**ST vs SA Salary Survey Results**

**SUMMARY**

In order to develop a deeper understanding of the impact a surgical assisting education has for surgical technicians, the Royal Academy of Surgical Assisting conducted a survey of STs and SAs of varying experiences. To the right, you can see an overview of the results. Based on this graph it is clear there is a definite progression in average salaries beginning with newly graduated STs as the lowest earners and leading to the experienced SAs as the highest earners. There is approximately a $13/hour increase from a new ST to an experienced SA, and a $7/hour jump from a new ST graduate to a new SA graduate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3rd Quartile</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Bottom</th>
<th>2nd Quartile</th>
<th>Average Low</th>
<th>Average Middle</th>
<th>Average High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Grad STs ($/hr)</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>15.94</td>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>15.94</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$17</td>
<td>$19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp STs ($/hr)</td>
<td>22.37</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>23.30</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>$21</td>
<td>$23</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Grad SAs ($/hr)</td>
<td>22.37</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>23.30</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>$21</td>
<td>$23</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp SAs ($/hr)</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>28.93</td>
<td>28.37</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>$27</td>
<td>$29</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the difference in pay ranges from New STs to Experienced SAs?

The graph to the right shows the ranges in salaries of new STs through experienced SAs. This graph shows more detailed results about the ranges in salaries. The white error bars (vertical lines) show the actual salary ranges for each category. As with the above graph, there is a clear upward progression of salaries from newly graduated STs to experienced SAs. Also, the range of salaries expands more for SAs, meaning that you have more of an opportunity to differentiate yourself and get rewarded for it!

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* Calculated based on up-front payment of course for a cost of $2,995 and an average of 40 hours a week worked.

* In order to remove the outliers and accurately present the information, RASA judgmentally chose to remove those data points that were approximately 2 standard deviations away from the median (approximately a total of 4% of the data) to insure that there were no outliers in the data. Actual reported lowest salaries were $9, $14, $11, $16 for new STs, experiences STs, new SAs and experienced SAs respectively per hour. Actual reported highest salaries were $26, $45, $40, $90 for new STs, experiences STs, new SAs and experienced SAs respectively per hour.
Who performs Surgical Assisting at your facility? (select all that apply)

- ST/SA: 131 (69%)
- RNFA: 74 (39%)
- PA: 103 (54%)
- Only Surgeons: 31 (16%)

What State do you practice in?
We compiled a listing based on geographic locations of the survey respondents. The picture below shows the amount of responses we received from each state. As you can see we received the most responses from surgical techs in Texas, Georgia and Florida, but we received responses from almost every state. We also received a few international salary results! There are a few states that surgical assisting is prohibited, however, most states recognize the medical delegation clause, and the American College of Surgeon statement that trained surgical assistants may work under the direct supervision of the surgeon. Contact your state Board of Medicine for details.

How long have you been practicing as a Surgical Technologist?
Our survey showed that many STs who are ready to take the next step in furthering their careers have been practicing for over 5 years, however you do not need to have years of experience as an ST! In fact, current students of a surgical tech program can enroll prior to graduating. You need to have your basic science classes completed, get a letter of recommendation from your ST instructor, and a recommendation from a surgeon stating you would be a good candidate for an SA program and that you are proficient in operating room fundamentals.
What percentage of Surgical Assisting do you perform while employed as a Surgical Technologist?

Our survey showed that the majority of STs are performing the job of a surgical assistant, without formal SA training or certification. This also means that they are likely not receiving the salary they could be, or obtaining the skills they need to have! By completing our formal SA training program you will be able to receive the recognition, pay and benefits of a formal SA. Our belief is that all surgical assistants should obtain the formal training necessary to perform as a skilled, knowledgeable and integral part of the operating room team. Performing as a surgical assistant without formal training puts the patient and practitioner at risk for injury and legal ramifications, in our opinion.

Did you graduate from a formal Surgical Technology program?

Although most of our students, and respondents have formal ST education, we still accept on-the-job trained surgical technologists. If you are a graduate of a formal ST program, all we need is proof of your education and two letters of recommendation (forms provided by RASA). If you are an on-the-job trained ST, you would be eligible to take the program in conjunction with some co-requisite courses.5

How many operating rooms does the facility you work in have?

The results of our survey showed that the majority of the respondents work in large facilities with greater than ten operating rooms. This indicated that many STs have the opportunity to get significant surgical experience at the facility they already work at. Whether that be on-the-job training or clinical hours towards a surgical internship the ability to gain experience without leaving their current job opens the door for a seamless transition from ST to SA.

5 Co-requisite courses may be waived at the discretion of the academic advisory department on a case-by-case basis, based on education, experience and letters of recommendation.
Does your facility provide tuition assistance for advancing employee careers in the healthcare field?

Many facilities will provide tuition assistance. This is not always the case, but it never hurts to ask! You may also be eligible for tax benefits for furthering your education, so check with your accountant to see if you would be eligible for the Lifetime Learning Credit or other benefits.

**YES!**

Most facilities (59%) provide at least some tuition assistance, and the large majority (47%) pay for full tuition.

### Facility Provided Tuition Assistance for Careers in Healthcare?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12%</td>
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Are you interested in advancing your career to become a Surgical Assistant?

An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that they would like to take the next step in their career and reap the benefits and rewards of a Surgical Assisting career.

**Jumpstart Your Career Now**

YOU ARE READING THIS INFORMATION FOR A REASON. SURGICAL ASSISTING IS THE LOGICAL CAREER PATH FOR A SURGICAL TECHNOLOGIST.

**Why wait to enjoy the benefits?**

**The time to turn a dream into reality is NOW!**

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Contact The Royal Academy of Surgical Assisting to get started today!

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