



**Surgical Technology Program
Student Handbook**

Fall 2026

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The basic beliefs, attitudes, and concepts that are the foundation of the Surgical Technology program are expressed in the following statements.

Surgical Technology is a program of study which is compatible with the policies of the Technical College System of Georgia and encourages each Surgical Technology student to benefit and contribute as a partner in the economic development and stability of Georgia. The philosophy of the Surgical Technology program is founded on the value attributed to individual students, the occupational field and technical education.

The Surgical Technology program is a training program that provides the student with the knowledge and skills to become a qualified surgical technologist. Important attributes for success of program graduates are critical thinking, problem solving, and the application of the training to the work requirement. We prepare entry-level Surgical Technologists who are competent in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains to enter the profession.

The program structure acknowledges individual differences and provides opportunities for students to seek fulfillment of their educational goals. GTC and the ST program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed or religion, national or ethnic origin, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), disability, age, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, veteran or military status, marital status, or citizenship status (except in those special circumstances permitted or mandated by law).

To assist each student to attain his or her respective potential within the program, **both the instructor and the student incur an obligation in the learning process.** The instructor is a manager of instructional resources and organizes instruction in a manner which promotes learning. **The student assumes responsibility for learning by actively participating in the learning process.**

This is a dynamic field which requires attention to current curriculum and state-of-the-art instructional equipment and technology. The Surgical Technology program promotes the concept of change as the profession evolves. The need for nurturing the spirit of involvement and life-long learning is paramount in the surgical technology field and related areas.

GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES

SEMESTER SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Surgical Technology classes are taught in a sequential order requiring the student to develop basic skills and knowledge to then incorporate forming advanced skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative to teach all the scheduled courses in sequence. The necessity of the sequence forces us to complete SURG 1010 before the students begin SURG 1020 even though they are both taught and completed during the student's initial semester in the program. Although SURG 1020 is not started until later in the semester, students are counted present for all registered classes at the beginning of the semester. Consequently, if a student initiates a withdrawal from classes after the drop add period *but* before the withdrawal deadline, several consequences may occur:

- 1) The student will **not** receive a refund for the other sequenced classes.
- 2) In order to withdraw from any course with a "W", the withdrawal must be initiated by the posted "Last day to withdraw with a W" date.

COMPLETION OF COURSE COREQUISITES

The Surgical Technology program is a lock-step program. All courses required in each semester must be successfully completed simultaneously. In the event that a student fails any individual class, they will not be permitted to continue in any program course, including the corequisites for that semester. Semester corequisite courses include:

1st Semester – SURG 1010, SURG 1020

2nd Semester – SURG 1100, SURG 2030, SURG 2110, SURG 2120

3rd Semester – SURG 2040, SURG 2130, SURG 2140, SURG 2240

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

1. ***A grade of 70% or above in each course component as well as the final grade.***
2. Successful completion of the Clinical Practicum.
3. Acceptable employability skills which include attendance, reliability, punctuality, appearance, socialization skills, cooperation and professional communication.
4. Completion of a comprehensive final exam at the end of the final semester in the curriculum with a grade of 70% or better.
5. The National Certification exam is a MANDATORY test given as an exit exam from the program. It is the student's responsibility to join the Association of Surgical Technologists (\$45 fee) and to apply for the exam (\$190 fee) during the program.

CLASS & LAB HOURS

Regardless of the times or days listed in Banner for the course, you will be expected to attend class or lab according to the following schedule:

- First semester - Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. During special times, such as SURG 1010 lab schedule, you may be expected to arrive earlier or stay later than normal hours.
- Second & third semesters – Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at hospital clinical site. Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on campus.

Open lab hours are Monday through Thursday 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. These hours apply to any time that formal class or lab activities are not scheduled.

CRITICAL COMPETENCY LAB SKILLS CHECK OFFS

In order for a student to receive course credit, the final weighted average of all course assessments *in each category* must be 70% or better. Failure of the course will result in the student's dismissal from the program. This is regardless of the student's average grade in the course prior to the attempt.

Practical exams, or clinical skills "check offs," will be administered throughout the course as listed below. Each of these skill sets is considered a critical competency, and it is required that the student pass each one by the due date set for the competency.

- Check off #1 Open Gloving, Towel Folding, Instrument and Sharps Handling
- Check off #2 Surgical Scrubbing
- Check off #3 Opening Sterile Supplies, Scrubbing, Gowning & Closed Gloving
- Check off #4 Entire Surgical Setup

For check offs #1, #2, and #3, students are given three attempts to pass the competency. If a student passes on the first attempt, their grade will be a 95%. With a second attempt pass the student will earn an 85%, and on a third attempt pass the grade will be a 75%.

For check off #4, students earn a percentage score based on a prescribed points system for each included skill. If the student earns a 70% or greater on their first attempt, that competency is considered met. If the student does not earn a 70% or greater they are given a second attempt at which time they must earn a 70% or better in order to pass and proceed in the course. On the occasion of a required second attempt, the highest grade that a student can receive is a 70%.

If a student fails any critical competency skills checkoff on the final attempt, they will receive a grade of F for the course, regardless of the student's other grades or any subsequent coursework. Failure of the course will result in the student's dismissal from the program. The student will have the option to withdraw from the course and any co-requisites prior to the withdrawal deadline. The student may also appeal the skill failure to the Dean of Health Sciences.

All of the assigned check offs listed above will be observed by a minimum of two (2) Surgical Technology instructors. Final attempts of any check off may be observed by the entire Surgical Technology faculty.

STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM

Students will begin with a Student Professionalism score of 100 points and will be evaluated in the classroom, lab and clinical site setting according to the guidelines outlined in the *Work Ethics and Employability Skills* and the *Professionalism Demerits* sections.

A score of 70% or better in this category must be maintained in order to successfully complete any SURG course. Failure to maintain a 70% in the Professionalism category will result in a grade of F for the course, as well as dismissal from the program.

PROFESSIONALISM DEMERITS

Issue	Point Deductions
Absence from class, lab, clinical, field trip, or class activity. Absence may be classified as any non-presence from class of 90+ minutes (regardless of reason)	10 per day

Early departure or tardiness to class, lab, clinical, field trip, or class activity of 1-89 minutes (regardless of reason)	5 per occurrence
Failure to notify instructor of tardiness or absence prior to class/lab/clinical	10 per occurrence
Failure to notify instructor of changes in assigned lab/clinical schedule	5 per occurrence
Unprofessional/negative/argumentative behavior in the class/lab/clinical setting to instructor/preceptor supervision, including failure to follow directions given by any instructor/preceptor	15 per occurrence
Unprofessional/negative behavior towards other students	15 per occurrence
Uncooperative behavior/failure to demonstrate teamwork in the class/lab/clinical setting	5 per occurrence
Failure to demonstrate safety measures and Standard Precautions in the lab or clinical setting, including failure to wear appropriate PPE properly	15 per occurrence
Out of uniform / unprofessional appearance / poor hygiene	5 per occurrence
Disruption of class, lab, or clinical of any kind	15 per occurrence
Failure to use class/lab/clinical time in an effective manner, including sleeping in class	5 per occurrence
Use of prohibited phone/tablet/computer/wearable technology during class/lab/clinical time	15 per occurrence
Non-adherence to ST/CS Program Handbook and/or GTC Policies & Procedures	15 per occurrence
Failure to submit daily clinical case logs accurately, completely, and within the assigned due date and time.	5 per occurrence

ATTENDANCE

Students anticipating an absence or tardy should contact the course instructor at the cell number or office number provided, IN ADVANCE or provide notification as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the student to account for instructional time missed and to seek permission for make-up work at the discretion of the instructor. Each tardy, absence or early departure, REGARDLESS OF REASON, will be documented and will result in a reduction of the student's professionalism grade for the course.

Any tardy to class/clinical or early departure from class/clinical of 1 to 89 minutes, REGARDLESS OF REASON, is considered a half day absence. Any tardy, early departure or absence from class/clinical greater than 90 minutes is considered an absence for the day. There are no "excused" absences or tardies.

CELL PHONE AND COMPUTER USAGE

Speaking on the cell phone or texting during a lecture is considered extremely rude and will not be tolerated. Personal computer usage is acceptable in the classroom under certain guidelines. Taking notes, viewing PowerPoints, etc. is acceptable. Checking email, chatting, playing games, browsing the internet, or logging into social media is not allowed.

Use of earbuds or headphones is not allowed in any part of the department at school or in the clinical setting, as it is not conducive to teamwork and effective communication. Any infraction of this type will result in a reduction in the student's Professionalism grade as outlined in the course syllabus.

While attending clinical sites or off-campus events, cell phones may be kept with you for cases of emergency but MUST be turned on silent mode. There will be absolutely no use of cell phones in the

OR/SPD setting. Any use of a phone should be done during break or lunch times and should be conducted outside the department areas.

In accordance with HIPAA laws, no patient information may be recorded or disseminated through any media outlets including photos, video, email, text, or social media. This also applies to students' receipt of patient information or photos through any means mentioned above. No comments about clinical sites are permitted to be posted on social media. Live streaming through any means is prohibited in the clinical site.

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

Any wearable technology that has the capability of recording and storing still images, video, and/or audio is prohibited to be worn during class or lab on campus, during student conferences with instructors, while at a clinical site, or while working with patients in any capacity on or off campus.

Examples of wearable technologies that are prohibited include, but are not limited to, smart watches, eyeglasses, rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earbuds. This includes eyeglasses that are prescription if they are also wearable technology.

Any use of wearable technology during class, lab or clinical as described above will be punishable as outlined in the previous Student Professionalism section. Any use of wearable technology in the clinical setting involving a HIPAA violation will be punishable by dismissal from the clinical course and the Surgical Technology program. Any instance of academic dishonesty involving wearable technology will be punishable using the GTC Academic Integrity policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Gwinnett Tech expects students, faculty, and staff to conduct themselves with honesty, character and academic integrity. Academic integrity is defined by the Center for Academic Integrity as “a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility” (AcademicIntegrity.org). Gwinnett Tech promotes and expects all members of the college community to conduct themselves professionally and with academic integrity.

Definition of Academic Integrity

Gwinnett Tech considers academic integrity an integral part of learning. Any infraction of this honesty policy is detrimental to the student's education and the integrity of the College. The following cases of dishonesty are strictly forbidden, including but not limited to:

Plagiarizing

- Using someone else's words or ideas, or using the essential style and manner of expression of a source as if it were one's own, without giving credit to the source via quotation marks, parenthetical citation, footnotes, or whichever mode is appropriate for the specific convention being used;
- Using your own previous work (recycling/re-purposing) - all work must be unique to the specific given situation;
- Copying on a test or assignment by any method of conveyance, including but not limited to visual materials, oral communication, notes, printed matter, or electronic means without proper citation;
- If there is any doubt the student should consult his or her instructor.

Fraud

- Copying/submitting another person's work, including the unauthorized taking of someone else's work, including but not limited to: homework, written papers, examinations, laboratory assignments, published work, circuit designs, software, etc.;
- Alteration of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a Faculty member and/or Institutional Official, so as to obtain unearned academic credit, or the invention of any information in an academic exercise, such as the use of ready-made tests or term papers, or falsifying data in a lab record or a student record, including a record of attendance;
- The forgery, alteration, or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the student, and/or any act that distorts or could distort grades or other academic records.

Unauthorized Aids

- Use or attempted use of prohibited materials, information, or study aids in an academic exercise used to provide unfair advantage to that student or used to convey information to another student. For example, using an unauthorized formula sheet during an exam, using unauthorized notes, or unauthorized equipment (including but not limited to programmable calculators, cell phones, ear buds/phones, smart watches, etc.);

Collaboration

- Allowing another student to have access to your work, thereby enabling that student to represent the work as his or her own;
- Unauthorized interaction with another student or students in the fulfillment of academic requirements;
- Using another person's file, flash drive, diskette, or copying another student's computer program;
- Sharing course materials or copyrighted materials, including but not limited to tests, course work, homework, etc., by any means, including but not limited to photographic/electronic sharing (social media, cell phone, etc).

Substitution

- Having someone else take a quiz or exam in your place or assisting someone in any way during a quiz or exam, or using any unauthorized electronic device or other unauthorized method of support during a quiz or exam.

Sabotage

- Destruction of another student's work, such as a model, a lab experiment, a computer program, or term paper.

Student Responsibility

- If a student observes another student violating this policy, he/she is required to report the misconduct to the instructor.

Consequences of Academic Integrity Breaches

Any instance of academic integrity failure will be addressed with a student conference and documented. Consequences may include any or all of the following:

- Professionalism demerits for not following policies as outlined above
- Grade of zero "0" for the assignment in question
- Failing grade of "F" for the course in question
- Dismissal from the Surgical Technology program

PERSONAL APPEARANCE (DRESS CODE)

Our uniform requirements are established on the current evidence-based research and guidelines for practice recommended by the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST), American College of Surgeons (ACS), and the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN). These uniform requirements are hospital industry standards that have been established for the sterile environment to promote optimal patient outcomes and infection prevention. We follow these guidelines on campus due to the fully immersive simulation environment of our labs. Program faculty reserve the right to disallow any uniform deemed inappropriate or unprofessional.

The personal appearance and demeanor of Surgical Technology students reflect on both the school and the program, and are indicative of the students' interest and pride in their profession. Students in improper, incomplete, wrinkled or soiled uniform or with poor personal hygiene will be asked to leave the classroom/lab and not return until they have corrected the issue. Any missed class time for this issue will be recorded as an absence or early departure in accordance with the amount of time missed and will generate Professionalism Demerits at the discretion of the instructor.

The following is required to be worn every class and clinical day:

Approved Attire

- **Scrubs** in solid color chosen by the class. No additional color trim is allowed.
- **Scrub tops** must be the standard V-neck style with no ties in the front or back.
- **Scrub pants** must be the standard style – no extra slim cut, no joggers, no elastic at the ankles. Cargo pockets are acceptable.
 - **Scrub skirts** may be alternately worn to class and on-campus lab only to accommodate religious requirements. Skirts must be pre-approved, purchased from a scrub manufacturer, and must be ankle length.
 - Students must be aware that hospitals may not provide scrub skirts to students, and home-laundered attire is not allowed in the clinical sites due to infection prevention guidelines.
- **Scrub jacket** - A long sleeve, round neck, waist length, scrub jacket in solid white color. Front of jacket must either snap, button, or zip up to the neck. Sleeves must have elastic at the wrist.
- **Health Sciences patch** - The Gwinnett Technical College patch must be sewn 2" below shoulder seam on left arm of the scrub jacket only, NOT on the scrub shirt.
- **Undershirts** may be worn under scrubs, but must be white, short sleeved, collarless, and minimally visible. Undershirt sleeves may not extend past scrub sleeves at any time, either in class, lab or clinical.
- **Socks** - Clean socks or hose must be worn. Medical compression hose/socks for both males and females are highly suggested.
- **Shoes** - Clean white uniform or SOLID white leather athletic shoes (no high tops; no clogs). Shoes may not have mesh or holes of any kind, must be slip-resistant, and must provide the student protection from fluids and sharp objects.
- **ID badge** - Students must display a Gwinnett Technical College ID badge with the provided green GTC Student lanyard at all times according to GTC policy. Badge must list current school year and "Surgical Technology" under the student's name. This serves as a ready identifier for students in the clinical site.

- **Hair coverings** – Home laundered hair coverings are allowed as long as they can be covered fully by the provided PPE. This includes scrub caps, scarves, natural hair protective caps, and religious or cultural head coverings (such as hijab, dastar, yarmulke, and kufi).
 - Hair coverings must be clean, unadorned, constructed of tightly woven and low-linting material, and must fit securely, with loose ends tucked into the scrub top. Larger hair and head coverings must be completely contained within the appropriate PPE provided by the program, including tucking all loose ends into the PPE and/or scrub top. When necessary, the program will provide larger PPE coverings to use at the clinical site.
 - Athletic caps, cold weather caps, and other hats are not allowed.

Personal Appearance / Hygiene

- **Hair** - Clean, neat and appropriate hairstyle and color. All hair must be contained under provided PPE head coverings. Use of hair coverings mentioned above, hair ties, and/or headbands may be necessary to accomplish proper hair containment under PPE.
- **Fingernails** will be short, neat and clean. Fingernails must not be visible over ends of fingers. No polish may be used, including clear. No artificial or acrylic nails are allowed.
- **Jewelry** of all kinds is prohibited. No visible body piercing is allowed.
- **Underclothing** - Proper underclothing must be worn at all times in class, lab, and clinicals.
- **Makeup** should be kept to a minimum.
- **Eyelashes** - No false eyelashes are allowed.
- **Facial hair** - Mustaches and/or beards must be kept neatly trimmed. Proper cover is to be worn in the OR to contain all hair.
- **Perfumes and colognes** should not be worn.
- **Proper dental and body hygiene** are required. Due to the close contact between students and staff and the use of the same equipment, the best of hygiene must be maintained. The program will not tolerate complaints generated because of hygiene issues such as offensive body odor (including the smell of cigarette smoke and poor dental hygiene), general uncleanliness, dirty clothes, or other complaints.

PERSONAL CONTACT & PHYSICAL COVERAGE DURING LABS

Due to the nature of the skills students are learning and the proximity necessary for:

- Surgeon to technologist interaction,
- Circulator to technologist interaction,
- Technologist & circulator to patient interaction,
- And instructor to student interaction.

It is often necessary to have physical contact and close proximity during labs. This includes many activities of scrubbing and donning sterile attire, preparing a sterile setup, and steps of surgical procedures, as well as during the instruction of such skills. At no time will physical contact by instructors or other students be allowed to vary from the normal parameters and functions of the operating room.

There are times during which a student's arms must be exposed as is necessary for the industry standards of scrubbing, gowning and gloving. If a student has a religious objection to revealing their arms, this must be addressed with the Program Director prior to beginning the program so that accommodations may be discussed. No accommodations can be guaranteed in the hospital clinical sites, as each facilities' individual policies must be followed.

SAFETY MEASURES IN LAB

Due to the nature of the Surgical Technology profession, it is necessary for students to train in the lab setting using sharps and chemicals. GTC, the Surgical Technology program, and all students are required to follow OSHA regulations in regards to Personal Protective Equipment.

Students are required to use the appropriate provided PPE in every lab experience. In addition, students are required to follow all operating room safety protocols including bloodborne pathogens containment, fire safety, sharps containment and safety, chemical precautions, and fall/injury prevention measures. Failure to follow any of these safety measures will be documented as outlined in the Professionalism section above.

PROGRAM PHYSICAL DEMANDS & TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Technical standards are an accreditation requirement meant to assist both students and faculty in determining appropriate qualification for the program. Technical standards must meet state and federal requirements that preserve the rights of individuals with disabilities. The standards below reflect those referenced by the U.S. Department of Labor and requirements of local job postings.

The following are physical demands that must be met in both the on-campus lab experience and the in-hospital clinical experience.

Standing:	7-8 hours per day; Stand and maintain balance; Stand on raised surgical step stools
Walking:	1-2 hours per day; Walk 100 meters in 1 minutes; Climbing stairs
Bending:	1-2 hours per day; Pick up objects from floor; Squat then rise from standing
Reaching:	1-2 hours per day; Reach above shoulder; Reach below waist
Lifting:	3-4 hours per day; Up to 75 pounds alone; Transfer and position surgical patient with a team; Repetitive lifting of 30+ pound instrument trays; Pushing and pulling large equipment
Fine Motor:	Pick up small objects with hands; Twisting while disconnecting and assembling equipment; Perform repetitive motions with hands
Hearing:	Hear and repeat normal speech without seeing lips; Hear faint body sounds like blood pressure; Hear equipment auditory alarms
Visual:	See small objects 20 in. away; See larger objects 20 feet away; Distinguish color
Tactile:	Feel vibrations to palpate pulse; Detect temperature to identify hot/cold solutions

STUDENT WORK POLICY

Students are allowed to work in their free time but will not be permitted to leave class or clinical to go to work. It is recommended that students try to limit their outside work hours to accommodate the didactic and clinical rigors of the program.

Students are not allowed to work at their clinical site. A student may not complete their clinical assignment at a hospital where they are employed in any capacity.

All student activities associated with the curriculum, especially while students are completing clinical rotations, will be supervised and educational in nature. Students will not be substituted for hired staff within the clinical institution in the capacity of a surgical technologist.

PROGRAM DISMISSAL

Students may be dismissed from the Surgical Technology program for various reasons including:

- Failure of any SURG course
- Failure of any critical competency skills checkoff on the final attempt

- Failure to maintain a 70% in the Professionalism category of any SURG course
- Any event of academic dishonesty as outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy
- Any use of wearable technology in the clinical setting involving a HIPAA violation
- Any instance of misconduct as outlined in the Student Conduct Policy
- Request of hospital management due to safety issues, patient endangerment, employability skills, or unprofessional misconduct as outlined in the Clinical Dismissal Policy
- Failure to progress in skill acquisition after having been advised and remediated as outlined in the Clinical Dismissal Policy

PROGRAM RE-ENTRY

There may be situations where a student must leave the program due to academic deficiencies or personal reasons, and re-entry may be desired. Re-entry in any semester is based on space availability, both in didactic and clinical courses, as well as hospital clinical spaces. The student must be in good academic standing at the time of re-entry.

Exceptions Precluding Re-Entry

- If a student has been dismissed for academic or skill reasons twice, or has withdrawn from the program twice, due to any reason, they will not be considered for re-entry in any subsequent semester.
- Due to the critical nature of surgical practice, the importance of technical proficiency, and the utmost priority of patient safety, if a student has been dismissed due to failure of the allowed attempts of a Critical Competency Lab Skills Checkoff as outlined above, they will not be considered for re-entry in any subsequent semester.
- Due to the critical nature of surgical practice, the importance of technical proficiency, and the utmost priority of patient safety, if a student has been dismissed from a clinical site for any reason, or has been dismissed for failure to progress in skill acquisition during clinical courses, they will not be considered for re-entry in any subsequent semester.
- Due to the critical nature of professionalism and work ethics in the profession, if a student does not successfully complete any SURG course due to failure of the Professionalism category, the student will not be considered for re-entry in any subsequent semester.

Re-Entry into the First Program Semester

- The student must make an appointment with the Program Director prior to application.
- The student must reapply with Admissions and go through the competitive admissions process again. A minimum of an overall GPA of 3.0 is required to apply.
- In the event that one first semester course was passed successfully on a previous attempt, the student must audit that course, as SURG 1010 and SURG 1020 are corequisites.

Re-Entry into Second or Third Semester

- Students are only allowed to re-enter into second or third semesters if they have completed first semester courses during the two previous semesters.
- The student must make an appointment with the Program Director prior to application.
- The student must successfully pass, with a minimum grade of 70%, both an academic test over the previous semester(s) material and an appropriate skills checkoff. Failure of either the academic test or skills checkoff will disqualify the student for re-entry.
- In the event that any course was passed successfully on a previous attempt, the student must audit the course(s), as each semester's courses are corequisites.
- Students may re-enter second semester either in Spring or Summer semesters.

- Students may re-enter third semester with two options:
 - If timing is appropriate, the student may re-enter third semester in Fall semester.
 - If timing is not appropriate, the student will need to audit second semester courses, and then continue on to third semester.

CLINICAL POLICIES & REQUIREMENTS

CLINICAL ASSIGNMENTS

Clinical assignments are a required aspect of the Surgical Technology program to receive the necessary clinical experience as defined by our accrediting body, the Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (ARC/STSA). All students are expected to exhibit an attitude of maturity, professionalism and responsibility toward their clinical assignments and experiences. Each clinical location expects the student to provide high quality patient services in addition to achievement of competencies. Students are expected to practice in a safe, legal and ethical manner.

Students will be assigned clinical rotations at one or more of our clinical partner facilities within the metro Atlanta, Gainesville, and Athens areas. Students will be assigned to one or more clinical sites throughout the program based on clinical site availability, student case requirements, and potential for graduate job placement. Although consideration may be given to clinical site location and student drive time, it is not a deciding factor in clinical assignments.

To successfully complete the SURG 2110/2120/2130/2140 clinical courses, students must complete each assigned clinical rotation.

Students should be aware that paid parking is required at some clinical sites. Students will be responsible for any costs incurred in transportation and/or parking associated with clinical rotation assignments.

CLINICAL ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend all clinical assignments as scheduled by the program faculty. The total number of hours each student spends in his or her clinical site will be entered on the student's permanent record at the end of the semester. Students must complete both the minimum total number of cases and the minimum number of contact hours to fulfill curriculum requirements.

If a student will be tardy or absent due to unavoidable circumstances, he or she must contact Susan Feltmann, Clinical Coordinator (404) 308-7013 within one hour of the start of that clinical day AND also contact the clinical site supervisor.

Scheduled absenteeism (i.e. appointments, vacations, marriages, etc.) must be reserved for periods when classes are not in session. If a student must leave the clinical site early (due to illness, emergency, etc.) Susan Feltmann, Clinical Coordinator (404) 308-7013 must be notified immediately. Clinical absences and tardies will be documented using the Professionalism demerit system described previously in this document.

BLS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS (CPR)

All students are required to have a BLS for Healthcare Providers card from the American Heart Association. This certification must be valid for the entire year of the program. This course may be taken through GTC's Continuing Education department, or you may find information about BLS courses through the American Heart Association.

IMMUNIZATIONS

As healthcare professional students, it is highly recommended that you are vaccinated against infectious diseases encountered at clinical sites. We recommend you discuss these vaccinations with your personal physician. This information is intended to give recommendations and not set specific policies on vaccinations and/or testing. Gwinnett Technical College, the Health Science division and the Technical College System of Georgia are not responsible for any adverse reactions that may occur as a result of vaccines and/or testing.

Students are required to follow the medical clearance policies designated by each assigned clinical site. Be aware that all clinical sites mandate vaccinations against and tests for specific diseases. If you elect to not be vaccinated or tested, you will not be allowed to attend clinical sites.

Although vaccines are not required for program admission, each clinical site reserves the right to deny a student entry based on their own policies and procedures. If a student is denied entry to a clinical site based on lack of vaccinations or testing, the student will not be able to complete the clinical courses, including SURG 1010, SURG 2110, SURG 2120, SURG 2130, and SURG 2140. As a result, successful completion of the program will not be possible.

A student will not be denied entry to the Surgical Technology program because of immunization status. However, without immunization clearance to attend clinical sites, they will not be able to receive credit for the courses listed above. Without course credit in all SURG major courses, a student will not be permitted to continue in the program and will, therefore, be unable to graduate.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS EXPOSURE

Due to the nature of the Surgical Technology profession, students are entering environments in both school labs and hospital clinical sites which are considered to have a high risk for exposure to bloodborne pathogens and hazardous materials. Because of these risks, the following guidelines must be followed closely by all students and faculty in both the laboratory and hospital settings.

- **Training:** All students are required to complete training using the GTC Bloodborne Pathogens & Hazardous Materials training courses. These must be completed prior to program entry and the certificates of completion are kept in each student's file.
- **Standard Precautions:** All covered individuals will use hazardous materials standard precautions as dictated by the task or activity. These standard precautions include adhering to appropriate prescribed engineering & administrative controls, personal protective equipment, housekeeping, and laundry.
- **Personal Protective Equipment:** Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including but not limited to respiratory, gloves, protective clothing, eye, and face protection, is provided to students and faculty.
 - All students and faculty must use appropriate PPE when it is reasonably anticipated that there may be contact with hazardous materials; replace gloves or other protective clothing if torn or punctured, or if their ability to function as a barrier is compromised.

- Appropriate face and eye protection must be donned when splashes, sprays, spatters, or droplets of hazardous material pose as risk to the eye, nose, or mouth.
- Respiratory protection devices should be donned when the vapors of fumes pose a risk to the respiratory system.
- Disposable PPE should be discarded properly after each use.
- Remove immediately, or as soon as feasible, any garment contaminated by blood or other potentially infectious materials in such a way as to avoid contact with the outer surface.
- **Sharps Safety:** Contaminated sharps are discarded immediately or as soon as possible in containers that are closable, puncture-resistant, leak proof on sides and bottoms, and appropriately labeled or color-coded. Sharps disposal containers are available in all lab areas and in clinical sites.

STUDENT INJURIES

The program faculty should be notified immediately should any student suffer an injury that requires medical attention while in a clinical site or a school lab. Any injury the student may sustain while in a learning environment is covered by the Student Accident Insurance at no cost to the student. Failure to notify an instructor immediately and follow proper procedures as outlined by the GTC Environmental Health & Safety Office may result in financial responsibility being assigned to the student.

An immediately available confidential medical evaluation and follow-up will be conducted by the clinical site where the incident occurred or Concentra Medical Centers. After initial first aid (clean the wound, flush eyes or other mucous membrane, etc.), the following activities will be performed:

- Document the routes of exposure and how the exposure occurred.
- Identify and document the source individual (unless the employer can establish that identification is infeasible or prohibited by state or local law).
- For blood or other potentially infectious materials exposure:
 - Obtain consent and arrange to have the source individual tested as soon as possible to determine HIV, HCV, and HBV infectivity; document that the source individual's test results were conveyed to the employee's/student's health care provider.
 - Exposure involving a known HIV positive source should be considered a medical emergency and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) should be initiated within 2 hours of exposure, per CDC recommendations.
 - Assure that the exposed student is provided with the source individual's test results and with information about applicable disclosure laws and regulations concerning the identity and infectious status of the source individual (e.g., laws protecting confidentiality)
 - After obtaining consent, collect exposed employee's/student's blood as soon as feasible after exposure incident, and test blood for HBV and HIV serological status.
 - If the employee/student does not give consent for HIV serological testing during collection of blood for baseline testing, preserve the baseline blood sample for at least 90 days; if the exposed employee elects to have the baseline sample tested during this waiting period, perform testing as soon as feasible.
- The exposed covered student is to be counseled immediately after the incident and referred to his or her family physician or health department to begin follow-up and appropriate therapy. Baseline testing should be performed as soon as possible after the incident.
- The technical college is responsible for the cost of a post-exposure follow-up for covered students. However, if the exposed person does not follow the post exposure protocol set by

the facility, Gwinnett Technical College is absolved of its responsibility for financial coverage of the incident.

PREGNANCY

Students who become pregnant while enrolled in the Gwinnett Technical College Surgical Technology Program have the option to voluntarily inform the Program Director of their pregnancy. This information must be in writing. A student will not be considered pregnant without written disclosure.

Upon written disclosure, the student and the Program Director will meet to discuss the potential harmful effects of exposure to diseases, chemicals, radiation, and anesthetic gases inherent in the practice of surgery on the unborn child, as well as the options available to the student to fulfill the educational requirements of the program.

The pregnant student is required to seek advice and counsel from their attending physician concerning continuing in the Surgical Technology Program at Gwinnett Technical College. A checklist form will be provided for the student to review with their physician. After consultation with the program director and seeking counsel from their attending physician, the student will choose from the following options:

1. The student may voluntarily withdraw from the Surgical Technology program. If they leave in good academic standing, they will be reinstated to the program at the beginning of the semester that was not completed, on a space available basis.
 - If the student does not re-enter the program at the earliest possible date after delivery, they will have to reapply for the program under the standard of application procedure, should they wish to enter the program at a later date. In this case, the student will begin the program from the first semester, and they will be responsible for any incurred costs involved in repeating a course.
2. The student may choose to continue in the Surgical Technology program. Student clinical assignments will not be changed; however, the student will be reminded of possible hazards and exposure risks, and guidance will be given as to proper protection mechanisms. In addition, the student must supply a signed Pregnancy Form and Physician Visit Checklist to be allowed to continue in the program. The student will be expected to fulfill all assignments as required of all other students. The pregnant student must follow the established program policies and meet the same clinical and educational criteria as all other students before graduation.

If the student chooses to continue in the program they are assuming responsibility for certain medical risks. Some of these risks and areas of concern include, but are not limited to:

1. Exposure to anesthetic gases and compressed gases.
2. Exposure to surgical smoke plume including toxic chemicals and by-products such as hydrogen cyanide, toluene, perchloroethylene, benzene, formaldehyde, and ethylbenzene.
3. Exposure to infectious waste and bloodborne pathogens.
4. Exposure to teratogens including cytotoxic compounds, chemical agents, sterilizing agents, cleaning agents, preserving agents, and fixing agents.
5. Exposure to hormones (e.g., prostaglandins and progesterones).
6. Exposure to ionizing radiation and other sources of radioactive materials.

7. Exposure to diseases including, but not limited to HIV, Hepatitis B and C, influenza, COVID-19, tuberculosis, MRSA, measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, varicella.
8. Injury including, but not limited to sharps injuries, electrical hazard, exposure from equipment, and musculoskeletal injuries.
9. Necessity to frequently lift/carry up to 75 pounds, as well as twist, bend, squat and kneel.
10. Necessity to stand and walk for long periods of time of up to 8 hours.

If the student remains in the Surgical Technology Program during pregnancy, they accept full responsibility for their actions and relieve Gwinnett Technical College, its faculty, and surgical clinical sites of any responsibilities in case of adverse effects.

BACKGROUND CHECKS & DRUG SCREENING

All students will be required to undergo a criminal background and drug test from Advantage Students. This process is mandatory and must be completed in order for the student to attend clinical. Students with a positive drug screen will be prohibited from attending hospital clinical sites. The student cannot complete the program without attending clinical rotations.

Because of hospital regulations, a student may not be placed in clinicals if they have any of the following on their criminal background check:

- Two or more misdemeanors in the same category (i.e. two DUIs, two thefts, etc.)
- One or more felonies of any kind
- Any misdemeanor or felony involving moral turpitude (i.e. assault, battery, armed robbery, child molestation, drug manufacture/distribution, family violence, manslaughter, kidnapping, murder, rape, prostitution, etc.)

If a student has one misdemeanor, or two misdemeanors in different categories, they may be placed in clinicals. However, the student should be aware of the difficulty in obtaining employment in the healthcare field after graduation with a criminal background of any kind.

It is not acceptable for a student to discuss background checks or drug screening directly with the clinical site. Any questions or comments regarding this process or regulations must be directed only to GTC program faculty.

STUDENT CONDUCT

The conduct of the Surgical Technology student reflects upon the individual, the clinical site, Gwinnett Technical College and the surgical profession. Therefore, the surgical technology student must conduct himself/herself in a professional, mature manner at all times. Surgical technology students will adhere to all policies in the program handbook and any additional Gwinnett Tech policies. Failure to comply with policies will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the program. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all clinical requirements, college requirements, and the requirements for completion as stated in the syllabus.

The Surgical Technology program reserves the right to refuse admission and/or program continuation to any student who is involved in any activity considered unprofessional or not conducive to proper patient care.

Misconduct is defined as: deliberate violation of a standard or improper behavior (Webster's); and is characterized by the following behaviors during clinical time:

- Non-alert condition.
- Possession of drugs or alcohol.
- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Sleeping at the clinical site.
- Theft from the clinical site.
- Immoral or unethical conduct as deemed by program faculty or clinical site.
- Smoking or vaping in prohibited areas.
- Unapproved extended breaks or lunch times.
- Eating or drinking in prohibited areas.
- Refusing to do assigned tasks within the realm of capabilities.
- Forgery/falsifying any record of attendance or evaluation tool.
- Leaving the assigned clinical site without permission from the supervisor and GTC faculty. This includes leaving the specifically assigned OR or Central Processing department, even if the student remains on the hospital premises but is not in their assigned area participating in assigned tasks.
- Contacting any clinical site personnel regarding preceptor or supervisor evaluations, or criminal background or drug screen results.
- Taking photographs or video recordings in the operating room or restricted hospital areas as prohibited by hospital policy.
- Making comments regarding the school or clinical site on social media.
- Violation of any HIPAA regulation including: recording or disclosing any patient information including personal information, pictures, videos, health information. This is to include taking pictures in the operating room by which any patient may be identified including taking pictures of the surgery schedule.
- Functioning independently in any role as prohibited by law or hospital policy.

CLINICAL DISMISSAL

Any student suspected of being impaired due to alcohol or drugs will be subject to an alcohol or drug test (at the student's expense) and face immediate program dismissal. Please refer to the college's drug and alcohol policy in the GTC college catalog.

If a student is believed to have committed an instance of misconduct listed above, the instructor will investigate with the clinical site and hold a conference with the student. If a student is found to have committed any of the above stated instances of misconduct, they will be removed from the clinical site either by GTC faculty or by request of hospital management.

A student will also be removed from a clinical site by GTC faculty or by request of hospital management due to safety issues, patient endangerment, employability skills, or unprofessional misconduct (as referenced in the Professionalism and Student Conduct sections). In addition, a student may be dismissed from clinicals for failure to progress in skill acquisition after having been advised and remediated.

If a student is removed from the clinical site by request of hospital management and/or GTC faculty, due to safety issues, patient endangerment, employability skills, unprofessional misconduct, or failure to progress in skill acquisition as referenced above, the student will earn the grade of "F" for all clinical practicum courses, SURG 2110/2120/2130/2140. This results in dismissal from the program, including any other SURG courses which are co-requisites. A student dismissed by a

clinical site for these reasons will not be eligible to return to the SURG program in any subsequent semester.

If a student is dismissed by request of hospital management due to any other reason not stated above, the instructor will review the dismissal on a case by case basis with other program faculty.

SURGICAL CASE REQUIREMENTS

The Surgical Technology program is required to verify through the surgical rotation documentation the students' progression in First and Second Scrub surgical procedures of increased complexity as he/she moves toward entry-level graduate competency. These are requirements of our programmatic accrediting body, the Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (ARC/STSA), as outlined in the 7th Core Curriculum. Students must complete a minimum of 120 cases as delineated below.

ROLES DEFINED

First Scrub Role: To document a case in the first scrub role, the student shall perform the following duties during any given surgical procedure with proficiency:

- Verify supplies and equipment needed for the surgical procedure.
- Set up the sterile field with instruments, supplies, equipment, medication(s) and solutions needed for the procedure.
- Perform required operative counts with the circulator prior to the procedure and before the incision is closed, according to AST guidelines and facility policy.
- Pass instruments and supplies to the sterile surgical team members during the procedure, including anticipation of surgical team needs.
- Maintain sterile technique as measured by recognized breaks in sterility, correction of sterility breaks, and documentation as needed.

Second Scrub Role: The second scrub role is defined as the student who has not met all criteria for the first scrub role, but actively participates in the surgical procedure in its entirety by completing any of the following:

- Assistance with diagnostic endoscopy
- Assistance with vaginal delivery
- Cutting suture
- Providing camera assistance
- Retracting
- Sponging
- Suctioning

Observation Role: The observation role is defined as a student who has not met the first scrub or second scrub criteria. The student is observing a case in either the sterile or nonsterile role. Observation cases cannot be applied to the required 120 case count but must be documented.

CASE REQUIREMENTS

- I. A student must complete a minimum of 120 cases as delineated below:
 - A. General Surgery
 1. A student must complete a minimum of 30 cases in General Surgery

- a. 20 of these cases must be performed in the First Scrub Role.
 - b. The remaining 10 cases may be performed in either the First or Second Scrub Role.
- B. Specialty Surgery
- 1. A student must complete a minimum of 90 cases in various surgical specialties, excluding General Surgery.
 - a. A minimum of 60 cases must be performed in the First Scrub Role and distributed amongst a minimum of four surgical specialties.
 - i. A minimum of 10 cases in four different specialties must be completed in the First Scrub Role (40 cases total).
 - ii. The additional 20 cases in the First Scrub Role may be distributed amongst any one surgical specialty or multiple surgical specialties.
 - b. The remaining 30 cases may be performed in any surgical specialty in either the First Scrub or Second Scrub Role.
 - 2. Surgical Specialties (excluding General Surgery)
 - a. Cardiothoracic
 - b. Genitourinary
 - c. Neurologic
 - d. Obstetric and gynecologic
 - e. Orthopedic
 - f. Otorhinolaryngologic
 - g. Ophthalmologic
 - h. Oral Maxillofacial
 - i. Peripheral vascular
 - j. Plastics and reconstructive
 - k. Procurement and transplant

COUNTING CASES

- I. Cases may be counted according to surgical specialty as defined in the core curriculum.
 - a. One pathology is counted as one procedure.
 - i. Example – A patient requires a breast biopsy followed by mastectomy. It is one pathology, breast cancer, and the specialty is general surgery; therefore, it is counted and documented as one procedure and one case.
 - b. Counting more than one case on the same patient:
 - i. Example – A trauma patient requires a splenectomy and repair of a LeFort fracture. Two cases can be counted and documented since the procedures are in different surgical specialties.
 - ii. Example – A procedure that requires different setups and includes different specialties may be counted as separate cases. A mastectomy procedure (general surgery) following with immediate reconstruction or augmentation (plastics and reconstruction) are counted as separate cases.
 - c. Diagnostic vs. operative endoscopy cases
 - i. An endoscopy classified as a semi-critical procedure is considered a diagnostic case.
 - ii. An endoscopy classified as a critical procedure is considered an operative case.
 - iii. Diagnostic and operative cases will be counted according to specialty
 - iv. Diagnostic cases are counted in the Second Scrub Role up to a total of 10 of the required 120 cases.
 - 1. Example – A cystoscopy is a diagnostic procedure. If an adjunct procedure is

performed, it is considered operative; therefore, a cystoscopy with ureteral stent placement is an operative procedure.

- II. Vaginal delivery cases are counted in the Second Scrub Role of the OB/GYN specialty, up to a total of 5 of the required 120.

Surgical Specialty	Total # of cases required	Minimum # of First Scrub cases required	Maximum # of Second Scrub cases allowed
General Surgery	30	20	10
Surgical Specialties - Cardiothoracic, ENT, Eye, GU, Neuro, OB/GYN, Oral, Maxillofacial, Orthopedics, Peripheral Vascular, Plastics	90	60	30
Optional: Diagnostic Endoscopy - Bronchoscopy, Colonoscopy, Cystoscopy, EGD, ERCP, Esophagoscopy, Laryngoscopy, Panendoscopy, Ureteroscopy			10 diagnostic endoscopy cases may be applied toward the Second Scrub cases
Optional: Labor & Delivery			5 vaginal delivery cases may be applied toward the Second Scrub cases
Totals	120	80	40

CASE DOCUMENTATION

Students’ clinical participation is required to be documented and stored in a secure location. Students are required to log all cases into a database that is accessed through an individualized weblink provided to them at the start of the semester. A link to a spreadsheet showing all of the student’s entries will also be provided. Each case scrubbed or observed must be documented DAILY on the form provided by the department. The information must be complete and accurate, and a preceptor electronic signature is required for each case logged by a student.

Any falsification of information on the clinical case log will be subject to Gwinnett Technical College’s Academic Integrity policy (GT 5.1.20). The online clinical case log is a legal document, and by electronic signature, the student and preceptor attest to the accuracy of the information.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

The Surgical Technology program recognizes an electronic signature as a valid signature from students and clinical site staff for purposes of clinical case documentation and clinical evaluation, subject to the conditions listed below. An electronic signature is defined as any electronic process signifying the integrity of the document, presented in electronic format.

Each student’s case log and forms are stored in a secure cloud-based location, which are only accessible by program faculty and the individual student. Authorized users must sign in with individual log-in credentials to access the secure location and forms. It is the responsibility and

obligation of all parties to keep log-in credentials secure and confidential. Once logged in, any information uploaded, updated, or removed is subject to the College's Academic Integrity policy (GT 5.1.20). Users are responsible for logging out of all systems and exercising the necessary precautions when using publicly accessible computers.

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This completed signature sheet is due on the first day of class

INITIAL each of the following statements:

_____ I have read each of the following documents in their entirety. I understand the included policies and hereby agree to abide by them.

- Surgical Technology Program student handbook
- SURG 1010 syllabus
- SURG 1020 syllabus
- First Semester Checkoff Rubrics

_____ I understand that I must personally complete all required critical competencies set forth by the program and accreditation, and that accommodations cannot be made which would waive the accomplishment of each required competency.

_____ I understand that failure to reach any critical competency by the assigned due date will result in a grade of F for the course, regardless of my other grades. Failure of the course will result in my dismissal from the program. I further understand that such dismissal may negatively impact my GPA and financial aid.

_____ I understand that through the course of training in the laboratory and hospital clinical settings, I will be exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials as well as hazardous materials.

_____ I understand that my student records will be shared with the clinical training sites and any all instructors as necessary.

_____ I permit the Surgical Technology program at Gwinnett Technical College to use my likeness in photographs or videos for promotional materials for the program.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____