2025 - 2026 Sterile Processing Technician Student Handbook Supplement

Effective September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2026

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Welcome to the Sterile Processing Technician Student Handbook Supplement!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Berkeley College. We are glad that you have chosen us to assist you in attaining your educational goals. Everyone at the College wishes you an enjoyable and productive academic year.

This Sterile Processing Technician Student Handbook Supplement is intended to clarify policies and procedures specific to the Sterile Processing Technician program. These policies supersede any conflicting statements made by faculty, administrators, the general Berkeley College Student Handbook, and the Undergraduate Catalog. This Sterile Processing Technician Student Handbook Supplement is updated regularly. You are urged to provide us with recommendations and suggestions for future revisions by communicating your ideas to Student Development and Campus Life.

The faculty of the School of Health Studies is committed to guiding and assisting you in your academic career. You, in turn, have a responsibility to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of the College.

Once again, welcome from the entire Berkeley College community. We look forward to assisting you in reaching your goals!

Overview

The policies and procedures outlined in this Student Handbook Supplement are specific to the Sterile Processing Technician program. These program-specific policies and procedures supersede any conflicting statements made by faculty, administrators, the general Berkeley College Student Handbook, and the Undergraduate Catalog. Students should refer to the Undergraduate Catalog and the general Berkeley College Student Handbook for all other Berkeley College policies.

Sterile Processing Technician Program Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Sterile Processing Technician program is to prepare competent entry-level sterile processing technicians with the knowledge and skills required to work in a central supply/sterile processing department of a healthcare facility.

- Reading and Written Communication: Students will demonstrate competency in reading and writing.
- Oral Communication: Students will demonstrate effective oral communication skills that incorporate emotional intelligence, empathy, and civility.
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning: Students will apply critical thinking and the knowledge gained in their degree program for better decision-making informed by:
    - Ethical Reasoning
    - Quantitative Reasoning
    - Scientific Reasoning
- Knowledge and Skills for Living in a Diverse Society: Students will respect multiple perspectives and cultural contexts when making decisions independently or as part of a team.
- Information Literacy: Students will be able to locate, evaluate, and ethically utilize reliable information, empowering them as informed and responsible citizens.
- Integration of Learning: Students will develop the ability to make connections between different academic studies and specialized professional skills leading to more informed, creative, and productive decisions in life and career.
- To provide students with a background in the basic sciences and a mastery of decontamination and sterilization processes.
- To educate students regarding the ethical, legal, and professional principles of the healthcare profession and the scope of their practice as a patient advocate.
- To prepare students for successful completion of the Certified Registered Central Service Technician Exam, administered by the Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA), formerly known as the International Association of Healthcare Central Service Materiel Management (IAHCSMM).
- To ensure students enter the workforce as qualified and technically skilled healthcare professionals in the ever-changing healthcare environment.
- To educate students to prepare and assemble instruments for distribution, and to process supplies and equipment from operating rooms and nursing units throughout the healthcare facility.
- to instruct students to employ HIPAA, OSHA, Standard Precautions, and other infection control measures in the healthcare setting.
- To prepare students to effectively interact with patients, families, and members of the healthcare team in a therapeutic and professional manner.
- To prepare graduates for success in career advancement.

Core Performance Standards

The Sterile Processing Technician program at Berkeley College prepares students to become sterile processing technicians in healthcare settings. Students are provided with the knowledge and skills needed to receive and process supplies and equipment from operating rooms and nursing units throughout the hospital. The role of the sterile processing technician is demanding. Indicated below are several examples of the scope of practice, roles, and competencies that sterile processing technicians may encounter.

The School of Health Studies is committed to providing reasonable accommodation(s) in its academic programs to qualified individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to learning disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is one that does not require a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program or lower academic and/or clinical standards.

Throughout the program, students must be able to perform in a reasonably independent and timely manner that does not affect the quality of care, the safety of patients or other individuals, and in a way that does not adversely affect the School of Health Studies, clinical affiliates, or any member of the healthcare team.

Students must be able to meet all of the performance standards outlined below, with or without reasonable accommodation(s), in order to be admitted to and progress in the program. Individuals requiring accommodations while enrolled in the program are encouraged to speak with a representative of the College's Office of Accessibility Services before enrolling in clinical and/or laboratory courses. These core performance standards are required skills in order to render safe care while in the clinical setting.

Some chronic or recurrent illnesses and problems could interfere with safety and may be incompatible with sterile processing technician education and practice, because they may lead to a higher chance of absences. Sterile processing technician students are not required to disclose any chronic or recurrent illness and/or disability/disabilities; however, students with concerns about meeting these technical standards are strongly encouraged to discuss the issues with the Department Chair and/or the Office of Accessibility Services. Deficiencies in knowledge, skills, judgments, integrity, and/or professional attitude may jeopardize patient safety and, as a result, may be grounds for course failure and possible dismissal from the Sterile Processing Technician program.

Students must have aptitude and abilities in six areas: sensory ability and skills; fine and gross motor skills; strength, mobility, and physical endurance; the ability to communicate, comprehend, read, and write in English; behavioral stability; and cognitive ability and critical thinking skills. Possessing proficient communicative, auditory, and visual skills are required.

It is the student's responsibility to understand the duties, responsibilities, skills, and abilities required to be a sterile processing technician. In addition to the technical standards described above, students are encouraged to review the information regarding medical equipment preparers at the O*NET website.

The following list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but instead offers examples of required activities. Students are encouraged to review the standards carefully; if there are any

questions and/or concerns, they should be discussed with the Chair of the Allied Health – Surgical Department and/or the Office of Accessibility Services.

Core Performance Standards

- Visual abilities, correctable to normal ranges, including close vision, distance vision, depth perception, and color perception sufficient to reliably distinguish color-coded instruments and supplies
- Stand and/or walk for extended periods of time
- Continuously bend, squat, and stoop to process instruments, supplies, and equipment
- Lift instrument sets weighing up to 20 pounds
- Demonstrate manual dexterity to process microsurgical instruments
- Push and/or pull carts weighing up to 100 pounds
- Withstand continuous, controlled exposure to contaminants including blood and body fluids
- Withstand continuous, controlled exposure to hazardous supplies such as cleaning and disinfecting solutions and sterilization agents
- Hear activation/warning signals on equipment
- Detect odors sufficient to maintain environmental safety and patient needs
- Ambulate/move around without assistive devices
- Communicate effectively, both verbally and nonverbally, with other medical staff
- Follow oral and written instructions and procedures
- Use independent judgment
- Maintain accurate records and prepare detailed reports
- Perform all laboratory and clinical skills within a pre-established timeframe that ensures safe patient care

Academic Policies

- Academic Progression and Grading Criteria
- Add/Drop Policy
- Attendance and Participation
- Class Hours
- Course Withdrawal
- Clinical Requirements
- Credit for Prior Learning
- Graduation Requirements
- Transfer Credit

Academic Progression and Grading Criteria

Passing Grade

The minimum passing grade required for all Sterile Processing Technician (SPT) courses, Anatomy and Physiology I, Anatomy and Physiology II, and Microbiology (degree students only) is a C+ (75 percent). Any grade below a C+ (75 percent) is a failing grade. A student failing either the didactic, clinical, or laboratory component of a SPT course will fail the entire course. Failure of an SPT course is defined as any grade below the minimum progression requirement of C+.

In addition, the minimum passing grade required for Medical Terminology is a C (70 percent). Any grade below a C (70 percent) is a failing grade.

Repeating Courses

Students enrolled in the Sterile Processing Technician program who receive a grade of C or below in any SPT course, Anatomy and Physiology I, Anatomy and Physiology II, or Microbiology (degree students only) must repeat the course(s) in order to progress in the program. The minimum passing grade required for a repeated course is a C+.

Students enrolled in the Sterile Processing Technician program who receive a failing grade as outlined above in Medical Terminology must repeat the course in order to progress in the program. A minimum grade of C on the repeated course is required to pass the course.

Students are reminded that they may only attempt to pass a single course two times, including one repeat. A student wishing to take a course for a third time, regardless of whether the repeated grade is passing or failing, must obtain written permission from the Dean of the School/Division in which the course is offered.
Note that failed courses may lead to repeat charge fees and may also delay graduation.

Program Dismissal Appeal

Students who are dismissed from the Sterile Processing Technician program for violating policies outlined in this Student Handbook Supplement will receive official notification from the College’s Allied Health - Surgical Department Chair. Any student dismissed from the program for reasons other than academic integrity violations may ask for a review of the circumstances leading to the dismissal and request the possibility of being readmitted into the program. This appeal should be sent to the Allied Health-Surgical Department Chair within six (6) months of the date of dismissal using the following mechanism:

- Student outlines a written appeal to the Chair of the program of study detailing reasons why the dismissal should be reversed. Such appeal should include relevant documentation, a detailed summary of the circumstances that have

changed that will lead to student's success, and any other appropriate supporting facts.

- The Chair will review the appeal and conduct an appropriate investigation with a committee comprised of representatives of the School of Health Studies.
- After reviewing all relevant documentation, the committee will deliberate, vote, and present their final decision to the Department Chair who will then share it with the School Dean. All decisions made by the Committee will be final and cannot be appealed. The Department Chair will notify the student and Academic Advisement of the committee’s decision in a letter sent via email.

Add/Drop Policy

Students interested in adding a course or courses to their schedule must meet with the Academic Advisement Department to obtain approval prior to the start of the second week of the term. Requests will be considered only if appropriate arrangements can be made to make up missed class time from the first week of the term. Clinical courses cannot be added to a student's schedule after the start of the term.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance, punctuality, and professionalism are key elements of any healthcare professional role. Unexcused absences or habitual tardiness, at lecture, laboratory, clinical/internship/practicum experiences, and other similar experiences, will not be tolerated and could result in dismissal from training and/or failure of the course.

Students are expected to participate in each of their courses through regular attendance at lecture, laboratory, clinical/internship/practicum training, and other similar experiences. Students are expected to meet the requirements of coursework as assigned, including completing assignments as scheduled. For courses in which some of the meetings are asynchronous, e.g., remote or blended learning, students are expected to participate in a similar manner.

While attendance itself is not used as a criterion for academic evaluations, grading is frequently based on participation in class discussion, laboratory work, performance, field experience, and/or other activities that may take place during class sessions. In addition, attendance is required for in-class assessments. If these areas for evaluation make class attendance essential, the student may be penalized for failure to perform satisfactorily in the required activities. Grading based on participation in class activities must be explained in the course syllabus.

In all circumstances, it remains the student's responsibility to promptly initiate discussion about absence and arrangements for making up any missed work with each instructor. Students are encouraged to work directly with their instructor for any needed flexibility, and with the Program Chair for supplemental support as needed. Absences from class are handled between students and instructors.

For clinical/internship/practicum training students should follow the program specific policy as delineated in the Student Handbook.

Class Absence(s)

Absences from class are handled between students and instructors (or in the case of the clinical training between students and the clinical instructor or clinical preceptor). The instructor may request documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence and consider said documentation at their discretion, while maintaining a student's right to privacy. Students are expected to provide requested documentation in a timely manner.

Advance Notification for Non-Emergency Planned Absence(s)

A student may need to schedule a planned absence from class. The student should discuss the planned absence(s) with the appropriate program representative and receive approval two weeks prior to the day(s) of absence. Table 1. Notification Policy for Non-Emergency Planned Absences, offers instructions on the appropriate program representative in the School of Health Studies students must inform regarding the

planned non-emergency absences. Upon advanced notification excused absences may be granted for situations specifically addressed below.

- For absence due to religious observance
- Participation or attendance at events sanctioned by the College and/or the School of Health Studies
- Academic pursuits
- Non-emergency medical reasons (e.g., elective surgeries or treatments)
- Planned absence due to Career Services activities
- For planned absence due to active military duty

Outside conflicts need to be avoided; for example, students must not schedule work hours or other obligations during synchronous class sessions, which could be in person or online, during clinical/internship/practicum training, and/or during the final assessment period. Students should not schedule leisure activities/vacations during the scheduled academic session course dates and the final assessment period. It is expected that every student will be present, on time, and prepared to participate when scheduled class sessions begin.

Table 1. Notification Policy for Non-Emergency Planned Intermittent Short Absences

	Course Type & Who to Notify		
Program	**Lecture**	**Laboratory**	**Clinical Training (including rotation, internship, practicum)**
Sterile Processing Technician	Instructor	Instructor	Clinical Coordinator, **and** clinical site monitor, **and** submit *Excused Absence Request Form* **and** receive approval prior to planned absence

Failure to provide advance notification will result in the absence(s) being considered unexcused. Advance notice is not expected in cases of sudden illness or other unforeseen conflicts. Refer to the section below for non-planned absences.

Excused Absence Criteria for Non-Planned Absences

In case of an emergency, sudden illness or other unforeseen conflicts, students may request for an absence to be marked as excused absence, by filling out the *Excused Absence Request Form*. Excused absences are granted for situations specifically addressed below. All absence requests must be accompanied by contemporaneous

supporting documentation. The following criteria are recognized for granting excused absences:

1. The student has a death in the immediate family. An announcement of the family member's funeral arrangements may be presented as supporting documentation.
2. The student is admitted to a healthcare facility to receive necessary medical care. In the case of an injury or illness, a physician's note (and/or evidence documenting such an absence) is required. The Program Chair or the Clinical Coordinator reserve the right to ask for additional supporting documentation in support of the physician's note. Seeing a doctor does not satisfy the requirement for a medical excuse. Late presentation of a note or retroactive application may affect the determination of whether the absence is excused.
3. Situations beyond the control of the student and related to exceptional circumstances.
4. Special Circumstances
    a. Should requests for academic flexibility be made by the Student Development and Campus Life (SDCL) and the Title IX Coordinator - from the perspective of a Reporter victim or a Respondent, on behalf of a student, instructors will work with the student and the SDCL as necessary/appropriate to determine the type of flexibility/accommodation the student may benefit from.

Table 2. Notification Policy for Emergency Intermittent Short Absences

	Course Type & Who to Notify		
Program	**Lecture**	**Laboratory**	**Clinical Training (including rotation, internship, practicum)**
Sterile Processing Technician	Instructor	Instructor	Clinical Coordinator, **and** clinical site coordinator, **and** submit E*xcused Absence Request Form*

Attendance and Participation During Clinical Training

Excused Absence

Due to the very specific nature of the student learning goals and outcomes, the number of absences during laboratory and clinical training is limited even when the absences may fall under the excused absence criteria. The table below shows the number of permissible excused absences for each clinical/internship/practicum course.

Course	Program	Total Clinical Hours	Excused Absences	Make-up Needed
SPT2150	SPT	400	2	Yes

Tardiness (Applies to Both Laboratory and Clinical Training)

Repeated tardiness is considered improper professional behavior and may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, dismissal from the clinical sites, failure of a course, and/or dismissal from the program. Clinical or laboratory tardiness is defined as arriving after the designated start time of the clinical or laboratory experience. A student who anticipates being late to clinical or laboratory must directly contact the College representative* as instructed (e.g., the clinical or laboratory instructor, the clinical site monitor, and/or the clinical coordinator), or a representative of the clinical site (students to follow instructions provided by the clinical coordinator). Students must inform (report to) the College representative (e.g., faculty or site monitor) or the Clinical facility representative as soon as they arrive at the clinical site.

- The first tardy occurrence will result in a verbal warning and a note will be placed on the student’s record.
- A second tardy occurrence will result in a written warning, the student will be sent home, and an absence will be recorded for the component of the course (laboratory or clinical experience).
- A third tardy occurrence will result in the student's dismissal from the clinical site** and course failure***.

*Note: Students must inform the instructor or College Representative. Communicating being late to another student is not permitted.

**If a student is dismissed from the practicum site for cause, Berkeley College is not obligated to place the student at another practicum site. Therefore, the student will be subject to dismissal from the practicum training and course failure. In such cases, the student’s graduation will be delayed.

***A course failure may result in program dismissal based on the maximum number of course failures allowed for the program.

Unexcused Absence

As stated in prior sections of the policy, students are required to inform representatives of the School of Health Studies (faculty or the Clinical Coordinator, and/or the Program Chair) that they will not be at the clinical site. For specific programs students must notify the clinical facility as well. Instances when the student does not attend a clinical training day and fails to inform the College representative and/or the clinical site representative (a.k.a. No Call, No Show) will result in dismissal from clinical training and course failure.

Extenuating circumstances that impede the student to provide the required notification will be evaluated by the Program Chair. It is the student’s responsibility to provide

documentation that clearly demonstrates that the student could not provide the mandatory notification on-time.

Class Hours

Generally, classes are in session from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Saturday classes may be scheduled from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Clinical practicums are typically scheduled from 7:00 AM until 12 midnight, Monday through Friday.

Clinical Requirements

To pass the clinical practicum course, students must remain in their practicum assignment for the entire term, accumulate a total of 400 clinical hours, and successfully complete course requirements. If, for some reason, a student is unable to remain in the practicum assignment for the entire term, the student must contact the Clinical Coordinator and the instructor immediately.

Credit for Prior Learning

Students enrolled in the Sterile Processing Technician (SPT) program may be eligible to receive credit for prior learning if they possess active healthcare licenses and/or certifications and said license and/or certifications are in good standing. Details regarding the College's Credit for Prior Learning Policy can be found in the 2025-2026 Undergraduate Catalog.

Graduation Requirements

To qualify for graduation, students in the Sterile Processing Technician (SPT) program must fulfill the following requirements:

- Pass each SPT course, as well as Microbiology (degree students only), Anatomy and Physiology I, and Anatomy and Physiology II with a minimum grade of C+
- Pass Medical Terminology with a minimum grade of C
- Successfully complete the prescribed number of clinical hours
- Meet the credit-hour requirements for the major
- Discharge all financial obligations to the College
- Participate in the Certified Registered Central Service Technician certification examination

Additional information regarding graduation can be found in the 2025-2026 Undergraduate Catalog.

Transfer Credit

In addition to the transfer credit guidelines outlined in the Berkeley College 2025-2026 Undergraduate Catalog, students enrolled in the Sterile Processing Technician (SPT) program who wish to have credits considered for transfer must note the following:

- A grade of C+ or higher is required for all Science (SCI) transfer credits, and the credits must have been earned within the last five years.
- A grade of C+ or higher is required for all Sterile Processing Technician transfer credits, provided the Sterile Processing Technician courses do not contain a clinical and/or laboratory component; and the Sterile Processing Technician courses must have been completed within the last five years.
- Courses that contain clinical or laboratory credits are not eligible for transfer credit due to the affective and psychomotor learning domains covered in clinical and laboratory experiences.

Note that transfer credit will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis based on the recommendation of the Department Chair/Director and/or School Dean.

Course Withdrawal

Students who wish to drop a course must do so in writing and must have the approval of the Academic Advisement Department. Courses dropped during the first two weeks of classes do not appear on the student's transcript. Withdrawal from a 15-week course between weeks three (3) and twelve (12) will result in a grade of WP or WF, which indicates whether the student was passing or failing the course at the time it was dropped.

Students enrolled in the Sterile Processing Technician program are permitted to withdraw from one Sterile Processing Technician (SPT) course during the length of their program. Students who withdraw from a second SPT course without receiving prior approval from the Department Chair will be dismissed from the program.

A grade of W will be assigned to students who enrolled in but did not participate in a course. Students who do not officially drop a course will receive a letter grade that reflects their achievement.

Clinical Requirements and Responsibilities

- Clinical Clearance Requirements
- Clinical Practicum Overview
- Latex Sensitivity

Clinical Clearance Requirements

In preparation for clinical rotations, please follow the guidelines outlined below. Students should also refer to the Clinical Clearance Canvas course for specific details on each of the items below and are encouraged to reach out to the Clinical Coordinator with specific questions and/or concerns.

Week 1

Due by Saturday 11:59 PM

1. Government-issued photo identification (i.e., passport, driver's license, etc.)
2. Proof of health insurance
3. Proof of COVID vaccination

Week 7

Due by Saturday 11:59 PM

1. Completed student and healthcare provider health forms
2. Lab work, including applicable titers

Week 10

Due by Saturday 11:59 PM

1. Basic Life Support BLS card (must be current for entire length of clinical rotation(s))
2. Proof of flu vaccination (seasonal)
3. Proof of FIT testing (details regarding testing will be provided)

Week TBD

Due by Saturday 11:59 PM

1. Urine drug screening
2. Background check (details regarding this will be provided)

Students who fail to submit health forms in their totality by the given due date will be withdrawn from the clinical course and a course designation of WF will be assigned. All students are encouraged to retain copies of all documentation presented to the Clinical Coordinator. The Allied Health Surgical Department reserves the right to make administrative changes to clinical placements as necessary.

- Criminal Background Check
- Health Requirements

Criminal Background Check

A criminal history background check is required for all students in the Sterile Processing Technician program prior to participating in clinical rotations and may be conducted annually or at the discretion of clinical affiliates. Not passing a background check may prohibit the student from progressing in the program and from becoming certified to work in the field. In instances where a student's criminal background check contains information related to past criminal activity, Berkeley College cannot guarantee that it will find suitable clinical placement(s) since the decision to allow students to complete clinical rotations is at the sole discretion of the clinical affiliate. If the student is denied clinical placement by the clinical affiliate due to criminal history information, that student will not be permitted to continue in the program. If the offense is expungable, the student is encouraged to seek legal counsel. If the student's record is cleared, and the record shows as "clear," the student is eligible for progression, provided all other clinical eligibility requirements are met.

If a charge, arrest, and/or conviction occurs while a student is enrolled in the Sterile Processing Technician program, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Department Chair. This notification must be in writing and must occur within two business days after the event occurs. The required notification must include a description of the circumstances surrounding the charge, arrest, and/or conviction. Subsequent to this notification, the student should make an appointment with the Department Chair to discuss options. Failure to notify the Department Chair of a charge, arrest, and/or conviction may result in the student being removed from the Sterile Processing Technician program.

Health Requirements

Students in the Sterile Processing Technician (SPT) program must complete a physical assessment by a licensed physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant at least 10 weeks prior to enrolling in the clinical practicum course. In addition to meeting any general immunization requirements applicable to admission, students also must provide appropriate proof of immunity as follows:

- Blood titers for measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella
- Immunization records or blood titers for hepatitis B
- A two-step PPD skin test administered within the last year or a negative chest x-ray within three months
- A tetanus shot administered within the past 10 years

Clinical affiliates require all clinical students to have a yearly influenza vaccine. A COVID vaccine and available boosters are strongly recommended. Please note that some sites may also require weekly PCR testing in addition to the COVID vaccination series. Failure to comply with these immunization requirements may prohibit students from attending clinical courses. Clinical affiliates also may require students to provide proof of individual health insurance or be an eligible dependent or beneficiary of another person's accident and health insurance policy. Students not able to meet this requirement may find it difficult to complete the required clinical rotation(s) and/or progress in the program.

A negative 12-panel, pre-clinical urine toxicology screening is also required. This includes screening for:

- Amphetamines
- Barbituates
- Benzodiazepine
- Cannabinoids
- Cocaine
- Meperidine
- Methadone
- Opiates
- Oxycodone
- Phencyclidine
- Propoxyphene
- Tramadol

Any student who fails to submit the documentation outlined above will not be permitted to enroll in the practicum course.

Upon readmission, reinstatement, or returning from a Leave of Absence, a student must repeat the drug screening outlined above prior to participating in any clinical rotations. If during the course of study a student is suspected of drug use, he/she may be asked

to provide an updated urine toxicology screening. The cost associated with these repeat drug screenings will be borne by the student.

A negative drug screen is required to progress in the SPT program. Students with a positive drug screen result will be required to meet with the Department Chair and/or School Dean to discuss continuation in the program. A student's drug screen is not considered positive until a determination is made that the results are not due to legally prescribed and appropriately taken prescription medications and the student has been offered the opportunity to have their original sample retested at the student's expense. If the positive drug results are not due to legally prescribed prescription medications, the students will be removed from the program and will not be eligible for reentry. If during the course of study students are suspected of drug use, they may be asked to provide an updated urine toxicology screening. The cost associated with this repeat drug screening will be at the student's expense.

By submitting the results of a urine toxicology screening to the College, the student thereby authorizes the College to share those results with any individual clinical facilities that request such information.

Health Advisory

Berkeley College's SPT program is physically and mentally challenging. During the laboratory and clinical portions of the program, students will be exposed to healthcare situations where there is an increased risk of exposure to strenuous activity, communicable diseases, radiation, and toxic substances.

Students may be exposed to a variety of other situations and substances which could potentially affect students with medical conditions that include, but are not limited to, asthma, allergies, and pregnancy. If a student becomes pregnant during the practicum, these exposures can harm the student's unborn baby. If you are concerned, you should consult with your healthcare provider prior to participating in the clinical practicum to ensure you are physically capable of remaining in the program and meeting all relevant technical standards outlined in this Handbook. Neither Berkeley College nor its affiliating clinical agencies shall be responsible for any harm that might occur to a fetus or pregnant student.

Any student who is unable to continue in clinical courses based on the recommendation of her/his healthcare provider will be afforded the opportunity, once medically cleared, to return to the program pending course availability.

Latex Sensitivity

Hospitals and other clinical settings have numerous items that have a natural latex rubber component. Unforeseen exposure and sensitivity may result from repeated exposure to the protein associated with natural latex rubber (commonly found in powdered gloves). True allergies are rare, but latex sensitivities can be seen in approximately eight to twelve percent of healthcare workers.

Students with known latex sensitivity and/or allergies must provide the College's ADA Coordinator with documentation of the specific sensitivity/allergy along with suggested safety guidelines from the healthcare provider in order to request a reasonable accommodation. Information regarding the student's latex sensitivity/allergy will be shared with clinical affiliates as applicable.

Students with documented latex sensitivity/allergies are responsible for carrying their own medication to counteract the allergy. Any costs related to the allergy screening and/or treatment will be borne by the student.

If a student has a suspected reaction, he or she must report it to the clinical site as well as to the College's Clinical Coordinator and ADA Coordinator.

Berkeley College cannot guarantee a latex-free environment, including in its classrooms, laboratories, and/or during clinical rotations.

Clinical Practicum Overview

While in school, students will gain knowledge and skills that will prepare them for their new career. The practicum is designed to provide students with the opportunity to utilize this newfound knowledge under the supervision of healthcare professionals. Through this system of performance and feedback, students will acquire confidence and viable experience to complement their classroom training.

The practicum will consist of training, usually completed within an academic term. Each student is expected to accommodate the hours of the practicum site. If a student holds a job and their work schedule conflicts with the practicum hours, then the student's College program must take precedence. A student in a practicum observes the regularly scheduled office hours of the site assigned, rather than the College's vacation, holiday, or snow hours. Since a prescribed number of hours is required for practicum, the student is responsible for making up all hours missed due to hours canceled by the office. Students must remain at the site for the duration of their scheduled practicum.

Many clinical affiliates now require personal interviews prior to accepting students for practicum assignments. Therefore, students should be prepared with a current resume, professional attire, and a professional outlook on the profession.

Because the practicum period is a culmination of the student's program and permits the student to practice in a realistic work setting prior to graduation, it is a prerequisite for a student to satisfactorily complete most courses within the program prior to enrolling in the practicum course.

The clinical time schedule will be assigned at the beginning of each term at the discretion of the Clinical Coordinator, based on site availability.

Transportation

Students are responsible for transportation to and from clinical sites. Any parking or transportation fees are the responsibility of the student. Students should not expect to be placed at a clinical site within their immediate surrounding area. Clinical placement depends on several factors including site availability and the status of the clinical affiliation with the College**.** Clinical placement can be made within a 50-mile radius of the student's home campus and depends upon site availability.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

- Complaints and Grievances
- Confidentiality
- Dress Code
- Professionalism

Complaints and Grievances

For policies and procedures regarding student complaints and grievances, including grade appeals and other academic grievances, please see the Student Complaint Procedures.

Confidentiality

Berkeley College students are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of all patient information encountered at any clinical internship and/or practicum site. While the requirements of patient confidentiality are emphasized throughout the student's coursework, all students are encouraged to visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website (https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html) to review the entire Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) policy before beginning the clinical component of the program. In addition to complying with all federal regulations, Berkeley College students must comply with any specific confidentiality requirements, policies, and/or procedures established by the assigned internship and/or clinical site.

A patient's right to confidentiality regarding their medical information, which includes confidentiality of personal and social information, is a fundamental healthcare tenet. Accordingly, students must remain mindful of the following basic requirements:

- Patients must not be described in any identifiable way for purposes other than the provision of direct patient care. When discussing experiences involving patients with third parties for legitimate educational purposes, using patient initials, exact descriptions, or locations of patients - either on paper or online - is strictly prohibited. Students are to use generalities only, so that no patient can be clearly recognized.
- While participating in clinical rotation(s) students shall not videotape, photograph, or make audio recordings of themselves, their fellow students, their instructors, and/or their patients for any reason.
- The public discussion of any patient who is identified by name or whose identity can be derived from other circumstances (or the condition of such patient) without consent violates patient confidentiality and ethical principles. This includes, but is not limited to, any discussion held in public areas such as elevators, hallways, and cafeterias. It also includes any discussion held in any media forum (such as print media) or any virtual forum (such as websites or social networking sites). Classrooms, pre- and post-conferences, and/or laboratory settings may be used for such discussions, but only for legitimate educational purposes.
- Students should only obtain information about those patients who are assigned to their care for that clinical day. At no time should students use their position in the clinical setting to seek information about a patient other than the patient(s) to whom they have been assigned.
- Copying, scanning, and/or removing any portion of a patient's medical record or printed patient information from a healthcare facility is strictly prohibited.

Social networking has become one of the main sources of communication in today's world. However, its use can have major legal and ethical implications for healthcare workers with regard to patient privacy and confidentiality. Students must comply at all times with the requirements of HIPAA and must be especially mindful of patients when using social media. For instance:

- References to patients, patient data, or clinical experiences involving patients or their family members are not to be included in any part of the social networking environment. Social media breaches include, but are not limited to, tweeting and/or confidential and/or proprietary information about clinical facilities and/or rotations and taking ‘selfies’ while participating in clinical rotations and posting them on social media sites.
- Students are strictly prohibited from posting any information pertaining to or descriptive of a clinical site, instructor/preceptor, patient, employee, fellow student, and/or procedure. This includes revealing the location of a clinical site either by posting or by providing content with GPS locator evidence (such as digital photographs).

Students who disclose restricted patient information may face serious consequences. For example, federal law provides for fines up to $250,000 and imprisonment up to 10 years for misusing protected patient information for commercial advantage or malicious harm. Students found in violation of the Berkeley College Confidentiality Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate suspension or dismissal from the College. For additional requirements concerning the use of social media in connection with Berkeley College matters, go to the College’s Social Media Policy.

Dress Code

All Sterile Processing Technician students are required to follow the professional appearance code while attending on-campus laboratory classes and while at a clinical site participating in clinical practicum. A neat, clean, and professional appearance is expected at all times. Working closely with surgical processing equipment, as well as with other staff members, requires that students maintain strict personal hygiene standards. Students will be working on making a lasting impression at the clinical site, and maintaining a professional appearance is an important part of making a good impression.

Failure to adhere to the professional appearance code will result in a warning, and if not corrected, can result in dismissal from the clinical site and possibly the program.

The following are the guidelines of the professional appearance code:

- Hair must be clean. Long hair must be pulled back and cannot fall forward in front of the shoulders while providing patient care. Hair accessories must maintain a professional appearance, safety, and hygiene. Hair of an unnatural color of fad designs is not permitted. Avoid highly colored sprays and maintain only natural-looking hair color. Male students must be neatly shaven and well groomed. Facial hair should be kept trimmed and neat.
- Fingernails must be kept short, clean, and filed. Artificial nails, nail polish, and added stick-on jewels are not permitted as they harbor microorganisms.
- Artificial eyelashes are prohibited.
- Dangle earrings, rings, or other visible body jewelry (nose rings, lip rings, tongue piercing, bracelets, necklaces which can become entangled in equipment) are not permitted while working in the laboratory and/or clinical setting.
- Cosmetics should be worn in moderation. Students are not permitted to wear fragrant products (cologne, perfume, aftershave, lotion, etc.) in clinical settings due to potential patient allergic response. Strong odors, including the odor of a smoker, can be apparent and offensive to patients who are ill.
- Unless other facility-specific guidelines are provided, students are required to wear a clean and pressed sterile processing technician uniform with the Berkeley College insignia. Appropriate undergarments are to be worn and be undetectable through the uniform.
- Shoes must be professional in nature; clean operating room (OR) clogs, white sneakers, or black sneakers are acceptable provided they contain no mesh and/or open areas. No sandals, flip-flops, non-operating room clogs, open-toed, or sling back shoes are permitted.
- Students are required to wear their Berkeley College IDs at all times while on campus and at the clinical sites. If a student is employed at the same facility where they are assigned for their clinical practicum, the employment name badge may not be worn during clinical assignments.

Professionalism

Students are preparing for membership in a profession that serves the public – a public that expects a high standard of professionalism. While participating in the classroom/laboratory/clinical portion of the program, students are expected to present themselves in a professional manner at all times by demonstrating integrity, respect, and compassion and are expected to be thoughtful and professional when interacting with faculty, staff, patients and their families, healthcare providers, preceptors, affiliated institutional staff, and other students.

It is expected that during the lecture and laboratory portion(s) (as applicable) of their courses, students will:

- Arrive at class on time. Students who anticipate being late must notify their instructor at least 30 minutes prior to the start of class.
- Not disrupt the lecture or laboratory instruction by engaging in private conversations.
- Refrain from eating or drinking while in the laboratory.
- Refrain from inappropriate behavior, such as verbal abuse, angry outbursts, etc.
- Not engage in personal phone conversations, text messaging, or the use of social media while participating in the didactic, laboratory, and/or clinical portions of their program. To the extent possible, electronic devices should be turned off or placed in silent mode.

It is expected that during the clinical portion of their courses, students will:

- Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performances.
- Refrain from performing any technique or procedure for which they have not been adequately trained.
- Refrain from any deliberate action or omission of care in the academic or clinical setting that creates an unnecessary risk of injury to the client, self, or others.
- Communicate client care in a truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
- Protect patient privacy, which is governed by HIPAA. Information about patients and/or their circumstances should not appear on social media sites.

If, while enrolled in a clinical course, a student's level of professionalism and/or performance presents potential harm to the welfare of clients, the faculty will determine, based on written and/or oral documentation, whether or not the student will be permitted to continue in the course. If a student’s performance presents immediate potential harm to either the student and/or their clients, the program faculty and/or preceptors have the responsibility to remove the student immediately from the clinical setting. A student who recognizes that they have made a clinical error is obligated to report the situation to their instructor immediately and to take necessary measures to ensure subsequent patient safety.

In addition, students enrolled in the Sterile Processing Technician program may be suspended, or expelled, from clinical studies for reasons associated with academic misconduct. These reasons include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to follow Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Guidelines by maintaining the confidentiality of patient information and records.
- An act of dishonesty involving clinical work.
- Falsification of credentials.
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices such as, but not limited to photographing, recording, and/or transmission of patient information.
- Any behavior by a student that jeopardizes the affiliation between Berkeley College and the clinical site, or any behavior that causes Berkeley College to lose a clinical site.

Professional demeanor is also required while students are on virtual sites, such as online social networking sites. All students are expected to abide by the College's Social Media policy.

As members of the healthcare profession, it is imperative that students recognize their responsibilities to society and their patients and exhibit behavior representing high standards, polite etiquette, compassion, and respect for human dignity in both the classroom and clinical settings.

Professionalism will be a graded component of all core Sterile Processing Technician courses via the completion of the Professional Development Achievement Tool (PDAT). This form is included as part of the course syllabus. Students must achieve 90% or higher on each PDAT form. Those scoring less than 90% on their first PDAT will receive remediation and a verbal warning; scoring less than 90% on two PDATs will result in a written warning; and scoring less than 90% on the third PDAT will result in automatic dismissal from the program.

Click for more general conduct requirements applicable to all Berkeley College students.