

**AST CONTINUING EDUCATION  
POLICIES FOR THE CST® AND CFA®**

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## INTRODUCTION

The *AST Continuing Education Policies for the CST and CFA* are provided for CSTs® and CFAs® participating in continuing education (CE). CSTs, CFAs and providers must adhere to these high standards, established by the profession to ensure the ongoing educational development of individual practitioners and to demonstrate to the public the profession’s commitment to providing the highest level of quality surgical patient care.

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## **ORGANIZATIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION MISSION & GOALS**

### **AST Continuing Education Mission**

AST supports quality surgical patient care by promoting the completion of continuing education to assure the public, certifying bodies and other health professionals that CSTs and CFAs are maintaining current standards in the field of surgical technology and surgical assisting.

### **Continuing Education Definition**

CE is formal and structured learning to enhance the competency of the CST and CFA in order to foster the development of the surgical technology and surgical assisting professions.

### **AST Continuing Education Goals**

AST will:

1. Analyze and up-date the CE policies on a periodic basis to reflect policy changes and current trends.

2. Develop and deliver continuing education that improves the knowledge and skills of the CST and CFA.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the CE offerings in meeting the needs of the CSTs and CFAs.
4. Evaluate the CE offerings of other organizations and businesses to determine their meeting the AST CE policies.

### **Role and Responsibility of AST**

AST recognizes and establishes the CE credit as the standard for all CE programs and products that are completed by the CST and CFA. The AST CE Department is assigned the responsibility for reviewing CE programs and enduring materials for adherence to the AST CE policies. Only those CE programs and enduring materials approved by AST will be allowed to award CE credits to the CST and CFA.

### **Definitions of Program and Enduring Material**

#### **Program**

A CE program is defined as a live program including but not limited to health care facility/employer sponsored in-service, conference, seminar, symposium or workshop in which the CST and CFA attend CE lectures.

#### **Enduring Material**

Enduring material is defined as a non-live offering including but not limited to CE article delivered hard-copy or electronically that has a post-article CE exam; viewing a recorded CE lecture on-line, CD, or other electronic means that has a post-article CE exam.

### Responsibility of CST and CFA

It is the responsibility of the CST and CFA to know if a CE program or enduring material offered by a business or organization is AST approved for CE credits. Only CE credits earned by attending AST approved programs or completing an enduring material activity will be applied towards re-certification.

### **SUBMITTING YOUR CE CREDITS TO AST**

#### **Member**

1. Submit the AST Continuing Education Reporting Form. Include verifying documentation of all CE credits reported (e.g., certificate of completion, attendance verification form). The CE Reporting Form and documentation can be mailed, sent by FAX, or scanned and sent as an E-mail attachment to AST.
2. After your CE credits are processed, AST will send you a letter acknowledging the number of CE credits that were accepted. This is proof that your CE credits were processed and recorded by AST and this letter should be kept with your personal CE credits.
3. AST CE exams from the monthly journal *The Surgical Technologist*, independent study courses, and on-line program offerings are processed by AST independently from other CE credits and should not be submitted on the reporting form. After processing the answer sheet and recording the CE credits, AST will send you confirmation; this confirmation should be kept with your personal CE records.  
  
Visit the AST Continuing Education Resource Center at the AST web site to earn quality CE credits on-line.

4. CE credits earned at the AST National Conference and other programs will be automatically processed and recorded for the member.
5. AST will process your CE credit record at least one month prior to your recertification date.

### **Nonmember**

1. Submit the AST CE Reporting Form two to six months prior to recertification date; include the non-member fee of \$400.
2. Include verifying documentation of all CE credits reported (e.g., certificate of completion, attendance verification form). The AST CE Reporting Form and documentation can be mailed, sent by FAX or scanned and sent as an E-mail attachment to AST.
3. After your CE credits are processed, AST will send you a CE Credit Letter acknowledging the number of CE credits that were accepted. A copy of the CE Credit Letter should be submitted with the NBSTSA Renewal Form to the NBSTSA.

### **Fees**

#### **Member**

- Submit AST CE Reporting Form with verifying documentation.....*No Charge*

#### **Nonmember**

- Submit AST CE Reporting Form with verifying documentation one time per certification cycle, two to six months prior to recertification date.....\$400

### Important Notice

If membership lapses for more than 90 days the CE credits earned while a member are maintained and recorded by AST and can be applied towards renewal of the credential. However, CE credits earned as a non-member are subject to the non-member processing fee of \$400 when submitted to AST.

### Appeals Process

AST will review possible exceptions to the CE policies on a case-by-case basis. To appeal a decision concerning the denial of CE credit(s) a written petition for reconsideration must be sent to the AST Director of Continuing Education. If the original decision is upheld, a second appeal may be made to the AST Board of Directors who will make the final decision.

### **METHODS TO EARN CE CREDITS AND DOCUMENTATION**

CE credits can be earned through the following methods: health care facility/employer sponsored in-services; attending professional physician organization programs; writing for health-related publications; instruction of health professionals; college credit; lecture; clinical demonstration; and completion of enduring material activities.

### Important Notice

Continuing education activities in which CE credits are earned must be relevant to the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting.

### AST CE Credit Values

1. One CE credit equals 50 – 60 minutes of activity when attending a program or viewing a recorded CE lecture and completing the post-lecture CE exam.

2. Partial CE credits are accepted by AST. However, the CE activity offered at the program or recorded lecture must be a minimum of 30 minutes (0.5 CE credits). Partial CE credits are accepted in 15 minute increments past the required minimum of 30 minutes. For example, an activity that is one hour and fifteen minutes will be awarded 1.25 CE credits.
3. When possible the lectures provided at CE programs will be combined in order to award the maximum number of CE credits as long as the lectures are subject related. For example, an orthopedic seminar offers several lectures that are 15 minutes in length; the lectures will be combined to determine the total number of CE credits that will be accepted by AST.
4. CST and CFA authors of a CE article published in a health-related magazine or journal will be awarded 1 CE credit per 2,000 type-written words.
  - a. The word count does **not** include the post-article CE exam, reference page, or bibliography.
5. CSTs and CFAs that complete an independent study CE article or course with post-article CE exam will be awarded 1 CE credit per 2,000 type-written words.
  - a. The word count does **not** include the post-article CE exam, reference page, or bibliography.

### **Employer Sponsored In-Services**

1. Employer in-services are accepted by AST for CE credits.
2. Health care facility orientation is **not** accepted for CE credits.
3. BLS and ACLS are accepted for CE credits.

4. If the employer sponsors or provides funds for an employee(s) to attend a conference, seminar, symposium, or workshop or complete any other type of CE activity sponsored by an organization other than the employer, the program must be AST approved in order to have the CE credits count towards certification renewal.
5. Documentation requirement: A certificate of attendance signed by the employer's Clinical Educator or other individual designated by employer. The total number of CE credits to be awarded for the in-service should be printed on the certificate.

#### **Professional Physician Organization**

1. CE credits offered at programs sponsored by professional physician organizations, such as the American College of Surgeons or American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, are accepted by AST. **However**, the professional physician organization must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).
2. Documentation requirement: A certificate of attendance signed by the individual designated to represent the professional physician organization. The total number of CE credits to be awarded for the program should be printed on the certificate.

#### **State Assemblies of AST**

1. State assemblies who sponsor a program are required to complete the program approval process in order for participants to receive AST approved CE credits.
2. Participants should verify that a state assembly program is AST approved prior to attending the program.

3. Documentation requirement: A certificate of attendance signed by the individual designated to represent the state assembly. The total number of CE credits to be awarded for the program should be printed on the certificate.

### **Writing for Health-Related Publications**

1. When authoring a CE article to be published the magazine or journal must be a health-related publication. Additionally, the publisher must have a peer-review process in place in order to determine if the article meets the publishing standards of the magazine or journal.
2. CE credit will only be awarded for the initial publication of an article.
3. One (1) CE credit is awarded per 2,000 type written words.
4. Documentation requirement: The CE credits will be automatically entered for CSTs and CFAs that author CE articles for the AST monthly journal, *The Surgical Technologist*. CSTs and CFAs that author a CE article for other magazines and journals must submit an official, published copy of the article that has your name printed as the author, name of the magazine or journal, date of publication, and volume number.

### **Instruction of Health Professionals**

1. This method for earning CE credits does **not** apply to those CSTs and CFAs who provide lectures or lab/clinical demonstrations as part of their job duties, such as educators, preceptors and medical sales representatives. In addition, CSTs and CFAs who perform their job duties as a member of a surgical team that travels to a foreign country to perform surgery for a limited amount of time is **not** accepted for CE credits.

2. This method for earning CE credits applies to CSTs and CFAs that provide CE lectures at an AST approved CE program or employer sponsored in-service, or serve as instructors during an AST approved CE workshop, e.g. wound closure workshop at a state assembly meeting.
3. CST and CFA presenters and instructors will receive CE credits for the initial preparation and presentation of a topic. Two CE credits will be awarded for the initial preparation of the presentation. The lecture or workshop must last a minimum of 30 minutes. For example, if a lecture lasts 45 minutes the CST or CFA presenter would be awarded a total of 2.75 CE credits. However, if the lecture is repeated at a future program CE credits are only awarded for the length of the lecture.
4. Documentation requirement: For AST sponsored programs such as national conference, forums or workshops the CST and CFA presenter or instructor does not need to submit documentation as proof of providing a CE lecture or serving as a workshop instructor; AST will automatically enter the CE credits for the individual.

However, CSTs and CFAs that present a CE lecture or serve as an instructor at a non-AST sponsored program including a state assembly meeting must submit a copy of the program agenda that includes their name as presenter and title of the presentation or workshop as well as length of the activity.

### College Credit

1. College courses to be submitted for CE credits must be completed with a grade of “C” or better.
2. The courses must be completed at an institution that is accredited by an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
3. Surgical assistant college courses submitted for CE credit(s) must be completed at a CAAHEP accredited surgical assistant program.
4. General nursing and physician assistant college courses that are not specifically related to the medical surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting will not be accepted for CE credits.
5. Freshman (100)/sophomore (200) level courses or equivalent will be awarded 5 CE credits for each semester hour completed. Example: 3 semester course,  $3 \times 5 = 15$  CE credits.
6. Junior (300)/senior (400) level or equivalent will be awarded 7 CE credits for each semester hour completed. Example: 3 semester course,  $3 \times 7 = 21$  CE credits.
7. Graduate level (500+) or equivalent will be awarded 10 CE credits for each semester hour completed. Example: 3 semester course,  $3 \times 10 = 30$  CE credits.
8. College courses submitted as quarter hours will be converted to an equivalent number of semester hours; quarter hour  $\times 0.75 =$  semester hour.
9. Documentation requirement: Unofficial college transcript – **no exceptions made.**

### **Enduring Material**

1. Enduring material is self-directed learning in which the CST and CFA independently completes CE activity that is approved for CE credits by AST.
2. Methods of enduring materials include but are not limited to CE articles and completing a post-article CE exam that are offered hard-copy or electronically; viewing recorded lectures and completing a post-lecture exam that are offered on-line, CD, DVD, video tape or other electronic means.
3. Participants should verify that the enduring material activity is AST approved prior to completing.
4. Documentation requirement: AST members and non-members refer to “Submitting Your CE Credits To AST” for information as related to submitting AST sponsored enduring material activities for CE credits.  
  
Upon completion of an enduring material activity offered by another business or organization the CST and CFA must submit the certificate of completion provided by the business or organization with the AST CE Reporting Form.

### **Important Notice Concerning Training Provided by Employer & Work Experience**

CE credits are **not** awarded for on-the-job training and work experience that the CST and CFA completes as an employee of the facility providing the training. Example, CST is completing on-the-job training in learning the first scrub role to be a member of the health care facilities cardiovascular team.

This training is distinct from attending employer sponsored in-services which is described on page eight (8).

## **FILLING OUT THE CONTINUING EDUCATION REPORTING FORM**

Type or use ballpoint pen. Fill in all blanks.

### **Credits Earned on Month and Year**

1. Credits must be earned within the four-year certification cycle.

### **Provider Name**

1. List the name of the organization or business that sponsored the CE program or provided the enduring material activity.

### **Educational Activity**

1. List the specific title of the CE program or enduring material activity.

### **Location**

1. List the city and state where the CE program took place.

### **Number of CE Credits**

1. List the total number of CE credits earned.

### **Signature**

1. Sign the form.

### **Submitting AST CE Reporting Form with Verifying Documentation**

1. The CE Reporting Form and verifying documentation can be mailed, sent by FAX, or scanned and sent as an E-mail attachment to AST.
2. Mailing Address: AST; 6 West Dry Creek Circle; Suite 200; Littleton, CO 80120
3. FAX to the attention of Member Services Department: (303) 694 – 9169
4. Allow four weeks for processing.
5. **Incomplete forms will be returned.**

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