

PLA Assignment

Sterile Processing Competency Portfolio – SPI 1081 – Internship: Sterile Processing

Background: The Sterile Processing Program

Certification helps to ensure Sterile Processing (SP) professionals possess the essential knowledge and skills necessary for managing critical departmental duties safely, effectively, and consistently. After successful completion of an HSPA certification, required continuing education guides these professionals to stay on top of ever-evolving instrumentation, technology, standards, and best practices. HSPA offers five different certifications tailored specifically to functions within the Sterile Processing department.

Before a surgeon can make an initial incision, a team of skilled Sterile Processing professionals has worked diligently to ensure that every instrument is properly decontaminated, sterilized, well-functioning, and available when needed. Waves of surgical instruments and devices flow in and out of the Sterile Processing Department (SPD), supplying the essential elements to keep the healthcare facility functioning smoothly. Sterile Processing is the most crucial link in the chain of care from professional to treatment to patient. Every surgical procedure hinges on the care and attention of the technicians in the SPD.

Sterile Processing professionals prepare surgical instruments and devices by cleaning, inspecting, testing, sterilizing, storing, and delivering devices needed for surgery in a healthcare facility. Departments throughout the healthcare facility, from the Operating Room to outpatient clinics, depend on the surgical instruments and devices prepared by Sterile Processing teams. These departments rely on their precision, attention to detail, and layered skills and knowledge related to surgical instrumentation.

Continuing education is an essential part of professional development in Sterile Processing. Requirements change, best practices evolve, and technology advances, making ongoing learning a critical component to promoting and ensuring quality and safety. The dedication of Sterile Processing professionals bridges the gap between skill and precision, hope and assuredness. Their work saves lives every day.

PLA Assignment Objective:

To demonstrate your comprehensive knowledge, skills, and experience in the core areas of sterile processing as outlined below. This assignment requires you to provide detailed documentation and narratives addressing key competencies learned in the 400-hour clinical internship.

1. Decontamination (120 Hours)

- Blood-borne pathogens
- Soiled item transport
- Safety (e.g., chemical handling, sharps)
- Manual and mechanical cleaning processes
- Decontamination area disinfection
- Manufacturer's IFUs (e.g., device cleaning, chemical handling, equipment operation)
- Item receiving, traceability, and functionality checks

Task:

Write a detailed narrative (minimum 750 words) describing your experience in

decontamination processes. Include specific examples of tasks performed, such as handling soiled items, manual/automated cleaning techniques, safety protocols, and how you've ensured compliance with manufacturer instructions.

- Provide supporting artifacts (e.g., job descriptions, training certificates, or evaluations).

2. Preparing & Packaging Instruments (120 Hours)

- Instrument identification, inspection, and testing
- Container and wrapping material inspection/testing
- Assembly and packaging techniques (e.g., pouches, flat wraps, rigid containers)
- Labeling and documentation

Task:

Based on your work experience, prepare a step-by-step guide (minimum 500 words) for preparing and packaging instruments. Highlight challenges faced and how you resolved them.

- Include photographs of packaged instruments (if available) and a written explanation of how you ensured compliance with standards.

3. Sterilization & Disinfection (120 Hours)

- High- and low-temperature sterilization processes
- Logging and record-keeping (e.g., biologicals, failed cycles)
- Handling and storage of sterile supplies
- Equipment functionality checks

Task:

Submit a flowchart or process map outlining the sterilization and disinfection workflow you've used in your workplace.

- Write a minimum 500-word narrative explaining each step and how you ensured quality control during the sterilization/disinfection process.

4. Storage & Distribution (24 Hours)

- Handling and putting away sterile supplies
- Rotating supplies, inventory restocking, and event-related shelf life
- Cleaning storage shelves and maintaining case carts

Task:

Create a checklist for managing inventory and storage. Include elements like rotation of supplies, expiration checks, and cleaning schedules.

- Submit a narrative (minimum 500 words) explaining how you implemented these processes in your role.

5. Quality Assurance Processes (16 Hours)

- Interpreting manufacturer's IFUs
- Standards, regulations, and documentation
- Quality/functionality testing processes
- Routine maintenance and equipment tracking

Task:

Develop a sample quality assurance log or report for equipment or processes (e.g., sterilizer or washer testing).

- Write a narrative (minimum 500 words) detailing how you maintained quality assurance in your workplace. Include examples of how you identified and resolved issues.

Evaluation Criteria Section for Assignment

Your PLA portfolio will be evaluated based on the following:

1. **Completeness of Submission**
 - Does the portfolio include all five tasks (Decontamination, Preparing & Packaging Instruments, Sterilization & Disinfection, Storage & Distribution, Quality Assurance Processes)?
 - Are all required narratives, artifacts, and documentation present for each task?
2. **Alignment with Competencies**
 - Does each task demonstrate a thorough understanding of the course competencies?
 - Are the experiences and learning outcomes appropriately aligned with program requirements?
3. **Quality of Documentation**
 - Are the supporting artifacts comprehensive, relevant, and sufficient to validate the stated competencies for each task?
 - Do the artifacts provide clear evidence of the learning outcomes and practical experience?
4. **Depth of Reflection**
 - Are the narratives detailed and insightful, reflecting meaningful learning and application of skills?
 - Do the narratives provide specific examples and thoughtful connections to professional practices?
5. **Professional Presentation**
 - Is the submission well-organized, clearly formatted, and free of spelling or grammatical errors?
 - Does the portfolio demonstrate professionalism and attention to detail?

PLA Assignment Rubric

- **40 points max score**
- **Must achieve at least 31 points to be awarded to receive course credit**

Task 1: Decontamination (120 Hours)

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Developing (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
Narrative Detail	Thoroughly describes decontamination processes with detailed examples and insights.	Adequately describes decontamination processes with some examples.	Describes decontamination processes but lacks sufficient detail or examples.	Minimal or incomplete description of decontamination processes.
Supporting Artifacts	Includes comprehensive and relevant artifacts (e.g.,	Includes mostly relevant artifacts but may lack comprehensiveness.	Includes some artifacts, but relevance or breadth is limited.	Artifacts are missing or do not validate the experience

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Developing (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
	certificates, evaluations) to validate experience.			effectively.

Task 2: Preparing & Packaging Instruments (120 Hours)

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Developing (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
Step-by-Step Guide	Provides a clear, detailed guide with specific examples and challenges addressed.	Provides a mostly clear guide with minor gaps or missing examples.	Guide is present but lacks clarity, detail, or specificity.	Guide is incomplete or missing significant steps or examples.
Supporting Artifacts	Includes detailed and relevant artifacts, such as photographs and documentation of packaging processes.	Includes mostly relevant artifacts but may lack some necessary details.	Includes some artifacts, but relevance or quality is limited.	Artifacts are missing or fail to validate the guide effectively.

Task 3: Sterilization & Disinfection (120 Hours)

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Developing (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
Flowchart/Process Map	Provides a detailed and accurate flowchart/process map for sterilization workflows.	Provides a flowchart/process map with minor errors or omissions.	Provides a flowchart/process map but lacks clarity or contains significant errors.	Flowchart/process map is missing or incomplete.
Narrative Explanation	Thoroughly explains each step of the workflow with clear connections to quality control.	Adequately explains most steps of the workflow but with some gaps in detail.	Explanation is present but lacks depth, clarity, or connection to quality control.	Explanation is missing or insufficient.

Task 4: Storage & Distribution (24 Hours)

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Developing (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
Inventory Checklist	Provides a detailed and well-organized checklist addressing rotation, expiration, and cleaning.	Provides a mostly complete checklist with minor omissions.	Checklist is present but lacks significant detail or organization.	Checklist is incomplete or missing key elements.
Narrative Explanation	Clearly explains the implementation and significance of the checklist with specific examples.	Explains the implementation and significance of the checklist with minor gaps.	Explanation is present but lacks depth or examples.	Explanation is incomplete or missing.

Task 5: Quality Assurance Processes (16 Hours)

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Developing (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
Quality Assurance Log	Provides a thorough and detailed quality assurance log with clear examples and explanations.	Provides a quality assurance log with minor gaps in detail or examples.	Quality assurance log is present but lacks clarity or significant details.	Quality assurance log is incomplete or missing key elements.
Narrative Explanation	Explains the importance of quality assurance and maintenance with clear connections to examples.	Explains the importance of quality assurance but with minor gaps or lack of specific examples.	Explanation is present but lacks depth or clear connections to examples.	Explanation is incomplete or insufficient.