

WESTERN DAKOTA

TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Preparedness & Continuity of Education Plan Surgical Technology Program

This plan ensures ongoing compliance with the ARC/STSA and CAAHEP Standards & Guidelines during institutional disruptions such as severe weather, pandemics (e.g., COVID-19), natural disasters, or other emergencies that require partial or full campus closure. The plan establishes procedures to maintain didactic, laboratory, and clinical learning continuity while upholding essential competencies and minimum surgical case requirements.

1. Communication & Chain of Command

1.1 Notification Procedure

Upon institutional confirmation of the closure, Program Faculty will:

- Notify students through LMS announcement, email, and phone call if needed.
- Faculty receive directives from the Vice President for Teaching and Learning.

1.2 Ongoing Updates

Daily and Weekly updates include:

- Revised academic schedules
- Adjusted lab and clinical plans from Program Director.
- Status of clinical affiliates plans from Program Director
- Updates to ARC/STSA guidance (if applicable during prolonged disruption) will be verified by the Program Director

2. Didactic Instruction Continuity

2.1 Transition to Remote Learning

Didactic courses will shift to LMS-supported remote instruction within 48 hours. Faculty will provide:

- Synchronous sessions via Teams or LMS
- Recorded lectures for asynchronous access through LMS
- Online quizzes and assessments using secure LMS tools
- PowerPoint lectures, reading assignments, and discussion boards

2.2 Learning Outcomes

Instruction continues to align with the Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology (AST) and meets Standard II.B (Curriculum) by maintaining:

- Cognitive knowledge progression
- Assessment of critical thinking
- Outcomes-based measurement

3. Laboratory (Lab) and Skills Competency Continuity

3.1 Alternative Laboratory Instruction

When campus laboratories are unavailable, the following methods will be implemented:

A. Virtual Simulation

- Surgical procedure simulations through online videos
- Instrument identification programs through LMS and eBooks available to all students
- Sterile technique modules through online LMS and eBook videos available to all students

B. Home-Based Practice (When Appropriate)

- Loaned or issued practice kits
- Guided instructional videos by Program Director
- Recorded skill demonstrations by Program Director

C. Hybrid Instruction

- Scheduled small group labs, when possible, to allow distance required teaching by Program Director

Western Dakota Technical College prepares students to be highly-skilled professionals through accessible, career-focused programs to improve their lives, while adapting to community workforce needs and positively impacting our economy.

- Extended lab hours upon reopening to accommodate any remediation needed

3.2 Competency Evaluation

Laboratory competencies may be assessed through:

- Video submissions through LMS
- Virtual demonstrations through LMS
- Online practical examinations through LMS
- Deferred in-person validations when necessary

3.3 Equipment Management

- Equipment checkout procedures
- Documentation of issued materials
- Cleaning and return protocols

3.2 Online Substitution of Competency Checkoffs

ARC/STSA Standards require direct observation for essential competency verification. Therefore:

- All in-person skills checkoffs (e.g., gowning/gloving, draping, back table setup, passing techniques) will be postponed and completed on campus when operations resume.

4. Clinical Education Continuity

4.1 Clinical Affiliate Communication

The Program Director will:

- Maintain updated affiliate contact lists
- Communicate program status
- Negotiate schedule modifications
- Secure alternative clinical placements if needed

The Program Director will maintain communication with all clinical partners regarding: Student attendance permissions

- PPE and safety requirements
- Hospital policy changes
- Suspension or continuation of clinical rotations

4.2 Clinical Site Closure or Restrictions

If clinical attendance is paused:

- Students must immediately discontinue clinical participation according to the site policy.
- Students receive structured alternative learning such as:
 - Procedure analysis assignments
 - Case scenario evaluations
 - Surgical videos with guided case study reports
 - Instrument and equipment identification modules

These assignments support cognitive development but do not count toward the required ARC/STSA case minimums.

4.3 Achieving ARC/STSA Minimum Case Requirements

When clinical sites reopen:

- Students will resume clinical rotations under normal preceptor supervision.
- The program will arrange extended clinical hours, additional shifts, or semester adjustments to ensure all students meet the 120 required cases, following ARC/STSA categories and ratios.
- The Program Director will submit any calendar adjustments to institutional leadership and accrediting agencies as needed.

4.4 Supervision & Documentation

Clinical preceptors will resume supervising students according to CAAHEP/ARC/STSA Standards. Students will continue logging cases using the approved case tracking system; faculty will continue validation and monitoring.

5. Technology & Resource Support

To ensure equitable access:

- Loaner laptops/tablets will be made available when possible.
- The IT help desk will provide virtual assistance during closures.

6. Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty will:

- Maintain weekly office hours via virtual platforms
- Deliver all scheduled instructional materials through LMS and provide feedback within regular timelines
- Document any deviations to deliver in the Continuity of Education Report for accreditation records
- Maintain alignment with the Core Curriculum learning objectives

7. Student Responsibilities

Students must:

- Check email and LMS daily during an interruption
- Attend all scheduled virtual sessions
- Complete all remote assignments
- Report technology issues immediately
- Adhere to revised lab/clinical schedules after reopening
- Maintain professionalism and communication standards as outlined in program policy

8. Documentation & Accreditation Compliance

The program will maintain a Continuity of Operations File including:

- Dates and causes of disruptions
- Instructional modifications
- Alternative assignments provided
- Clinical site communications
- Case log monitoring
- Revised academic or clinical calendars

This documentation will be available for ARC/STSA review during accreditation visits or reporting cycles.

9. Restoration of Normal Operations

When campus and clinical sites resume normal operations:

- Didactic courses return to on-site or scheduled hybrid format
- All postponed skills assessments are completed in-person
- Students resume clinical rotations with updated schedules
- Case logs are reviewed for compliance with minimum requirements
- Any extended schedules or semester adjustments are implemented