

SIMULATED PATIENTS – INFORMATION SHEET

1. **Purpose.** The Simulated Patient (SP) programme exists to support the delivery of the integrated curriculum in the School of Medicine. Using real people provides an introductory experience that allows students to practise and synthesise knowledge and skills acquired across the curriculum. There are two categories of SP; communication skills and clinical skills:
 - a. **Clinical Skills.** Clinical skills SP's serve as living anatomic models for the review and practise of basic skills such as taking a blood pressure and systems-based physical examinations. They also provide students the opportunity to practise history taking from scripted scenarios, in depth physical examinations, and diagnostic reasoning in scenario based practicals. No special knowledge or experience is required. No acting experience is required although many people already involved in amateur dramatics find this is a natural extension of their interest.
 - b. **Communication skills.** Communication skills SP's act out a particular role or character allowing students to respond appropriately. They are provided with a scenario rather than a script and are expected to act in the manner of the role they have been provided with, therefore acting skills are required. The workshops do not include any clinical examinations.
2. **Background.** Simulated patients must be over 16 years of age. They come from a wide range of backgrounds. No specialist knowledge is needed; indeed lack of knowledge can be a positive advantage as it ensures the student must give explanations and instructions clearly. SPs generally benefit in that they know that they are helping to train the next generation of doctors
3. **Support and Supervision.** Training or instruction will be provided to SPs prior to delivery of teaching sessions. Tutors will give guidance and supervise at the sessions and support will be provided by the co-ordinator and/or tutors if needed.
4. **Commitment.** SPs can express interest in being involved in as many or as few sessions as they wish. Sessions vary in length. Reliability is more important than the overall time commitment. The university cannot guarantee a certain number of hours of work per year and there is no obligation for the SP to take part in a certain number of sessions. Assignments are based on the criteria required for the practical session.
5. **Examinations.** SP's are expected to remain neutral during any examination session. The SP cannot provide guidance or in any way interfere with the student's performance. Any concerns can be directed to the examiner or co-ordinator at a scheduled break or at the end of the exam day.
6. **Communication.** The SP Co-ordinator will be the main point of contact. They will recruit SPs for teaching sessions and communicate with the SP by their preferred method, i.e. post, email or telephone. The SP Co-ordinator will meet SPs and introduce them to the tutors and students.
7. **Process of starting.** Those who express an interest in becoming a SP will be invited to a teaching sessions as an observer to watch SPs in a wide variety of roles. The potential SP can express an opinion about how they might be used after this observational period.
8. **Reserve SPs.** SPs will be allocated as reserves for each practical session and OSCE exams. We ask reserves to come to the relevant meeting place at the allotted time. The purpose of reserves is to be on site should SPs call in sick or be delayed for whatever reason on the day of the session. They are not reserves to replace SPs who withdraw in advance, so please give as much notice as possible if you are unable to participate so that your position can be re-allocated.

University of St Andrews - School of Medicine Handbook

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