

St. Petersburg College
Funeral Services Handbook 2025-26



This handbook outlines requirements specific to the Funeral Services program, supplementing the [Student Handbook](#) and [St. Petersburg College Catalog](#). These requirements are subject to change without prior notice.

Funeral Services Program
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The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidelines to assist you in achieving your educational goals both on campus and in clinical practice, and to clarify your responsibilities as a student in the Funeral Services Program. Like other community college programs, St. Petersburg College (SPC) separates academic coursework from practical experiences. This structure leverages the strengths of both settings: college faculty deliver didactic knowledge with expertise in current trends and teaching methods, while funeral homes provide licensed funeral directors/embalmers as preceptors who are experts in the practical application of embalming and funeral directing skills.

Funeral Services Faculty:

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Accreditation:

The Funeral Services associate in science (AS) degree at St. Petersburg College is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992

Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097 (816) 233-3747. Web: www.abfse.org

National Board Examination (NBE) pass rates, graduation rates, and employment rates for this and other ABFSE-accredited programs are available at www.abfse.org in the Directory of Accredited Programs. To request a printed copy of this program's rates, visit Health Education Center Room 154, email brown.gary@spcollege.edu, or call (727) 341-3783.

Applicants to the ABFSE-Accredited Funeral Services AS Degree Program who are graduates of any non-accredited Funeral Service program, must be licensed funeral directors to be accepted into the accredited degree program.

Note: For purposes of GPA calculation when applying for selective admission to either the AS degree or Funeral Arts Certificate, only the first attempt in FSE 1000 and FSE 2061 will be considered.

Funeral Services Student Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the importance of funeral service professionals in developing relationships with the families and communities they serve.
- Identify standards of ethical conduct in funeral service practice.
- Interpret how federal, state, and local laws apply to funeral service in order to ensure compliance.
- Apply principles of public health and safety in handling and preparing human remains.
- Demonstrate technical skills in embalming and restorative art that are necessary for preparing and handling human remains.
- Demonstrate skills required for conducting arrangement conferences, visitations, services, and ceremonies.
- Describe the requirements and procedures for burial, cremation, and other accepted forms of final disposition of human remains.
- Describe methods to address the grief-related needs of the bereaved.
- Explain management skills associated with operating a funeral establishment.
- Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and research skills needed for funeral service practice.

Grading Policy:

The Funeral Services Program uses the following grading scale:

- 92–100 = A
- 84–91 = B
- 75–83 = C

- 70–74 = D
- Below 70 = F

To pass any Funeral Services (FSE) course, students must:

- Earn at least 75% of the total points available in the class.
- Score at least 70% on the final comprehensive examination.

Quizzes and exams in the Funeral Services Program are proctored using Respondus, an online proctoring service that may incur a cost. Students do not need to create an account or schedule appointments; quizzes are accessible on dates set by the instructor. To take a proctored quiz, students need:

- A computer with a working webcam and microphone.
- A valid ID.
- A stable internet connection.

For technical assistance, visit <https://studentsupport.spcollege.edu>.

Special Progress Requirements

- A grade of “C” or better is required in all prerequisite FSE courses to enroll in subsequent courses.
- Students must register for and successfully complete at least six semester hours per semester (excluding summer sessions and the final semester).
- Failure to enroll in FSE classes for more than two consecutive semesters results in dismissal from the program, requiring re-admission.
- Students who fail, withdraw from, or are otherwise unsuccessful in more than two FSE courses will be dismissed from the program and will be ineligible for readmission. This policy applies to both A.S. degree and Certificate students.
- Students in the AS program with more than two grades of “D,” “F,” or “W” in FSE classes will be dismissed without eligibility for re-admission.

Special Graduation Requirements

A grade of “C” or better is required in all program courses.

Change of Address Responsibility

Students must notify the Admissions Office and the Funeral Services Program of any address or phone number changes within one week. Changes must be submitted in writing to the Program Director after updating the College.

Communication Between Students and Faculty

- Instructors will post office hours on their doors and provide contact information in course syllabi.
- Students should email instructors through the course platform with questions specific to that course.
- Students must check announcements daily in blended and online courses for updates.
- Students are required to schedule a conference with the Program Director at least once per academic year to discuss graduation progress.

Attendance Requirements

Regular attendance is mandatory. Absences may require remedial work to meet course objectives. Per the Funeral Services Attendance Policy:

- Three excessive absences may result in dismissal from the course.
- Lateness disrupts learning and should be avoided.
- Students failing to meet attendance requirements before the 60% course completion point may choose to withdraw voluntarily or receive a “WF.” After the 60% point, they will receive an “F.”
- Students who fail attendance requirements can no longer attend the course or its corequisites.

Re-Evaluation Process

- Students missing two or more consecutive sessions must be re-evaluated.
- Schedule a meeting with the Program Director.
- Arrange re-evaluation exams for prior FSE classes at a determined cost (contact Program Director for fees).
- Students must score 75% on re-evaluation exams or audit the class with a passing grade.

Students transferring FSE courses from another ABFSE-accredited institution must pass the final exam for the course(s) they wish to transfer.

Distance Clinical Requirements

A distance lab option is available for both Embalming and Restorative Art. This option allows qualified students to complete a portion of their clinical training at an

approved off-campus funeral establishment. To be eligible for and maintain this privilege, the following requirements and conditions must be met:

- A prior unsuccessful attempt in any FSE course will render a student **ineligible for the Distance option** in both Embalming and Restorative Art labs.
- Students must have a **“B” or higher** in all funeral service and support courses attempted.
- No grade lower than a **“C”** may be earned on any individual assessment within any FSE class registered for during current semester.
- If a student’s average falls below a “B” in any class at any point in the semester, **on-campus lab attendance will be required** for the remainder of the term. If unable to meet this requirement, the student will be withdrawn from both the clinical and lecture, since these are co-requisites, and will be required to repeat the courses if eligible.
- All students, regardless of distance option, **must attend the first scheduled on-campus lab session** for both Embalming and/or Restorative Art.
- Distance clinical students must also attend **at least one additional on-campus lab** to demonstrate competency.

All clinical students, **including those enrolled in distance embalming or restorative art labs**, are required to attend the first scheduled embalming and/or restorative art lab meeting on campus. Distance clinical students must also attend at least one additional lab session on campus to demonstrate competency in their skills. Students participating in off-campus clinical instruction must complete the clinical site application process prior to beginning their assignments.

Licensure Requirements, National Board Examination (NBE):

Students should keep all notes, study guides, and textbooks until passing both sections of the NBE. Upon completing FSE 2946 (Professional Practicum), the Program Director will notify the appropriate authority to allow students to schedule the NBE. Students must provide the last six digits of their Social Security number to the Program Director to facilitate this process.

NBE Sections and Scoring Areas:

Science Section:

- Embalming (62 questions)
- Other Preparation of the Deceased (28 questions)
- Restorative Art (34 questions)
- Funeral Service Sciences (26 questions)

Arts Section:

- Funeral Service Marketing/Merchandising (21 questions)

- Funeral Service Counseling (19 questions)
- Legal and Regulatory Compliance (35 questions)
- Funeral Arranging and Directing (51 questions)
- Cemetery and Crematory Operations (24 questions)

Florida and the Conference Board require a score of 75% or higher on each section. After graduation, students may seek employment as interns with a registered training agency (funeral home) for one year. During the internship, graduates may take the Florida Laws and Rules Exam to become fully licensed. Licensing requirements vary by state, and students must contact the relevant state licensing board for specific details.

The Florida Board of Funeral, Cemetery, and Consumer Services requires fingerprinting and a background check for licensure. Many funeral homes also require background checks and drug testing for employment. Individuals with a criminal record or history of bad character may be denied licensure, even after completing the program.

Personal Protective Equipment:

Students must comply with OSHA standards for biological and chemical exposure control. Protective apparel is required during clinical and practicum courses and must adhere to the dress code and infection control policies of the assigned funeral home. Apparel requirements may be updated as regulations change.

Hepatitis B Vaccine:

Before enrolling in Embalming Clinical courses, students must:

- Provide proof of Hepatitis B vaccination or positive antibody status.
- Submit documentation of at least the first injection of the vaccine series to the Program Director before the first embalming clinical class.
- Students refusing the vaccine must provide a physician's note confirming a medical contraindication or an informed consent form acknowledging liability.

Insurance:

- Liability and Accident Insurance: Required for Embalming Clinical I, with fees included in tuition. Covers FSE 2101L, FSE 2141L, and FSE 2946.
- Accidental Medical Insurance: Included in the special fee.

Arrests During the Program:

Students encountering legal issues during the program must immediately notify the Program Director. Failure to disclose may result in dismissal or ineligibility for licensure. Arrests or convictions (other than minor traffic violations) may impact clinical placement, NBE eligibility, or licensure. The Florida Board requires applicants with felony convictions to explain the circumstances, and the Board will determine eligibility.

Clinical Preparation:

Pregnant students must notify the instructor and Program Director and submit a letter from their healthcare provider outlining participation recommendations and any limitations. A list of hazardous chemicals used in clinicals is available from the Program Director.

Students and faculty must complete an incident report within 24 hours for:

- Physical injuries
- Accidents
- Theft or suspected theft
- Damage to student property

Incident Report Instructions:

- Complete the report immediately with detailed information and submit it to the designated department within 24 hours.
- The supervisor in the area where the incident occurred must sign the report and ensure its completion and distribution.
- Attach supporting documentation to the report.
- Reports must only be shared with appropriate college administrative staff.
- No statements about incidents should be given to outside parties without consulting the Program Director.

Crime at Your Funeral Home Site:

If a student becomes a victim of a crime during their practicum, they must notify the clinical site authorities and a college faculty member immediately. For safety information, refer to:

- SPC: <http://www.spcollege.edu/safety/>
- Florida State: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/fsac/ucr/>

First Aid:

Students injured in the laboratory must notify the instructor and file an incident report within 24 hours. Medical treatment costs are the student's responsibility. A first-aid kit is available in HEC Room 160 for self-administered treatment.

Academic Environment:

To maintain a conducive learning environment, the HEC Provost, Funeral Services Administration, and Faculty enforce the following:

- No food or drink in the Funeral Services area or classrooms.
- No open containers outside the cafeteria.
- No children on campus, per the SPC College Handbook.
- No pets on campus.
- Cell phones must be turned off during lab classes.

Reverence for the Dead:

Reverence for the dead is a core ethical principle of the funeral service profession. As future practitioners, students must uphold this responsibility. Clinical and practicum courses provide hands-on experience in funeral homes, where students interact with licensed professionals to apply classroom knowledge. In funeral homes and preparation rooms (HEC Room 160), family privacy and funeral home policies are the top priority.

Students are guests in funeral homes and must adhere to all facility rules, communicated by the Preceptor on the first day. Professional conduct is a primary program goal, and the college may suspend or dismiss students who fail to demonstrate the knowledge, behavior, ethics, or skills required in the profession.

Each funeral home assigns a Preceptor to oversee students, who must always seek approval before acting. A faculty member monitors student progress and coordinates clinical experiences. Students are not employees, accept no payments, and may not perform employee duties.

The use of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, TikTok, X) to discuss sensitive or confidential aspects of deceased care during FSE classes or clinicals is strictly prohibited. Photography in these settings is also forbidden.

Transportation:

Students are responsible for transportation to practicum sites, clinicals, and field trips. Plan for weather and traffic delays and take safety precautions when traveling.

Insurance/Injuries/Incidents in the Funeral Home:

Report errors or accidents immediately to the Preceptor and Program Director, followed by completing an incident report per the funeral home's policy. Errors in judgment or practice may lead to dismissal. Neither the college nor clinical affiliates provide free healthcare for students.

Personal phone calls are prohibited during funeral home hours. Emergency calls should be directed to the Preceptor or instructor, who will notify the student. Cell phones must remain off during class time.

Dress Code for Clinical Experience:

Students must wear personal protective apparel in the preparation room and comply with the funeral home's dress code and classroom policies. Clothing must be clean, pressed, and professional. Non-compliance may result in being sent home to change. Additional guidelines include:

- Professional, conservative attire.
- Clean, polished shoes in good condition.
- Proper hygiene and grooming; facial hair, if permitted, must be trimmed to fit a respirator.
- Short nails to prevent glove punctures.
- Minimal jewelry (wedding bands, watches, one pair of conservative earrings for women only; no tongue studs or other piercings).
- Tattoos and piercings must be covered if required by the funeral home.
- No shorts, open-toe shoes, or tank tops during embalming clinicals.
- Cell phones must remain in vehicles during clinicals.

Attendance on Campus:

Although the Funeral Services Program is primarily online, students must attend campus for:

- Exam reviews (due to test security).
- The first and last day of clinical (e.g., Embalming or Restorative Art Lab).

- Weekly Embalming Clinicals and Restorative Art Lab (if not qualifying for the distance option).
- Testing requiring special accommodations.
- Funeral Service Orientation.

Off-Campus Clinical and Practicum Site Requirements and Application:

Since Spring 2020, the ABFSE permits video certification of funeral homes for off-campus instruction. This certification must be completed before clinical begins, and videos must not include any bodies. Students must narrate the video inspection, including, in order:

- Exterior of the funeral home and signage.
- Front entrance.
- Funeral home licenses.
- A walk-through explaining each room.
- FTC paperwork.
- Preparation room (no bodies).
- OSHA Manual and formaldehyde (HCHO) testing results.
- Drench and eyewash stations, with a demonstration of functionality.
- Instruments and chemicals.

Before commencing clinical, students must also submit:

- Student Contact Information Form.
- Funeral Home Agreement Form.
- Preceptor Application.
- Photocopy of the Preceptor's Funeral Director/Embalmer License.
- Photocopy of the student's Embalmer Apprentice License or state permission to embalm.
- Distance Clinical Requirements Form.
- ABFSE Clinical Site Inspection (signed by funeral home preceptor and SPC Faculty).
- The funeral home video inspection (see above).

Licensure Outside Florida:

Federal regulations effective July 1, 2020 (34 CFR 668.43) requires institutions to disclose whether a program meets licensure requirements in each state, for all modalities (including distance education). If a program does not meet or the institution has not determined if it meets a state's requirements, direct written disclosure to students is required:

- For enrolled students, within 14 days if a program ceases to meet requirements.
- For prospective students, before enrollment.

For NC-SARA institutions, disclosures must include contact information for the licensing board in the student's state if no determination has been made. Resources include:

- <https://theconferenceonline.org/resources/state-licensing-requirements/>
- <https://www.nfda.org/careers/licensing-requirements/>
- <http://www.abfse.org/html/resources.htm>

Contact the Program Director for questions.

FSE 2946 Professional Practicum:

Students are responsible for securing a practicum site. The program may assist in selecting a funeral home, but securing the site is the student's responsibility.

Safety Note: Students should prioritize safety when traveling to clinical sites. If an area feels unsafe, request a funeral home staff member to escort you to and from your vehicle.

Outside Employment:

While part-time work is permitted, it must not interfere with program obligations. Excessive work hours leading to fatigue or unprofessional conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. Students must maintain confidentiality regarding funeral home and family information; breaches may lead to disciplinary measures.

Student Code of Conduct:

Unacceptable conduct includes:

- Repeated disregard for rules.
- Disrespect toward instructors, preceptors, co-workers, or families.
- Cheating or failure to meet performance standards.

Academic dishonesty will result in dismissal. Students are expected to earn their degree through personal effort.

New Initiative Program (NIP) Referral:

Students struggling with the following will be referred to NIP for free support services:

- Needing tutoring.
- Not participating in assignments or quizzes.
- Failing exams.
- Difficulty relating to others.

Student Governance:

Students are encouraged to provide feedback through the Student Government Association (SGA) at the Health Education Center and to volunteer for the Funeral Services Advisory Committee. Participation in college surveys, such as the Student Survey of Instruction, is also encouraged.

Essential Functions:

Graduates of the Funeral Services Program must meet the following minimum requirements, with or without accommodation:

Cognitive and Critical Thinking:

- Comprehend and apply new knowledge in funeral service practice.
- Analyze situations and identify cause-effect relationships.
- Organize, problem-solve, and make decisions.

Interpersonal Skills:

- Establish rapport with individuals.
- Exchange ideas in groups.
- Demonstrate sensitivity, respect, and a mentally healthy attitude.

Communication:

- Convey thoughts clearly in verbal and written English.
- Understand and be understood in verbal and written instructions.

Physical Mobility:

- Maintain balance, move between rooms, and maneuver in small spaces.
- Flex and move joints freely without posing safety risks.

Strength and Endurance:

- Work six or more hours in a lab or funeral home.
- Position, lift, and transfer human remains safely.
- Push, pull, or lift heavy objects (e.g., caskets) with assistance.

Fine Motor Skills and Hand/Eye Coordination:

- Manipulate small instruments and sharps safely.
- Handle objects without dangerous motions.
- Write legibly in English with correct grammar and syntax.

Auditory Ability:

- Hear and respond to verbal instructions quickly.
- Accurately record verbal instructions.

Visual Ability:

- Discern colors and distinguish changes.
- Read fine print accurately for extended periods.
- Read cursive writing and detect environmental changes.

Tactile and Olfactory Ability:

- Assess embalming conditions through touch (e.g., texture, temperature).
- Detect environmental odors.

Students unable to meet these requirements must request accommodations through Accessibility Services. Accommodations cannot alter the program's nature, impose undue hardship, or compromise safety.

How to Get a Funeral Director/Embalmer License in Florida:

Visit <https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/funeralcemetery/licensing> for details.

Internship and Exam:

- Complete a one-year internship at an approved training facility. Apply at: https://www.myfloridacfo.com/docs-sf/funeral-cemetery-and-consumer-services-libraries/fc-documents/licensing-instructions/are-you-eligible-laws-and-rules-examination-by-internship.pdf?sfvrsn=4fc94567_1
- Florida Statute 497.377: Combination Funeral Director and Embalmer Internships
- Internships for funeral director and embalmer licenses may be served concurrently.

Eligibility for Combination Intern License:

- Enrolled in an ABFSE-accredited mortuary science program.
- Completed 75% of the course of study (54 of 72 credits for the AS in Funeral Services).
- Passed college credit courses in mortuary or funeral service law and ethics.

Application Requirements:

- Include the name and address of the licensed funeral director (per F.S. 497.373 or 497.374(1)) and embalmer (per F.S. 497.368 or 497.369) supervising the intern, and the licensed funeral establishment's name.

Supervision:

- Interns perform tasks under direct supervision of a licensed funeral director and embalmer.
- After six months, interns who graduate with an ABFSE-accredited degree and pass the required exam may work under general supervision if certified as competent by the funeral director in charge.

License Duration:

- Valid for one year, non-renewable except in cases of illness, injury, or hardship, or if awaiting licensure exam results (renewable for one additional year).
- Upon expiration, interns who have completed educational requirements and applied for licensure may continue tasks for up to 90 days or until a license is issued/denied.

Summary of Requirements for Combination Funeral Director and Embalmer License:

- Submit a completed application: <https://www.myfloridacfo.com/docs-sf/funeral-cemetery-and-consumer-services-libraries/fc-documents/funeral-director-embalmer-and-disposer-licenses/dfs-n1-1724.pdf>
- Complete an internship at an approved training agency (verify with employer or state).
- Submit NBE scores (75% or higher).
- Submit an official transcript showing:
 - An AA or AS degree in Funeral Services, or
 - An AA or BA degree with a one-year mortuary science course.
- Complete a two-hour communicable disease course or provide proof of completion of HSC 1524 Infectious Diseases within the last two years.
- Prepare for and pass the Florida Laws and Rules Exam, covering:
 - Florida Statutes: Chapters 382, 406, 497, and 872.
 - Federal Laws: 10 U.S.C. §§1481-1488, 16 U.S.C. §17E, 18 U.S.C. §710, 38 U.S.C. §2303, 42 U.S.C. §§248, 238C.
 - Florida Administrative Code: Divisions 11G, Chapter 64V-1, and 69K.
 - Topics (percentage ranges): Practice Laws (40–50%), Preneed Contracts (16–20%), Medical Examiner (4–6%), Vital Statistics (10–16%), Disposition (10–16%), Federal Laws (4–6%), Offenses (8–16%).

St. Petersburg College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. For additional information, visit www.spcollege.edu/eaeo.