



**Surgical Technology
Program**
Student Handbook
2025-2026

Approved by Cabinet May 2025

This document is intended to provide students with policies and procedures that apply specifically to the Surgical Technology program. Please read this thoroughly and ask your advisor for clarification of any policies that are unclear before you sign.

An acknowledgement form appears at the end of this document that states you agree to the policies while you are enrolled as a student in the Surgical Technology program. The form must be signed and turned in to your advisor at the start of your first semester.

The Surgical Technology program reserves the right to make changes to policies and procedures. Students will receive in writing any revisions as they occur. The policies and procedures in this document are in *addition* to the policies and procedures in the Western Dakota Technical College Student Handbook.

Faculty for the Surgical Technology Program

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Goal of the Surgical Technology Program

The goal of the Surgical Technology Program is to prepare competent, entry-level surgical technologists in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains.

Intended Program Outcomes

Refer to the Program Learning Outcomes on www.wdt.edu under the Degree Programs link.

Essential Functions

The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines an essential function as the basic job duties that an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Essential functions refer to those physical, behavioral, and emotional demands and abilities that are necessary for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum and for the development of professional attributes required of students upon completion of the program.

The program has established the following list of minimum essential requirements according to industry standards and current position listings that must be met, with or without reasonable accommodations, in order to participate in the program and graduate.

Essential Functions:

Gross Motor Skills:

- Move within confined spaces
- Maintain balance in multiple positions
- Reach above shoulders (e.g., adjust overhead lights)
- Reach below waist (e.g., plug electrical appliance into wall outlet)
- Reach out in front

Fine Motor Skills:

- Pick up objects with hands
- Grasp small objects with hands firm and slight pressure (e.g., surgical instruments, sutures)
- Write with pen or pencil
- Key/type at a computer
- Pinch/pick or otherwise work with fingers (e.g., manipulate a syringe)
- Twist (e.g., turn objects/knobs using hands)
- Squeeze with hands and fingers (e.g., operate fire extinguishers, eye dropper)
- Simultaneous use of hands, wrists, fingers Appropriate manual dexterity for assembly of instrumentation and equipment

Physical Endurance:

- Stand for long periods of time
- Sustain repetitive motions with hands, fingers, wrists, arms
- Function in a fast-paced work environment for hours
- Maintain static position (holding instrumentation, manipulation of a patient's limb)

Physical Strength:

- Push and pull up to 50 pounds (e.g., carry instrument pans, position client, move equipment)
- Support up to 50 pounds of weight (e.g., hold arm or leg)
- Lift up to 50 pounds (e.g., pick up a child, transfer client, bend to lift an infant or child)
- Use upper body strength (e.g., retraction, physically restrain a client)

Mobility:

- Stand
- Walk
- Twist, turn
- Bend, stoop, squat

- Sit
- Climb stairs
- Move quickly

Hearing:

- Ability to hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g., person to person conversation, request for an instrument)
- Hear subdued conversation
- Filter speech over room noise (such as equipment, suction, conversation, music)
- Hear alarm sounds (equipment alarms)
- Hear in situations when not able to see lips (e.g., masks are worn in the operating room)

Visual:

- See objects up to 20 inches away (e.g., information on monitor screen, identification of small needles)
- See objects up to 20 feet away
- Use depth perception
- Use peripheral vision
- Distinguish color and intensity
- See in darkened room (e.g., during endoscope procedures, eye surgery)

Smell:

- Detect odors

Environment:

- Tolerate exposure to allergens (e.g., latex gloves, chemical substances)
- Work indoors
- Work around large equipment
- Exposure to dust, fumes, smoke, gases, odors, mists, irritating particles
- Work in sterile preparation areas with gloves, gown, and mask
- Work in unsterile preparation areas with apron, gown, and face shield
- Exposure to blood and bodily fluids
- Exposure to toxic or caustic chemicals
- Exposure to solvents
- Work in confined spaces
- Work alone
- Work with others

Reading:

- Read and understand written documents
- Read digital displays

Math:

- Ability to count, add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers
- Compute fractions and decimals

- Document numbers in records
- Tell and measure time
Read measurement marks (e.g., rulers, scale)

Emotional Stability:

- Adapt to changing environment/stress
- Deal with the unexpected (e.g., client condition, crisis)
- Focus attention on task
- Cope with own emotions
- Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently
- Cope with emotions in others (e.g., grief, anger, stress)
- Accept constructive feedback
- Ability to accept and carry out responsibility

Analytical Thinking:

- Transfer knowledge from one situation to another
- Process and interpret information from multiple sources (written or oral)
- Analyze and interpret abstract and concrete data
- Evaluate outcomes
- Problem solve
- Prioritize tasks (e.g., time management)
- Use long-term memory
- Use short-term memory

Critical Thinking:

- Comprehend and follow instructions
- Perform simple and repetitive tasks
- Maintain a work pace appropriate to a given workload
- Relate to other people beyond giving and receiving instructions
- Influence people
- Perform complex or varied tasks
- Make generalizations, evaluations, or decisions without immediate supervision
- Deal with problems from standard situations
- Carry out detailed but uninvolved written or oral instructions
- Carry out one- or two-step instructions
- Synthesize knowledge and skills
- Sequence information

Interpersonal Skills:

- Establish professional relationships
- Establish rapport with individuals
- Demonstrate tolerance in working with others
- Work as a team member

This list is not all-inclusive.

ADA/504 Accommodations

WDTA does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Students with disabilities who are seeking accommodations are strongly encouraged to work with the Disability Services Office prior to the start of the semester as accommodations are not retroactive and the process to become Registered can be lengthy. With that said, students can Register at any time during the semester. Disclosure by the student to a faculty or staff member does not qualify as self-identification to begin this process. Students with disabilities are not required to Register with the Disability Services Office if they are not seeking accommodations.

For more information regarding ADA/504 Accommodations, refer to [Policy 4415](#) and the [Disability Services page](#) housed on the [Student Hub](#) in [My.WDTA](#).

Discrimination and Harassment

All employees, non-employees, and students have a responsibility to maintain a positive learning, work and school activity environment by reporting all incidents or suspected incidents of discrimination and/or harassment involving themselves or others.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

WDTA will not tolerate racism, discrimination, harassment, exploitation or victimization of students, school employees, non-employees, or any person who is an invitee of WDTA for any reason, including but not limited to race, color, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, marital status, religion, creed, age, sex, citizenship, political affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a veteran, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state or local law. WDTA is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of discrimination for students, employees, non-employees and its invitees. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries or complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies: VP for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success who serves as the Title IX Coordinator.

Pregnancy Modifications

WDTA does not discriminate in its education programs or activities against any student based on the student's current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions. Students seeking modifications for pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions need to contact the Title IX Office at TitleIX@wdt.edu.

For more information regarding modifications for pregnancy and pregnancy related conditions, refer to [Policy 4420](#).

Title IX at Western Dakota Technical College:

Title IX of the U.S. Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and

activities. Western Dakota Technical College (WDTC) does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities that it operates including admissions and employment.

Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of sex can also include sexual harassment which is defined as conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee of the College conditioning the provision of education benefits on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo); or
2. Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the institution's education program or activity; or
3. Sexual assault (as defined in the Clery Act), dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the WDTC Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the WDTC Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number, electronic mail address, or by mail to the office address listed for the WDTC Title IX Coordinator. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and/or laws: Kelly Oehlerking, Title IX Coordinator; 800 Mickelson Drive, Office D206, Rapid City, SD, 57703; 605-718-2931; Kelly.Oehlerking@wdt.edu .

WDTC Policies 9090/4430, 9090/4430.Procedure.001, and 9090/4430.Procedure. 002 provide information on WDTC's grievance procedures and grievance processes, including how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to report or file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how WDTC will respond.

Policy <https://www.wdt.edu/assets/docs/uploads/policy/4430.pdf>

Procedure.01 <https://www.wdt.edu/assets/docs/uploads/policy/4430procedure01.pdf>

Procedure.02 <https://www.wdt.edu/assets/docs/uploads/policy/4430procedure02.pdf>

Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the WDTC Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary, or to both. The Assistant Secretary contact information is U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202, Main Telephone: 202-453-6914.

Surgical Technology Program Student Policies and Procedures

The Surgical Technology program has established the following policies and procedures in addition to the policies in the Western Dakota Technical College Student Handbook.

A. Student Advising

Students will meet with their assigned academic advisor at mid-semester and as needed throughout the course of the program. The advisor will have posted office hours for each semester and will assist in the following areas:

- a. Registration, scheduling, and general record keeping
- b. Referrals to student resources (counseling, financial aid, disability services, learning resources, tutoring, Student Success Coaches, placement, and career services)
- c. Student questions or concerns
- d. Degree requirement and graduation procedures

B. Background Check and Drug Testing

Background check and drug testing will be based on Clinical site preferences. If you are placed in a Clinical site that requires these, the Clinical site will notify you and guide you through their process. In other instances, the Clinical site may require that a background check and/or drug screen is performed through the school prior to the start of the clinical rotation. If this is requested, the Program Director will notify you and guide you through the process. In either instance, costs associated may be incurred by the student.

Note: If you are or have been convicted, pleaded guilty or no contest to, or received a suspended imposition of sentence for a felony or certain misdemeanors, you are advised that you may not be able to complete all course requirements for your chosen program, you may be prevented from taking required certification/licensure examinations in your chosen program field, and you may be prevented from gaining employment in your program field

C. Load/Study Time

A large amount of course material is covered in a short period of time. Readings and assignments must be completed, and you will need to make arrangements for study time outside of class time. The amount of study time needed will vary for each individual.

D. Grade Progression

A minimum grade of C (79% or higher) must be earned in all technical courses to progress to future surgical technology courses and be eligible for graduation from the program.

E. Transportation

Clinical and lab practice experiences will require you to travel within Rapid City and possibly outside the Rapid City area. **Clinical experiences may be scheduled out of state.** Clinical hours are scheduled according to the preceptor's needs and may include days, nights, weekends, and some holidays. Transportation and lodging are the responsibility of each student. The student must allow sufficient time for commuting and must have reliable transportation.

F. Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is required for all classroom and clinical experiences and is a significant factor that promotes success in coursework. Students must adhere to the attendance policies stated in each course syllabus.

Students must notify the instructor as early as possible prior to any known absences from class or clinical (weddings, funerals). They must also notify the clinical site. In the event of an unexpected absence (illness, transportation issues, weather conditions), the instructor should receive notification before the starting time of class or clinical, as should the clinical site. Make-up work may be allowed at the discretion of the instructor. Make-up clinical time may be allowed at the discretion of the clinical preceptor. Promptness is expected. Students should arrive on time and be prepared for class and clinical.

G. Uniforms and Appearance

Students will be required to wear scrubs during all labs. Students must wear their name tag when at clinical or observations (according to South Dakota law) and when requested by an instructor.

Students are required to purchase a set of scrubs within the first 14 days of the fall semester. Students are required to wear scrubs every scheduled lab class throughout the entirety of your program.

Workplace requirements are adopted by the surgical technology program for lab and didactic where appropriate. Workplace requirements for clinical will follow facility policies.

- Proper personal hygiene—personal cleanliness, use of deodorant, and good oral hygiene
- Hair should be clean and completely covered by surgical cap.
- Fingernails should be kept clean.
 - Cut short to not extend beyond the fingertips.
 - Artificial nails should not be worn.
 - No polish of any kind should be worn.
- Perfumes and colognes should be subtle and not overwhelming.
- Jewelry should be removed from fingers and wrists to allow proper scrub technique.
- Small stud earrings that do not dangle may be worn during lab.

- Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes only.
- Clinical students must follow facility policies for uniforms and appearance.

H. Student Conduct

Students are expected to follow the conduct policies in the WDTC Student Handbook. Please see the WDTC Student Handbook Code of Conduct for details.

Students are expected to adhere to the Association of Surgical Technology (AST) Code of Ethics.

- To maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and patient care.
- To hold in confidence, with respect to the patient's beliefs, all personal matters.
- To respect and protect the patient's legal and moral rights to quality patient care
- To not knowingly cause injury or any injustice to those entrusted to our care.
- To work with fellow technologists and other professional health groups to promote harmony and unity for better patient care.
- To always follow the principles of asepsis.
- To maintain a high degree of efficiency through continuing education.
- To maintain and practice surgical technology willingly, with pride and dignity.
- To report any unethical conduct or practice to the proper authority.
- Adhere to this Code of Ethics at all times in relationship to all members of the healthcare team.

Clinical affiliate policies for appropriate behavior must be followed when in clinical facilities. Lab policies for appropriate behavior must be followed according to the course syllabus. Professional conduct is expected at all times. Good judgment must be used in the choice of words. Profane language may not be used, and tactfulness is expected. Tobacco use and vaping is not permitted while in the clinical facilities or on campus.

Confidentiality regarding any patient information is expected, and students must agree to and sign confidentiality policies of their clinical affiliates. Students will be provided patient confidentiality and HIPAA training prior to any clinical practice. Students are not to have a social relationship with patients and/or clinical preceptors as this is a conflict of interest. Honesty in all communication is expected.

I. Discipline Policy

Please refer to the WDTC Student Handbook.

J. Service Work and Compensation

Students completing their clinical requirements must be under the supervision of a preceptor and cannot be substituted for an employee. Clinical experiences must be of an educational nature.

K. Certification Exam Eligibility

The Surgical Technology program requires that all graduates take the national certification exam provided by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA). During the clinical semester, students will be provided with application information necessary for this exam. The exam will be proctored on campus to the entire graduating cohort within one week of the graduation date.

Required Steps to Obtain Your Credential

	<p>1. Complete the application for the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) Exam with the National Board for Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA)</p> <p><i>NOTE: Application provided to the student by the Program Director in last semester</i></p>
	<p>2. Successfully complete all ST courses</p>
	<p>3. Sit for the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) Exam which is proctored on the WDTC campus within one week of graduation</p>
	<p>4. CST exam results are documented by the National Board for Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) and a copy is sent to the applicant</p>
	<p>5. There are no further requirements needed to work in the state of South Dakota</p> <p><i>NOTE: If you plan to work outside of South Dakota, you will be required to apply for registration and/or licensure within that state. Each state may have different requirements for this process.</i></p>



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I have received from my advisor a copy of the Surgical Technology Program Student Handbook. By signing below, I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the program.

Printed Student Name

Student Signature

Date

*Please turn in the signed form to the Surgical Technology Program Director