



# American College of Surgeons

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March 22, 2006

James Bell, CST, CFA  
President, Association of Surgical Technologists  
6 West Dry Creek Circle  
Littleton, CO 80120

Dear Mr. Bell,

Surgical assistants are individuals with specialized education who function as members of the surgical team in the role of first assistant. With additional education and training, some surgical technologists function in the role of surgical first assistant.

Surgical assistant programs are accredited by the Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology (ARC-ST)—a collaborative effort of the Association of Surgical Technologists and the American College of Surgeons, under the auspices of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. Accredited programs provide both didactic education and supervised clinical experience based on a core curriculum for surgical assisting.

Accredited programs may be offered in community and junior colleges, vocational and technical schools, the military, universities, and structured hospital programs in surgical assisting. The accredited programs vary from nine to 15 months for a diploma or certificate to two years for an associate's degree.

Graduates of accredited surgical assisting programs are eligible for certification by the Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist (LCC-ST), an administratively independent body from the Association of Surgical Technologists consisting of representative certified surgical technologists, certified first assistants, a surgeon, and the public.

The accreditation and certification programs referenced above are those conducted through the ARC-ST and LCC-ST and do not apply to



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physician assistants and registered nurses whose professions have separate educational programs and/or credentialing processes related to first assisting

The American College of Surgeons strongly supports adequate education and training of all surgical assistants, supports the accreditation of all surgical assisting educational programs, and supports examination for certification of all graduates of accredited surgical assistant educational programs.

Sincerely,

*Paul E. Collicott*

Paul E. Collicott, MD FACS

Director, Member Services