



# **Surgical First Assistant**

## **Program Information and Registration Packet**

### **Fall 2025**

#### **Registration Deadline:**

Friday, August 15, 2025 at 5pm or until course fills.

#### **Important Dates:**

On-Campus Suture Lab will be held **September 5, 6, and 7, 2025 from 7 am to 5 pm**

Surgical First Assistant Program  
Health and Science Center  
425 Fawell Blvd.  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137  
(630)942-2516  
Esperanza “Ranzie” Wilson, MEd, CSFA, CST  
Surgical Assistant Program Coordinator  
[franadae@cod.edu](mailto:franadae@cod.edu)  
[www.cod.edu/surgical-assistant](http://www.cod.edu/surgical-assistant)

**Note:** Completion of Health Requirements, CPR completion, criminal background checks, and proof of insurance is an independent activity to prepare for entrance into health programs at College of DuPage and/or participation in clinical sites within health programs. Funds paid to Edward Corporate Health or to a personal health care provider/ source, Criminal Background.com (or equivalent), insurance companies, and funds used towards CPR completion are not eligible for any sort of refund from College of DuPage if the required course is not successfully completed.



425 Fawell Blvd.

Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

[www.cod.edu](http://www.cod.edu)

(630) 942-2516

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the College of DuPage Surgical First Assistant Program. Enclosed is the registration packet that will inform you on your next steps to the registration process. The information in this packet is subject to change. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at [franadae@cod.edu](mailto:franadae@cod.edu) or by calling (630) 942-2516. For more information and resource links, visit [www.cod.edu/surgical-assistant](http://www.cod.edu/surgical-assistant).

Sincerely,

Esperanza “Ranzie” Wilson

Esperanza “Ranzie” Wilson, MEd, CSFA/CST  
Program Chair

# **SURGICAL FIRST ASSISTANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

## **Occupational Description**

As defined by the American College of Surgeons, the surgical first assistant provides aid in exposure, hemostasis, closure, and other intraoperative technical functions that help the surgeon carry out a safe operation with optimal results for the patient. In addition to intraoperative duties, the surgical first assistant also performs preoperative and postoperative duties to better facilitate proper patient care. The surgical first assistant to the surgeon during the operation does so under the direction and supervision of that surgeon and in accordance with hospital policy and appropriate laws and regulations.

## **Job Description**

In general, surgical first assistants have the following responsibilities:

- Determine specific equipment needed per procedure
- Review permit to confirm procedure and special needs
- Select and place of x-rays for reference
- Assist in moving and positioning of patient
- Insert and remove Foley urinary bladder catheter
- Place pneumatic tourniquet
- Confirm procedure with surgeon
- Drape patient within surgeon's guidelines
- Provide retraction of tissue and organs for optimal visualization with regard to tissue type and appropriate retraction instrument and/or technique
- Assist in maintaining hemostasis by direct pressure, use and application of appropriate surgical instrument for the task, placement of ties, placement of suture ligatures, application of chemical hemostatic agents, or other measures as directed by the surgeon
- Use electrocautery mono and bi-polar
- Clamp, ligate, and cut tissue per surgeon's directive
- Harvest saphenous vein, including skin incision, per surgeon's directive
- Dissect common femoral artery and bifurcate per surgeon's directive
- Maintain integrity of sterile field
- Close all wound layers (facia, subcutaneous and skin) as per surgeon's directive
- Insert drainage tubes per surgeon's directive
- Select and apply wound dressings
- Assist with resuscitation of patient during cardiac arrest or other life-threatening events in the operating room
- Perform any other duties or procedures incident to the surgical procedure deemed necessary and as directed by the surgeon

## **Career:**

Graduates from the Surgical First Assistant program at College of DuPage will be given an opportunity to become a Surgical First Assistant and are eligible to take the Certified Surgical First Assistant Examination (CSFA-ERC) from the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assistant (NBSTSA).

## **Program Profile:**

The Surgical First Assistant Certificate program will provide students with career ladder advancement opportunities as a surgical assistant using a variety of instructional methods. The program's didactic content will be offered in an online format, allowing the students to continue their employment. The program will also consist of a suture lab and clinical experience. The student is responsible for securing his/her own clinical preceptor and clinical site.

The Surgical First Assistant program will educate and train students to actively, safely, and expeditiously assist the surgeon in surgical operations. The Surgical First Assistant program will provide students with experience in aiding in surgical procedure exposure, hemostasis, closure, and other intraoperative surgical functions that help a surgeon carry out a safe surgical procedure with optimal results for the patient. In addition to intraoperative duties, the Surgical First Assistant program will also provide students with the knowledge and skills to perform preoperative and postoperative functions to better facilitate proper patient care under the direction and supervision of a surgeon in accordance with hospital policy and appropriate laws, regulations and standards.

## **Laboratory Skills, Competencies and Exams**

This program has mandatory lab skills, competencies and exams that must be passed prior to going to clinical rotations. If the student does not successfully complete the competencies, then the student will be asked to withdraw from the program.

## **Program Courses:**

- **CSFA 2501 – Surgical First Assistant Principles I (9 credit hours; Fall semester)**

Students will explore surgical first assisting fundamentals. Topics include surgical first assisting role and responsibilities, perioperative microbiology, pharmacology, electrolytes, fluid, and shock, anesthesia principles, surgical site infections, hematological principles, and all-hazards preparation. Concepts of general and obstetric and gynecologic surgeries will also be included. Prerequisite: Admission to the Surgical First Assistant Program is required. (9 lecture hours)

- **CSFA 2502 – Surgical First Assistant Laboratory Practicum (6 credit hours; Fall semester)**

Students will be introduced to concepts of surgical procedures including incision, step-by-step elements of the surgical procedures, wound closure, dressings, and drains that require a surgical first assistant. Topics include principles, techniques, didactics, and laboratory practicum of basic and advanced suturing, knot tying, and wound closure for a variety of injuries, surgeries, and incisions. Prerequisite: Admission to the Surgical First Assistant Program is required. (3 lecture hours, 4 lab hours, 8 clinical hours)

- **CSFA 2503 – Surgical First Assistant Principles II (13 credit hours; Spring semester)**

Students will explore the perioperative management of genitourinary, ophthalmic,

otorhinolaryngology, orthopedic, plastics, neuro, cardiothoracic, and peripheral vascular surgeries. Prerequisite: Admission to the Surgical First Assistant Program is required. CSFA 2501 with a grade of C or better, or equivalent AND CSFA 2502 with a grade of C or better, or equivalent (9 lecture hours, 16 clinical hours) AND completion of 40 clinical cases minimum.

- **CSFA 2504 – Surgical First Assistant Principles III (7 credit hours; Summer semester)**

Students will participate in a clinical internship as a culmination of course work in the Surgical First Assistant Program. Emphasis will be placed on acquiring proficiencies in the clinical setting. Students will participate in mock national exams and scenarios, which will prepare them to take the national certification examination. Prerequisite: CSFA 2503 with a grade of C or better, or equivalent (4 lecture hours, 12 clinical hours) AND completion of 50 clinical cases minimum

**Total: 35 credit hours**

**First Semester**

- CSFA 2501 – Surgical First Assistant Principles I (9 credit hours)
- CSFA 2502 – Surgical First Assistant Laboratory Practicum (6 credit hours)
- Completion of 40 clinical cases

Total: 15 credit hours

**Second Semester**

- CSFA 2503 - Surgical First Assistant Principles II (13 credit hours)
- Completion of 50 clinical cases

Total: 13 credit hours

**Third Semester**

- CSFA 2504 - Surgical First Assistant Principles III (7 credit hours)
- Completion of 50 clinical cases

Total: 7 credit hours

**Clinical Education:**

**The applicant is responsible for securing his or her own clinical preceptor (surgeon) and clinical site.**

The process of obtaining a clinical site and starting a clinical contract can take up to 12 weeks. **The clinical affiliation agreement must be fully executed prior to receiving permission to register for the program.**

Applicants must also identify a surgeon who will be willing to serve as a main preceptor. An agreement letter and a copy of the surgeon's CV/resume is required prior to registration. It is recommended that students obtain more than 1 main preceptor (surgeon).

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) along with the ARC-ST/SA require that all surgical procedures that are part of the 140 mandated cases are

done “off the clock”, meaning on your own time. Students must complete 140 surgical procedures: 20 general surgery cases, and 20 cases in each of two other specialties, other than that the remaining 140 cases can be done in any specialty.

CAAHEP also mandates that the clinical component of the program shall be educational in nature. Also, students shall not be substituted for personnel during the clinical component of the program. College of DuPage does have a Student Work Policy in place, which is also required by the accreditation body.

The intent of the Student Work Policy is to ensure that medical control and accountability exist. Medical control and accountability exist when there is unequivocal evidence that Surgical Assisting students are not operating as independent practitioners on clinical assignment and when SA students are under direct medical control or in a system where timely medical audit and review provide for quality assurance. The sponsoring institution program should establish and implement a Student Work Policy reviewed and approved by the Program Advisory Committee (PAC). The Student Work Policy should minimally state:

- All activities including clinical in the program must be educational
- Students must not be substituted for hired staff

NOTE: If the student is also an employee of the Facility, the Student and Facility will abide by the following: Student is not to function as an employee when performing student clinical rotations, and may not wear any identifiable information indicating they are an employee of the Facility. When the Student is functioning as an employee of the Facility, the time shall not be considered as student clinical rotation hours.

### **Technical Standards of Acceptance:**

To participate in any Health Career program at College of DuPage that has a direct patient care or clinical education component, applicants must possess additional non-academic skills. These occupational standards are consistent with the duties of the entry-level professional in that field and are set by the individual program. These skills, which protect the health and well-being of patients, may include, but are not limited to, the ability to:

- Lift, push, pull and/or carry greater than 100 pounds
- Lift and transfer patients to and from wheelchairs, stretchers, beds and imaging tables
- Move, adjust and manipulate equipment
- Position patients for exams
- Respond appropriately to sounds such as the patient’s voice and movements at a normal conversational volume
- Respond appropriately to equipment signals such as sound and light
- Manipulate the necessary hospital equipment for patient care such as dials, switches, push button keyboards
- Perform for a prolonged period without breaks in a typical shift of eight hours
- Communicate orally and in writing with patients, doctors and other personnel clearly and effectively, and have the ability to follow verbal and written directions

In the surgical assisting profession, you may be exposed to fumes, chemicals, cold, noise, radiation, blood/body fluids, and infectious diseases. See the packet for the Health Career program to which you are applying for specific occupational requirements. Students who do not meet these standards may be considered ineligible for a program and can be withdrawn from all program classes. If you are unsure whether you can meet these requirements, you are advised to consult an adviser, counselor or member of the program faculty to discuss the situation, and/or schedule an appointment with your physician prior to applying to the program or enrolling for classes.

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### **Financial Aid**

Information is available at the [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#), SSC 2220, or (630) 942-2251. Please fill out financial aid application; if your financial aid has not been approved yet, please pick the appropriate payment plan: DEFERRED PAYMENT PLAN, until your financial aid has been approved.

### **Statement on Medical Care and Health Insurance**

Students are responsible for their own medical care and health insurance while in the program. Students must possess health care insurance in order to train at the clinical affiliate. The student is responsible for any costs that may be incurred related to personal injuries he/she may acquire while performing activities at the clinical affiliate. The affiliating clinical facility and/or College of DuPage cannot be held liable for such injuries. Please visit <https://cod.edu/student-life/resources/student-insurance.aspx> for additional details. Students are required to provide evidence of current health insurance coverage. Please follow specific guidelines as instructed for submitting proof of insurance.

### **Statement on Medical Malpractice Insurance**

Malpractice insurance is required and is included in the clinical education tuition costs on an annual basis. That is, the cost of the insurance is included with the tuition costs. Students must be officially registered and listed on the instructor's class roster to be covered by the malpractice insurance.

### **Statement on Transportation**

Students are responsible for finding their own transportation to and from the College of DuPage and the clinical site. Student should expect to drive within a 50-mile radius of the college to their clinical site.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

The College prohibits discrimination in its admissions, employment, and educational programs or activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, arrest record, military status or unfavorable military discharge, citizenship status, and physical or mental disability. The College will protect an individual's right to express their viewpoint or opinion, so long as it does not violate State or Federal law and is not detrimental to the College.

This Policy against discrimination applies throughout all College environments, whether on campus, at work assignments off campus, at College-sponsored social functions, or otherwise.

Procedures to facilitate the College's prohibition of discrimination will be promulgated consistent with the Policy. (Board Policy 20-5).

### **Student E-Mail Policy**

College of DuPage will send all official communications to you through your official COD email (dupage.edu). You will no longer be able to use a preferred email account. You do have the option to forward these communications to a personal email account if you wish.

Check out your COD email to get the message about:

- Official COD communications
- Financial aid communications
- Petition to graduate
- Transfer credit evaluation
- Prerequisite proof Sensitive
- FERPA-related communications
- Transcript order Important messages from instructors

<https://cod.edu/student-life/resources/information-technology/email/email-policy.html>

### **Estimated Costs for the Surgical Assistant program**

Please visit the [Program Costs webpage](#) for estimated fees

Cost estimate **does not** include provisions for travel to and from school and clinical education sites.

College of DuPage is a member of the [Comprehensive Agreement Regarding the Expansion of Educational Resources \(CAREER\)](#), an agreement that provides expanded educational services with 38 other community colleges in Illinois.

Members of the [CAREER consortium](#) offer in-district tuition rates for select career and technical programs. Under the agreement, out-of-district students can enroll in an applied science program at College of DuPage that may not be available through their area community college.

Please visit [Cooperative Agreement Request form](#) and contact the Office of Student Registration Services at (630) 942-2377 for questions.



# **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

The following are **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS** for the Surgical First Assistant Program. These Registration requirements are a part of your **PACKET**. Your packet must be complete in order to be considered for **REGISTRATION** and allowed to **REGISTER** for the course. Use this **Registration Requirements checklist** to assure that you have everything you need to complete your packet. There is a **Registration Deadline of Friday, August 15, 2025 at 5pm** for this program. Be sure all items below are completed in advance of that deadline.

*NOTE: Admission Committees for all Health Science programs has the right to deny admission to any applicant that they feel is unable to fulfill these essential functions as described.*

1. **Advising Session**: Contact the Instructor, Esperanza “Ranzie” Wilson at [franadae@cod.edu](mailto:franadae@cod.edu) or (630) 942-2516 to schedule an Individual **Advising Session**. **It is required that an applicant attend an advising session within a 12 month period prior to the semester in which you begin the program.**
2. **College of DuPage application**: If you have not been admitted to College of DuPage, please complete the **non-refundable \$20 College of DuPage General Admissions Application** online. **This application is for general admissions to College of DuPage only.**
3. **Certified Surgical Technologist/CST/ST**: Submit proof of a minimum of **one (1)** of the following prerequisites to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu):
  - Certified Surgical Technologist with current certification (email copy of certificate)
  - Graduate of a CAAHEP accredited Surgical Technology program (email copy of certificate and/or transcripts)

OR

**Registered Nurse with perioperative experience, Physician Assistant with perioperative experience, and/or foreign medical doctor with perioperative experience**: submit proof of the following to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu):

- Registered Nurse License with verification from employer (within perioperative field)
- Physician Assistant License with verification from employer (within perioperative field)
- Foreign Medical Doctor with verification of transcript with perioperative rotations

4. **Required forms that must be emailed to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu):**
  - a) Request that your precepting surgeon complete Page 11 - ‘**College of DuPage Letter Written by your Surgeon Preceptor Template**’. The form must be completed by your surgeon preceptor (must be a surgeon who is a Medical Doctor (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O)) that he/she is willing to precept you and it must be signed and dated by the surgeon. (Please inform the surgeon that once you are in the program, accreditation mandates that you complete a minimum of 140 procedures: 20 in general surgery, 120 in any other specialty areas as long as it requires a surgical first assistant. (Email completed form to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu)).
  - b) Submit the ‘**Clinical Contract Information**’ form (page 12) as soon as possible to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu). The clinical affiliation agreement must be **fully executed prior to receiving permission to register** for the program. This process could take 3-6 months if there is not already a contract in place between the institution and College of DuPage.
  - c) Submit the completed ‘**Health Requirement Acknowledgement Form**’ (page 13) to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu).

5. The **Registration Deadline** for this program is **August 15, 2025 at 5pm**. Once you have completed the steps above, you will be notified via email that you have permission to register. Please continue to monitor your email for instructions.
6. Once given permission to register, please call the Registration Office at (630) 942-2237 and register for the Surgical First Assistant Fall 2025 courses:
  - CSFA 2501-NET01
  - CSFA 2502-NET01

*You must wait until you are officially “cleared” by the Program Coordinator before you are eligible to register. Acceptance into the program is tentative, until a clinical site and contract have been secured. All application documents delivered to the College of DuPage pertaining to a health sciences admissions file become the property of the College of DuPage and will not be returned to applicants. This includes but is not limited to transcripts, letters of recommendation, clinical evaluation forms or outside test reports.*

7. **Health Requirements** - This program requires you to complete Health Requirements, Background Check, and a Drug Test prior to clinical rotation. You will be given instructions via e-mail once you receive permission to register. Please continue to monitor your e-mail for instructions. The due date for completion is **September 15, 2025**. Failure to complete the health requirements within the given timeframe will prohibit you from starting your clinical rotation. Please keep in mind that not starting clinicals could jeopardize your spot in the program. Do not begin these requirements until you are instructed to do so.

## College of DuPage Letter Written by your Surgeon Preceptor Template

(To Be Completed by Surgeon/ Medical Group)

Surgeon/Medical Group Name

Address

Phone Number

Email

Date

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be the surgeon preceptor for the College of DuPage Surgical First Assistant student, \_\_\_\_\_. My surgical specialty is \_\_\_\_\_ and I operate at the following clinical *sites (hospitals, outpatient surgery centers, office)*: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. I understand that my role as the surgeon preceptor is to be the student's mentor while they learn and adapt the clinical skills needed to become a successful surgical assistant. These clinical skills include:

- Patient prep and positioning
- Local administration onto surgical site
- Draping
- Tourniquet application
- Foley catheter insertion
- Explanation of anatomical features involved within the surgical procedure
- Blunt dissection, retraction, assisting with the surgical view
- Suturing including tying (involved in all layers of the wound closure if possible)
- Drain placement and suture/tying procedures
- Dressing application
- Turnover of the operating room and assisting patient communication within pre-operative (holding) and/or PACU

I will be responsible in evaluating the student while they assist in a minimum of 140 cases throughout the duration of the College of DuPage Surgical First Assistant program (3 consecutive semesters, 1 year) from the dates of August \_\_\_\_\_ (year) to August \_\_\_\_\_ (year). Although I am the student's surgeon preceptor, the student is not limited to only assisting with me (as long as a clinical contract is in place). **NOTE:** If the student is also an employee of the Facility, the Student and Facility will abide by the following: Student is not to function as an employee when performing student clinical rotations, and may not wear any identifiable information indicating they are an employee of the Facility. When the Student is functioning as an employee of the Facility, the time shall not be considered as student clinical rotation hours.

Regards,

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Insert Signature] [Insert Date]

Return completed form to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu)

### **College of DuPage Clinical Contract Information**

NOTE: You may have more than 1 clinical site/contract; please duplicate this form if needed.

(To be completed by Student)

Name of Clinical Site:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Contact Name (Manager/Educator) and Title:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	

**Return completed form to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu)**

# College of DuPage

## Health Career Programs

### Health Requirement Acknowledgement

(To be completed by Student)

Part of this program is to complete health requirements prior to the first clinical rotation. Please see the [health requirement packet](#) for details. **Please do not complete these requirements until you are instructed to do so.** Along with the health requirements, you will also complete a drug test and background check.

Failure to submit the necessary paperwork, obtain the required examinations and vaccinations, and/or are obtain clearance to participate in all the program's clinical activities, without restrictions and/or precautions, you may be considered ineligible for the program and can be withdrawn from the program courses in which you are registered.

I, hereby, acknowledge that:

- a. I have reviewed the [Health Requirement packet](#) for the program and understand that the program has specific requirements that must be completed during specific time periods as directed.
- b. I have reviewed and understand that enrollment and participation in the clinical component of the program is subject to the practices and requirements of the clinical site, which may necessitate additional health requirements.
- c. I understand that my failure to complete the health requirements mandated by the program and/or the clinical site may prevent either my registration into the program or continuation in the program.

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Print Full Name

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Date

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Signature

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Program Name

Return completed form to [surgicalassistant@cod.edu](mailto:surgicalassistant@cod.edu)