



SUB-COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION FOR SURGICAL ASSISTING (SASA)
AND
ACCREDITATION REVIEW COUNCIL ON EDUCATION IN SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY AND SURGICAL ASSISTING (ARC/STSA)

ACCREDITATION PROCESS, PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE - SURGICAL ASSISTING

- I. **Initiating the Accreditation Process (Approximately 8 – 12 months)**
 - A. **Contact the ARC/STSA office before or upon institutional accreditor approval** of a new surgical technology or surgical assisting program start.
 - B. Programs applying for accreditation for the first time or renewing accreditation that has expired will apply for Initial Accreditation.
 1. The SASA-ARC/STSA will schedule a mutually agreed upon on-site evaluation date based on schedule availability and the program's graduation date. A visit should be scheduled when the first cohort of students is in the final ¼ of clinical component or final phase of the program.
 2. The program will order a copy of the "Accreditation Packet" to begin the "Self-Study Application."
 - C. **Submission of the Accreditation Application**
 1. The "Self-Study Application" should be received in the SASA-ARC/STSA office at least 4 months prior to the on-site evaluation and should include:
 - a. Completed Self-Study Report
 - b. \$1200.00 Initial Application Fee
 - c. \$2500.00 Initial On-Site Evaluation Fee
 - d. CAAHEP Request for Accreditation Services Form (<http://www.caahep.org/Content.aspx?!D=11>)
 - e. On-site evaluation schedule
- II. **On-Site Evaluation and Program Approval (Approximately 8 to 12 months)**
 - A. The on-site evaluation will be performed in approximately 1½ to 2 days. On-site evaluations (site visits) for all program applicants for *Initial Accreditation* cannot occur before the cohort/class being visited is at least 1/2 complete with the clinical requirement for successful program completion and/or before the program has provided evidence of institutional accreditation.
 - B. The program is informed via letter of the on-site evaluators' findings and/or concerns found during the on-site evaluation (6-8 weeks).
 - C. The program is given approximately 6 to 8 weeks to submit a response to the letter of findings. The accreditation application is complete upon receipt of the program's response to the on-site evaluation findings letter.
 - D. The complete program application is forwarded to the next SASA, ARC/STSA and CAAHEP board meetings.
 1. The SASA and ARC/STSA board meets twice a year in March and September.
 - a. On-site evaluations performed in the months of May-October are forwarded to the September meeting if the program's application is complete.
 - b. On-site evaluations performed in the months of November-April are forwarded to the March meeting if the program's application is complete.
 2. Applications are forwarded to the CAAHEP board twice a year in May and November.
 - a. On-site evaluations performed in the months of May-October are forwarded to the November meeting if the program's application is complete.
 - b. On-site evaluations performed in the months of November-April are forwarded to the May meeting if the program's application is complete.
 3. Upon the completion of a CAAHEP meeting, each program will be notified of CAAHEP's decision in writing approximately 2 weeks following the meeting.

III. The Initial Accreditation Process (5 years)

- A. Once a program has received Initial Accreditation, it will begin submitting an Annual Report that is focused on the program outcomes.
- B. Each program should use the following SASA-ARC/STSA standardized/approved documents as tools for data collection for the Annual Report:
 1. Graduate Survey for Surgical Assisting Education
 2. Employer Survey for Graduates of Surgical Assisting Education
 3. Approved program assessment exam
 - a. CFA exam through the National Board for Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA)
 - b. CSA through the National Surgical Assistant Association (NSAA)
- C. Annual Reports are due by May 1st of every year.
- D. Programs will receive Annual Report instructional materials in January of every year.
- E. After receipt of two or more Annual Reports and submission of a Program Review Report (PRR), the SASA-ARC/STSA will determine if the program is in continued compliance with the Standards.
 1. If the program is determined to be in compliance, the ARC/STSA, upon recommendation by SASA, will forward a recommendation of Continuing Accreditation to CAAHEP.
 2. If the program is determined to be in non-compliance, the ARC/STSA, upon recommendation by SASA, will require the scheduling of a Consultative On-Site Evaluation.

III. The Transition from Initial Accreditation to Continuing Accreditation – The Program Review Report - PRR (1.5 to 2 years)

- A. The program begins the continuing accreditation application process approximately 2.5 to 3 years following the award of initial accreditation. This application process is initiated by the SASA-ARC/STSA.
 1. The "Program Review Report Application" should be received in the SASA-ARC/STSA office on or before the due date assigned in the PRR Notification Letter and Instructions and should include:
 - a. Completed Program Review Report
 - b. CAAHEP Request for Accreditation Services Form (<http://www.caahep.org/Content.aspx?ID=11>)
- B. The program is informed via letter of the PRR Review Panel's findings and/or concerns found during the review (8-12 weeks).
- C. The program is given approximately 6 to 8 weeks to submit a response to the letter of findings. The accreditation application is complete upon receipt of the program's response to the PRR findings letter.
- D. The complete program application is forwarded to the next SASA, ARC/STSA and CAAHEP board meetings.
 1. The SASA and ARC/STSA board review PRR applications in March.
 2. If a recommendation for Continuing Accreditation is made by the SASA-ARC/STSA, PRR applications are forwarded to the CAAHEP board in May.
 3. Upon the completion of the CAAHEP meeting, each program will be notified of CAAHEP's decision in writing approximately 2 weeks following the meeting.
- E. Programs **must** transition from Initial Accreditation status to Continuing Accreditation status before the program's Initial Accreditation expires. If the program's Initial Accreditation expires, the program will be required to begin the Initial Accreditation process described under Section I and II.

IV. The Continuing Accreditation Process (1 to 10 years)

- A. After a program receives Continuing Accreditation, it will continue to submit an Annual Report.
- B. On-Site Evaluations will be performed at least once in a ten-year period. These evaluations will be performed under two (2) different formats. The following is a synopsis of the formats:
 1. Random/Continuing Evaluation
 - a. Will occur once in a ten-year period.
 - b. The focus of the evaluation is on the verification of Annual Report data.
 - c. The programs will be given notice of the visit 3-4 weeks prior to the evaluation visit.
 - d. No Self-Study Report is due, unless previously requested by the SASA-ARC/STSA.
 2. Consultative Evaluation
 - a. Triggered by reports of outcomes consistently below SASA-ARC/STSA thresholds.
 - b. The focus of the evaluation is on areas of the program related to the insufficient outcomes and changes implemented to permit thresholds to be met or exceeded.
 - c. The On-Site Evaluation is schedule at a time mutually agreed to by the SASA-ARC/STSA and the program.
 - d. No Self-Study Report is due, unless previously requested by the SASA-ARC/STSA.

- C. Programs will continue through the Continuing Accreditation cycle, unless the program voluntarily withdraws from CAAHEP accreditation or the SASA-ARC/STSA recommends withdrawal of accreditation.

**For more information on the surgical assisting accreditation process, please visit our web-site at www.arcstsa.org or contact our office at (303) 694-9262.