

Recertification, simplified.



MAINTAINING THE CREDENTIAL





Association of Surgical Technologists

Who is AST?

The Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) facilitates the approval and processing of your continuing education (CE) credits toward your credential renewal through the NBSTSA.

Association of Surgical Technologists

6 W Dry Creek Circle, Ste 200

Littleton CO 80120-8031

800-637-7433

www.ast.org

Business hours: Monday–Friday,
8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. MDT



THE NATIONAL BOARD
OF SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY
AND SURGICAL ASSISTING

Who is NBSTSA?

The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) formerly known as the LCC-ST, (Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist), administers the national certification exams and issues the credential for CSTs and CFAs.

The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting

6 W Dry Creek Circle, Ste 100

Littleton CO 80120-8031

800-707-0057

www.nbstsa.org

Business hours: Monday–Friday,
8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. MDT



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Recertifying By CE Credits

A Simple Two-Step Process

Step 1—AST

Submit your CE credits to AST for processing and approval. CE credits are processed within 10 business days from the date received and you will receive a CE credit confirmation letter in the mail for your records.

Important Note: This does not mean your credential is automatically renewed. Once your CE credits are approved and on file with AST, proceed to step 2. You must submit a renewal application to the NBSTSA to complete your recertification.

Read all enclosed information completely before submitting CE credits. Credits not accepted could affect your recertification if sufficient time is not left to earn additional credits before the credential expiration date. **Your requirement total of CE credits should be approved and on file with AST six (6) months before your certification expiration date.**

If your CE credits were not accepted, this will give you time to earn approved CE credits within your certification cycle and avoid taking the recertification exam through the NBSTSA. Exam Fee: \$499 for CSTs and CFAs. This price is the same for both AST members and nonmembers.

Step 2—NBSTSA

Submit your CST or CFA renewal application with the appropriate fee to NBSTSA prior to recertification expiration date. **Even though your CE credits are approved, you must submit the required renewal application to the NBSTSA. There are no exceptions.** The NBSTSA takes four to six weeks for processing of your credential and issues your certification card and certificate. You may renew up to six months in advance of your expiration date. An NBSTSA renewal application is available at www.nbstsa.org. You do not need to mail proof of your CE credits to NBSTSA. Your CE credits are automatically on file with the NBSTSA.

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Certification Cycle

As of January 1, 2009 per the NBSTSA all certified individuals are on the four year certification cycle.

Four-Year Certification Cycle—CSTs

Certified Surgical Technologist® (CST) must earn 60 CE credits before the four-year cycle expires to renew the credential.*

Four-Year Certification Cycle—CFAs

Certified First Assistant® (CFA) must earn 75 CE credits before the four-year cycle expires to renew the credential.*

- ▲ **NBSTSA certification renewal date has not expired:**
Still may earn the additional CE credits needed as an AST member.
- ▲ **NBSTSA certification renewal date has expired:**
CE credits cannot be earned. Per policy of the NBSTSA, if certification date has expired CE credits can no longer be earned. There is no 30-day extension to earn CE credits. The certification exam must be taken through the NBSTSA for renewal.
- ▲ **NBSTSA certification has expired and CE credits were earned prior to the certification expiration date:** the credits can be submitted. The same AST fee applies, \$400 AST nonmember fee if credits earned when not an AST member. The NBSTSA will charge late fees for the renewal application. Contact the NBSTSA regarding any applicable late fees at 800-707-0057, option 1.

Verification of certification cycle dates is through the NBSTSA at 800-707-0057, option 1 or

 www.nbstsa.org

*CST® and CFA® are registered trademarks of the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA).

Recertification

Two Ways to Recertify

By Exam

The national certification exam and credential are offered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) formerly known as the LCC-ST, (Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist). It administers the national certification exams and issues the certification for CSTs and CFAs. AST and NBSTSA are two separate organizations. The Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) processes the Continuing Education Credits for individuals recertifying by credits and the NBSTSA does the actual recertification and issues the certification card and certificate.



THE NATIONAL BOARD
OF SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY
AND SURGICAL ASSISTING

- ▲ **Certified Surgical Technologist® (CST)**
recertification exam: \$499 for AST members and nonmembers
- ▲ **Certified First Assistant® (CFA) recertification exam:** \$499 for AST members and nonmembers

For exam questions and scheduling contact the NBSTSA at 800-707-0057, option 1, or

 www.nbstsa.org

NBSTSA business hours: Monday–Friday,
8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. MDT



By Continuing Education Credits (CE)

The Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) facilitates the approval and processing of your CE credits for the CST or CFA certification renewal through the NBSTSA. Approved CE credits are automatically on file with the NBSTSA and a CE credit letter confirmation is mailed for your records.

Important Note: This does not mean your credential is automatically renewed. You must submit a renewal application to the NBSTSA for recertification. The NBSTSA issues your certification card and certificate, not AST. Renewal application is available at www.nbstsa.org or 800-707-0057.



NBSTSA business hours: Monday–Friday,
8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. MDT

Earning CE Credits

- ▲ Advantages of Earning CE Credits as an AST Member
- ▲ Variety of Opportunities to Earn CE Credits
 - Employer-sponsored In-services
 - AST CE Online Resource Center
 - AST Monthly Journal—
The Surgical Technologist
 - AST Annual National Conferences
 - Local State Assembly
 - Professional Physician Organizations
 - College Credits
 - Writing for Health-related Publications
 - Instruction of Health Professions
- ▲ Documentation Requirement

Advantages of Earning CE Credits as an AST Member

CE credits earned outside of the AST membership are subject to the \$400 nonmember processing fee. If the CE credits are earned while an AST member, the processing of the credits is included in the AST membership and the \$400 processing fee is not required.

- ▲ Members can submit CE credits as often and as frequently as they wish at no additional cost
- ▲ Convenient online continuing education credits available
- ▲ Substantially discounted CE opportunities, including multiple-credit packages
- ▲ Access online profile to track CE credits
- ▲ Receive a report of your cumulative CE credits every year
- ▲ Savings on the annual AST National Conference. Offer up to 18 CE credits per year

Variety of Opportunities to Earn CE Credits

All CE credits submitted are examined for compliance with the policies set by the AST Board of Directors and the NBSTSA. This is to ensure they are approved CE credits for acceptance by the NBSTSA.

CE credits may be earned from one source or from a mixture listed below.

- ▲ Employer-sponsored In-services
- ▲ AST CE Online Resource Center
- ▲ Monthly Journal—*The Surgical Technologist*
- ▲ AST Annual National Conferences
- ▲ Local State Assembly
- ▲ Professional Physician Organizations
- ▲ College Credits
- ▲ Writing for Health-related Publications
- ▲ Instruction of Health Professionals

Employer-sponsored In-services

An in-service is a continuing education activity that is provided in-house through the employer to improve skills or to learn about new developments in the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting.

1. Employer in-services are accepted by AST for CE credits if they are relevant to the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting.
2. Health care facility orientation is not accepted for CE credits.
3. ACLS, ADLS, BLS, BDLS, BTLS, CPR, PALS, are accepted for CE credits.
4. If the employer sponsors or provides funds for an employee(s) to attend a conference, seminar, symposium, 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 employee's clinical educator or other individual designated by the employer. The total number of CE credits to be awarded for the in-service should be printed on the certificate along with the date of the activity.
6. AST accepts *annual* mandatory CE activities relevant to the practice of the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting, **Important Note: Training provided by employer and work experience CE credits are not awarded for on-the-job training, health care facility orientation, or 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 as described above.



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.

AST CE Online Resource Center

AST Member CE Credit Package Deals

- ▲ **Package 1:** 21 CE Credit Package for \$35
\$91 savings
- ▲ **Package 2:** 18 CE Credit Package for \$30
\$78 savings
- ▲ **Package 3:** 10 CE Credit Package for \$15
\$45 savings (Neurosurgical Specialty)
- ▲ **Package 4:** 10 CE Credit Package for \$15
\$45 savings (Orthopedic Specialty)
- ▲ **Package 5:** 12 CE Credit Package for \$19
\$53 savings (General)
- ▲ **Package 6:** 12 CE Credit Package for \$19
\$53 savings (Miscellaneous)
- ▲ **3 Free Online CE Credits Annually**
(4 years/12 Free Credits)
- ▲ **All available 24/7 at www.ast.org**

All other AST CE credits are \$6 per credit for members. Nonmembers are \$10 per credit plus the \$400 AST nonmember processing fee. These rates only apply to CE credits provided by AST through the monthly issue of *The Surgical Technologist* and the AST Online CE Resource Center. They do not apply to credits not offered through AST.

Two options to submit online CE credits:

- ▲ Pay for the CE credits online and the credits post to your AST record automatically within 24 hours.
- ▲ Print out the Certificate of Completion of each test and submit by mail to AST with payment.

Extra CE credits do *not* carry over to next certification cycle. Per policy set forth by the NBSTSA, CE credits have to be earned during the *current* certification cycle; therefore, extra CE credits earned would not carry over to the next certification cycle. If you elect *not* to earn additional CE credits over the recertification requirement, wait until your next certification cycle to submit AST tests or AST CE credit packages. No refunds for AST tests or packages taken online.

AST Monthly Journal—*The Surgical Technologist*

These articles provide valuable knowledge and credits that may be applied toward your recertification. Return the answer sheets to AST with the appropriate processing fee. You do not need to submit a CE Reporting Form with the journal tests. There are no expiration dates on the CE articles/tests and you may go back to the beginning from 1980 to present.

Members: \$6 per credit (per credit not per test)

Nonmembers: \$10 per credit (per credit not per test plus the \$400 nonmember fee)

Please Note: If a test has 2 or 3 credits, the fee will be \$12 and \$18 respectively.

Submit CE credits by mail with correct payment to:

Member Services

AST

6 West Dry Creek Circle, Ste 200

Littleton, CO 80120-8031

Helpful Tips

- ▲ Do not need to submit a separate check for each journal test. You may submit multiple journal tests with one check or money order. e.g., 5 journal tests at 1 credit per test. 5 tests x \$6 per credit = \$30 check or money order.
- ▲ If possible use a credit card number (debit or credit). It is a faster option for processing of credits and offers more flexibility for correct payment of submissions.
- ▲ Send the original answer sheet(s) from the journal and make a copy for your records.
- ▲ If you do not pass the test(s), they will be returned to you along with your payment.
- ▲ All AST tests and credit package deals must be earned within your current certification cycle. CE Credits earned outside of the certification cycle cannot be accepted per the NBSTSA. Credits submitted within your current certification cycle will ONLY be applied to that cycle. *If you have recertified at a future date, wait to submit future tests so they will apply to your next certification cycle.* Extra CE credits do not carry over to next certification cycle. No refunds for AST tests or packages taken online.
- ▲ On the journal test answer sheet are the month, year, test number, and number of credits the test is worth. It will say 1CE, 2CE, or 3CE and require payment of \$6, \$12, and \$18 accordingly. If you have an older test that doesn't show the credits, it should be interpreted as 1CE.
- ▲ CE credits not earned while maintaining an active AST membership are subject to the \$400 AST nonmember processing fee.

After your credits are processed, AST will send you a letter acknowledging the number of credits that were accepted. You can also check your CE credit status online with your login information at

 www.ast.org

Reasons AST journal tests are returned.

- ▲ Payment is needed
- ▲ Overpayment
- ▲ Failed Quiz—need a score of 70% or higher to pass each AST test. Review the material and resubmit new answers with the appropriate payment for processing.
- ▲ Duplicates—the test(s) were previously submitted and are on record within the current certification cycle. AST journal and online tests can be earned on a one time basis only.
- ▲ Nonmembers who wish to apply these credits to their NBSTSA certification will be subject to a \$400 nonmember processing fee in addition to the \$10 per credit.

AST Annual National Conferences

Earn up to 18 CE credits per year! Plus additional CE credits for preconference events. You can earn all of your credits in three to four years. CE credits earned at AST's national conferences are automatically documented in your AST record and a CE credit conference confirmation letter is mailed to you for your records four to six weeks after conference.

Local State Assembly

Your state assembly offers continuing education seminars and may provide guidance in pursuing legislation in your state. Announcements of state assembly meetings and workshops in your state are published in the AST monthly journal, *The Surgical Technologist*, on your state's web site, and at www.ast.org, under State Assemblies. Your state assembly will also contact you about upcoming workshops in your area.

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

Professional Physician Organizations

CE credits offered at programs sponsored by professional physician organizations, such as the American College of Surgeons or American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, are accepted by AST: *however, the professional physician organization must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).*

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 along with the date of the activity.

College Credits

- ▲ College courses to be submitted for CE credits must be completed with a grade of “C” or better.
- ▲ The courses must be completed at an institution that is accredited by an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- ▲ Surgical assistant college courses submitted for CE credit(s) must be completed at a CAAHEP-accredited surgical assistant program.
- ▲ Courses must be relevant to the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting.
- ▲ 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.
- ▲ College courses submitted as quarter hours will be converted to an equivalent number of semester hours; quarter hour x 0.75 = semester hour.
- ▲ **Documentation requirement:** Unofficial college transcript—no exceptions made. Submit transcript with the CE Credit Reporting Form listing each college course. Description of courses are helpful in determining relevancy to the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting, e.g., nursing, physician assistant courses.

Freshman (1000)/sophomore (2000) level courses or equivalent will be awarded 5 CE credits for each semester hour completed. Example: 3 credit course, $3 \times 5 = 15$ CE credits.

Junior (3000)/senior (4000) level courses or equivalent will be awarded 7 CE credits for each semester hour completed. Example: 3 credit course, $3 \times 7 = 21$ CE credits.

Graduate level (5000+) courses or equivalent will be awarded 10 CE credits for each semester hour completed. Example: 3 credit course, $3 \times 10 = 30$ CE credits.

Writing for Health-related Publications

1. When authoring a CE article to be published for a magazine or journal, the article 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 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

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.

This applies to CSTs and CFAs that serve as instructors or lecturers during an AST approved CE workshop, programs, or speaker at an employer sponsored in-service: e.g., wound closure workshop at a state assembly meeting

CST and CFA presenters and instructors may 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.

CE Credit Documentation Requirements

What type of documentation is accepted?

Only need **one** of the following verification forms for submission of each CE activity.

1. Certification of Completion
2. Copy of the Attendance sign-in sheet with name highlighted in yellow.
3. Transcript from employer or educator
4. If 1–3 above is not available, a letter (on official letterhead) from the educator or supervisor indicating the activities listed on the CE Reporting Form was attended and at least 30 minutes in length. An original signature from the educator or supervisor is required on the letter.

Proper Documentation Is:

(For each CE activity submitted.)

1. Name of the activity
2. Date of activity
3. How many CE credits awarded or length of time. One CE credit must be at least 50 minutes in length.
4. Who presented the activity? If an in-service through your employer state 'in-service' on the CE Reporting Form under the Step 3 column.
5. Your name listed on the document.

What type of documentation is not accepted?

Copies of event announcements, agendas, and receipts of payment, do not qualify as documentation and will not be accepted as proof of CE credits earned.

Non-AST Sponsored Programs

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.

AST Sponsored Programs

For AST sponsored programs such as the annual 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 AST members and mail a CE credit confirmation letter for your records.

 For more information, visit www.ast.org

Why CE Credits Are Not Accepted

- ▲ CE Credit Value Not Met
- ▲ Not Within Current NBSTSA Certification Cycle
- ▲ Documentation/Description Needed
- ▲ Not Relevant
- ▲ CE Credits Earned Outside Of AST Membership
- ▲ CE Reporting Form Needed
- ▲ Duplicates
- ▲ Nonmember Fee
- ▲ Program Approval Needed Through AST

CE credits not accepted could affect your recertification if sufficient time is not left to earn additional credits before the credential expiration date. **Your requirement total of CE credits should be approved and on file with AST six (6) months before your certification expiration date.** If your CE credits were not accepted, this will give you time to earn approved CE credits within your certification cycle and avoid taking the recertification exam through the NBSTSA. Exam Fee: \$499 for CSTs and CFAs. This price is the same for both AST members and nonmembers.

CE Credit Value Not Met

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.

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.

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.

Not Within Current NBSTSA Certification Cycle

CE credits earned must be within your current 4 year certification cycle start and expiration dates. CE credits are accepted by the date of completion, not by the purchased or the date submitted to AST.

Documentation/Description Needed

It is a requirement to submit copies of verification forms for all CE credits being submitted with the AST Continuing Education Reporting Form. Keep the original documentation. Proper documentation is a certificate of completion, in-service transcript, or attendance sheet with your name highlighted in yellow (any other color is not readable) for each continuing education activity submitted. A signature or initials from your educator or supervisor is *not* acceptable. If the aforementioned documentation is not available, an official letter (on employer letterhead) from your educator or supervisor stating the activities listed on the CE Reporting Form were attended and each activity at least 30 minutes in length. An original signature from the educator or supervisor is required on the letter. For college courses, an unofficial college transcript must be submitted.

Documentation Not Accepted

Announcements of events, agendas, tests, or paid receipts, do not qualify as documentation and will not be accepted as proof of CE credits earned.

Not Relevant

Continuing educational activities must be relevant to the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting

CE Credits Earned Outside of AST Membership

All CE credits must be earned while maintaining an AST membership. CE credits earned outside of the AST membership are subject to the \$400 nonmember processing fee requirement. (Effective 1/1/2005)

CE Reporting Form Needed

All CE credits from state assembly meetings, workshops, employer in-services, and home studies must be listed on the Continuing Education Reporting Form for processing. List each continuing education activity individually. CE Reporting Forms may be photocopied or printed at www.ast.org.

Duplicates

Do not submit CE credits previously submitted and on file with AST.

Nonmember Fee

As of January 1, 2005, per the National Board for Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA), all credits must be submitted to AST for processing and approval. All CE credits must be earned while maintaining an AST membership. CE credits earned outside of the AST membership are subject to the \$400 nonmember processing fee requirement. The \$400 nonmember processing fee includes one year of AST membership.

Program Approval Needed Through AST

The **AST Policies for Program and Enduring Materials Approval** became effective January 1, 2010.

Organizations providing or sponsoring continuing education activities are required to apply for **program approval** by contacting Kevin Frey, AST Education Director, kfrey@ast.org, or 800-637-7433, ext 2515. Business hours are Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. MDT.

This does not apply to in-services through your employer. Employer in-services are accepted by AST for CE credits if they are relevant to the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting and each CE activity is at least 30 minutes in length.

Definitions

Continuing Education (CE)

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.

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.





Nonmembers of AST

ALL CE credits must be earned while maintaining an AST membership. CE credits earned outside of the AST membership are subject to the \$400 nonmember processing fee requirement. The \$400 nonmember processing fee includes one year of AST membership.

CE credits are reviewed before the \$400 is charged to your credit card or check is cashed. If the required amount of CE credits are not approved the CE credits are returned with payment. Two common examples are listed below.

▲ Example A:

I have earned all of my CE credits in the past few years within my current certification cycle and would like to become an AST member to submit my CE credits for certification.

Result: CE credits must be earned while maintaining an AST membership. The \$400 nonmember fee would apply for processing and approval of CE credits.

▲ Example B:

I have earned some CE credits when not an AST member and some when I was an AST member.

Result: The \$400 AST nonmember fee would apply to the CE credits earned when not an AST member.

Certification Expired

Penalty Fees

See below for the penalty fees established by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) for late renewal of certification by CE credits, meaning that the CE credits were previously earned *within* the renewal cycle date but the credential has expired. CE credits cannot be earned after the recertification expiration date has passed and the certification exam must be taken for renewal.

Note: With a lapse in certification, the date that the NBSTSA receives the application will be the new renewal date.

Penalty Fees

- ▲ **0–1 month past expiration: \$50.00**
\$50 standard renewal fee + \$0 penalty fee
- ▲ **1–3 months past expiration: \$150.00**
\$50 standard renewal fee + \$100 penalty fee with a lapse in certification
- ▲ **3–6 months past expiration: \$250.00**
\$50 standard renewal fee + \$200 penalty fee with a lapse in certification
- ▲ **6–9 months past expiration: \$350.00**
\$50 standard renewal fee + \$300 penalty fee with a lapse in certification
- ▲ **9–12 months past expiration: \$450.00**
\$50 standard renewal fee + \$400 penalty fee with a lapse in certification
- ▲ **12–18 months past expiration: \$550.00**
\$50 standard renewal fee + \$500 penalty fee with a lapse in certification
- ▲ **18–24 months past expiration: \$650.00**
\$50 standard renewal fee + \$600 penalty fee with a lapse in certification

After 24 months, the applicant must re-take the certification exam and pay the fee for renewal by exam.

Name Change

Name change is through the NBSTSA, not through AST for previous or current certificants.

The National Board for Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) formerly known as the LCC-ST, (Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist) administers the national certification exams and issues the certification for CSTs and CFAs. AST administers the CE credits, and the NBSTSA issues the actual certification. AST and NBSTSA are two separate organizations. Previous or currently certified individuals who have a name change must go through the NBSTSA. The “Name Change” form is available at www.nbstsa.org. They can also be reached at 800-707-0057, option 1.

Frequently Asked Questions

Recertification—NBSTSA

(www.nbstsa.org, 800-707-0057, option 1)

Who is in charge of certification?

The certifying agency for surgical technologists and surgical assistants is the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA), formerly LCC-ST). It is solely responsible for all decisions regarding certification.

Why do you charge \$50 for a renewal fee when I am an AST member?

The NBSTSA charges a \$50 fee for recertification. The NBSTSA and AST are separate organizations. AST does the processing and approval of the CE credits and the NBSTSA does the certification.

Why are you charging me a late fee?

AST never charges late fees. The NBSTSA has late fee requirements if your renewal application was received after your certification expiration date. Please refer to the Certification Expired section on page 21.

Why do you require a photo?

The NBSTSA requires a photo with the renewal application for recertification. The NBSTSA issues your new certification card with your photo. AST does not require a photo.

How can I schedule a time to take the recertification exam?

Once you receive your Authorization to Test (ATT) letter, you may contact Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP) to schedule a time. Complete information is available at www.nbstsa.org.

If my certificate has the wrong name on it, what do I do?

Call NBSTSA at 800-707-0057, option 1, or www.nbstsa.org.

My certification has lapsed. Do I have to retake the exam?

Yes, unless one of the situations under Certification Expired applies on page 3. Call NBSTSA at 800-707-0057, option 1.



Credits—AST

(www.ast.org, 800-637-7433, option 3)

How many credits do I need to renew my certification?

As of January 1, 2009 per the NBSTSA all certified individuals are on the four year certification cycle.

▲ Four-Year Certification Cycle—CSTs

Certified Surgical Technologist® (CST) must earn 60 CE credits before the four-year cycle expires to renew the credential.

▲ Four-Year Certification Cycle—CFAs

Certified First Assistant® (CFA) must earn 75 CE credits before the four-year cycle expires to renew the credential.

Why should I be an AST member when earning CE Credits?

Avoid the \$400 nonmember processing fee! Please refer to the section on Advantages of Earning CE Credits as an AST Member on page 6.

How much does it cost to have AST maintain a record of the CE credits I've earned?

There is no charge for AST members for CE credit retention. It is part of the annual \$80 membership benefits. **Nonmembers:** \$400 AST nonmember fee.

How can I find out how many continuing education credits I have on file with AST?

- ▲ Every time CE credits are submitted for processing, a CE credit letter is mailed for your records.
- ▲ As an AST member, you can check your CE credits online by using your login information at www.ast.org.
- ▲ Each January, AST mails an annual CE credit letter to all certified members with the total of continuing education credits that have been earned in your current certification cycle.

How do I submit my continuing education credits to send to AST?

AST requires the submission of the AST CE Reporting Form(s) with your CE credits. You can print the CE Reporting Forms at www.ast.org, under Forms.

3 Ways To Submit Your CE Credits

- ▲ **Mail to:** AST 6 West Dry Creek Circle Ste 200
Littleton, CO 80120-8031
- ▲ **Fax CE credits to:** 303-694-9169
Do not mail credits that were previously faxed.
- ▲ **Email scanned CE credits in PDF format to:**
memserv@ast.org. *Do not mail credits that were previously emailed.*

How much does it cost to submit all of my CE credits to AST?

Members: can submit their CE credits as often as they wish at no additional cost. Submission of CE credits is included in the \$80 annual membership.

Nonmembers: are subject to the \$400 AST nonmember fee.

It is recommended that CE credits be submitted six months prior to recertification.

How do I know that AST has accepted the CE credits I submitted?

After the credits are processed, AST mails a CE credit letter to you with the number of credits that were accepted. The letter is proof that AST processed your credits. Also, as an AST member you can check your CE credits online by using your login information at www.ast.org.

How long does it take AST to process CE credits?

CE credits are processed within 10 business days from the day they are received.

What happens to my CE credits that AST has recorded if I don't renew my membership?

If AST membership lapses for more than 90 days, the CE credits earned and submitted while you were a member are maintained by AST and can be applied toward renewal of the credential.

If I join AST after I earned by CE credits as a nonmember will they be accepted toward renewal of certification?

CE credits are accepted with the \$400 nonmember processing fee.

Are there other ways to obtain CE credits besides the CE exams in the Journal?

Please refer to the Earning CE Credits section on page 6.

How can AST members access the CE articles and tests through the AST Online CE Resource site?

CE Credit Access (available 24/7 www.ast.org)

- ▲ Click on “Earn CEs”—on top of the homepage, little green button
- ▲ Click on link “AST Online CE Resource Site”
- ▲ Under Member Log In Enter your “User Name” which is your full email address on file.
- ▲ Under Member Log In Enter your “Password”.
- ▲ This takes you to the Continuing Education Resource Center

The exam can be purchased online. If you prefer not to pay online, print out the certificate of completion and mail with appropriate fee to AST. **Nonmembers:** Online CE credit access is a benefit of AST membership.

Can CE credits be earned by attending employer in-services?

Yes. For complete information, see Employer Sponsored In-Services under Earning CE Credits session on page 7.

Do I need to submit documentation from my local state assembly meetings and AST approved commercial programs? Don't they automatically send this to AST?

No organizations or companies automatically send AST documentation. It is the responsibility of the CST or CFA to submit proof of CE credits earned.

What categories do my CE credits go under?

There is no need to categorize your CE credits. Per the NBSTSA, categories 1, 2, and 3 have been eliminated.

Is it \$6 per credit to submit my CE credits as an AST Member?

CE credits earned through AST cost \$6 per credit for members and \$10 per credit for nonmembers. These rates only apply to CE credits provided by AST through the monthly issue of *The Surgical Technologist* or the AST Online CE Resource Center. They do not apply to credits not earned through AST.

Do I need to send proof of CE credits for recertification to the NBSTSA with my renewal application?

You do not need to mail proof of your CE credits to NBSTSA. Your CE credits are automatically on file with the NBSTSA.

 For more information, visit www.ast.org

Checklist Before Submitting CE Credits To AST

Two Step Process for Recertification By CE Credits

Step 1: Checklist before submitting CE credits to AST

- ✓ All CE credits earned while an AST member?
- ✓ All CE credits earned within your current certification cycle set forth by the NBSTSA?
- ✓ CE credits relevant to the medical-surgical practice of surgical technology and surgical assisting?
- ✓ Submit CE Reporting Form(s)? Obtain from www.ast.org homepage under Forms. CE credits will be returned without a CE Reporting Form attached.
- ✓ List each educational activity on the CE Reporting Form?
- ✓ Submit proper documentation for each education activity listed on the CE Reporting Form? Keep originals of documentation and submit copies
- ✓ Enclose the proper fee (if applicable)? **Members:** no additional fee for processing CE credits excluding AST tests. **Nonmembers:** \$400 processing fee. CE credits will be returned if no fee is enclosed.

Money orders, personal checks, institutional checks, Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted. Checks payable to AST.

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Yes! All CE credits submitted are examined for compliance by the policies set by the AST Board of Directors and the NBSTSA. This is to ensure they are approved CE credits for your recertification.



Step 2: NBSTSA Renewal Application

You may renew up to six months in advance of the expiration date of your certification cycle. This does not change your original expiration date. Submit your CST or CFA renewal application along with the renewal fee to the National Board for Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA), *prior* to your recertification expiration date. Failure to do so will result in additional fees by the NBSTSA. The NBSTSA takes four to six weeks for processing and will issue your new certification certificate and card. A renewal application is available at www.nbstsa.org. You do not need to mail proof of your CE credits to NBSTSA your CE credits are automatically on file with the NBSTSA.

*Prices subject to change without notice.



800-637-7433 www.ast.org



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OF SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY
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