: Some of the general program courses (i.e. Medical Terminology, General Anatomy and Physiology) may be completed at any of the MSTC locations or online. Core program courses (31-512-3xx) all take place at the Marshfield Campus. Students should plan to travel to their clinical experience at locations in Stevens Point, Wisconsin Rapids and Marshfield.

**Q: Where do Surg Tech students complete their clinical experience?**

A: As previously mentioned, students should be prepared to travel to all three cities that have clinical sites. Students participate in clinical at St. Michael's Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield Clinic Ambulatory Surgery Center in Marshfield and at Riverview Hospital.

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### **Q: Can I go to school part-time?**

A: Many students start taking general course requirements such as Medical Terminology on a part-time basis (six or less credits per semester). The core program courses are designed to be taken together. Once admitted to the core courses (31-512-3xx), students take 13 credits in the fall semester and 12 credits in the spring if all other requirements are complete. The program is designed to be full-time and consists of at least 30 hours of classroom/clinical per week, not to mention out of class work. Be sure to consider this time commitment when making plans for outside employment, etc.

### **Q: Do I need to attend Smart Start (college orientation)?**

A: Students are **highly encouraged** to attend MSTC's college orientation program known as Smart Start. Students learn how to use the college's technology including their student account (MyMSTC). Participants also learn how to register for classes and about many of the services available to students. Sometimes students receive a second invitation to participate in Smart Start when they complete their Intent to Enroll form and are officially accepted to their program. It is only necessary to participate in Smart Start one time.

### **Q: Do I need to attend Program Orientation?**

A: Program orientation for Surg Tech is completed by students online and is **required**. Approximately two to three months before you begin taking "core" program classes you will receive information on how to complete the online orientation. The program orientation provides another overview of the program and its curriculum. It also helps to ensure you understand the policies and procedures of the program.

### **Q: What is clinical health work?**

A: Students enrolling in health programs that require clinical experiences must document some information about their health including their record of immunizations for certain communicable diseases. This information is required by our clinical affiliates (sites where you will complete your clinical). Several months prior to clinical, students participate in an online health work orientation that provides details on the information you will need to provide. If you would like to get started early on this process, you can begin to gather documentation of immunizations you received as a child starting at age 1.

### **Q: Is it true that health work can be expensive?**

A: Documenting your immunization history is usually free as long as you know where you received your immunizations. Some students may have had their immunizations tracked within RECIN (Regional Early Childhood Immunization Network) that was implemented in central and northern Wisconsin in 1994. If you know you will be unable to provide documentation for immunizations, please be aware that you will need to have lab work (called titers) drawn to measure whether or not you are immune to the diseases. Titers are usually the most expensive part of the health work process so you are encouraged to locate the documents for your immunizations if at all possible. Unfortunately, health care agencies are unable to accept a history of the disease (i.e. having had the chicken pox at age 5) as evidence of immunity so a titer must be drawn for individuals who were not immunized due to a history of the disease. Although sometimes costly, health work is done to help ensure your safety and the safety of your patients. These documents will also be needed when you begin your career as a health profession so it is an investment in your future. Specific health work requirements will be presented to you the semester before you enroll in clinical.