About the job

In the operating room, everyone knows who performs surgery, but few people stop to think about those who work behind the scenes to make sure the procedure goes smoothly. The scrub or surgical technologist works under the supervision of surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nurses to assist in operations. This important member of the operating room team prepares the O.R. by setting up all drapes and solutions, making sure the equipment is working and ready to go, getting the patient ready for the procedure by washing, shaving, and disinfecting the site, transporting the patient to the operating room and positioning him or her on the table with sterile drapes. During the procedure, the surgical technologist will pass instruments and other supplies to surgeons and surgeon’s assistants, count sponges, needles, supplies, and instruments, and observe the patient’s vital signs. Other responsibilities are helping the surgical team into sterile gowns and gloves, transferring the patient to recovery, and preparing the O.R. for the next procedure. This role is a vital one, especially with the emphasis today on infection control.

Job Outlook

Employment for surgical technologists is expected to increase 19% between 2010 and 2020.

Part of this growth is due to advancements in medical technology that make surgery safer and a greater number of procedures being performed as a result. The population is aging, too, and older people often require more surgical procedures including heart-related operations and joint replacements.

While hospitals continue to be the major employer for these medical professionals, opportunities are expanding in other areas such as outpatient surgery centers and large veterinary practices.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual wage of surgical technologists was $44,420 in May 2013. There are many variables, however, including experience, responsibilities, the general economy, and geographical location.

Program Options

• Surgical Technology Diploma
• Sterile Processing Technology Certificate
About Greenville Tech’s Program

Graduates of GTC’s program will take the exam to earn the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) designation. Graduates of the Sterile Processing Technology program may take the exam to earn the Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST) designation. Surgical Technology is a diploma program requiring 51 credit hours, and Sterile Processing is a certificate program requiring 13 hours.

All classes are taught at the Barton Campus during the day, but clinical requirements are off-site, and students will be responsible for their own transportation. In addition to classroom lecture, the program has a state-of-the-art “lab” that is a very realistic simulated operating room.

How do I get started?

Anyone considering a health care program at Greenville Technical College is required to attend Career Talk, a monthly event to help potential students make the right career choice. To begin Fall Semester classes, the deadline to submit the program application is May 15, and attending Career Talk is required. For additional information, visit the program’s web site at http://www.gvltec.edu/surgtech/ or contact the department head, Joyce Moyer, at Joyce.Moyer@gvltec.edu.

Professional Organizations

Association of Surgical Technologists
www.ast.org

International Association of Healthcare Central Service Material Management
IAHCSMM.org

National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA)
nbstsa.org

Visit www.gvltec.edu/gainful-employment for important information about the educational debt, earnings, and graduation rates of students who attended this program.