

What is the value of being an SP?

The simulation experience provides students with a safe and highly effective learning environment and can be either for practice or an exam, both of which are important educational opportunities for students. Repetitively portraying a specific patient role in the same, standardized way for multiple students keeps the evaluations fair and unbiased. This requires concentration while being interviewed and examined, each time. At the conclusion of the simulation, you must recall the student's performance to evaluate them on the checklist and possibly give verbal feedback.

How are standardized patients trained?

There is an initial nine hour training course broken into three, three-hour classes. This training provides SPs with the skills to learn how to realistically portray an actual patient, give constructive feedback to students, and how to learn a role in more detail. Prior to each SP experience, a one hour practice session with faculty is required. SPs carefully studying each role before the experience is important, since the feedback assists in training future physicians.

Do you need any special education?

No. SPs come from various backgrounds, and we will teach SPs the assigned roles.

How will I know what to do or say as an SP?

We will provide the SP with a complete patient history to learn. The history includes the patient's complaint for which he/she comes to see the doctor, his/her past medical history, and details about his/her life such as employment, family, and activities. We also will provide the SP with an emotional state he/she is in during the encounter. By learning that history, the SP can learn to portray the patient and speak to the doctor. The SP also is taught how to move like the patient and how to react to the physical examination. For example, an SP may be portraying someone with a bad back. The SP is then shown the location of the pain on his/her body and what the patient could or could not do because of the back problem.

Do the students know we are not real patients?

Yes. Students are informed that they will be working with SPs but are instructed to behave as though SPs are real patients.

Do I grade the student?

Standardized Patients may be asked to complete a checklist as a record of the encounter and also give verbal constructive feedback on communication skills.

What type of physical examination is performed?

Students will perform focused physical examinations based on the patient case as they would with a real patient. They will use a stethoscope to listen to the heart and lungs; palpate (press on) the abdomen; use a light to look in the ears, throat and eyes; and they may also take blood pressure and pulse. The students will not perform the following physical examinations: breast, pelvic, genital or rectal exams, nor will they perform invasive procedures, such as drawing blood or throat cultures.

Will I have to remove my clothing?

SPs will be asked to wear a patient gown for realism. Under this gown, the SP should wear some sort of sports clothing (shorts, sports bra) as students will place the stethoscope directly on their chest.

Is it safe?

Yes. Students and SPs should not do anything that might be harmful. SPs are just portraying someone who has a medical condition. The examinations are very basic and do not cause any harm to the SP. If an SP had cause for concern, he/she would be entitled to stop an examination.

Can an SP pass on a role?

Yes, an SP can pass on a role that they do not want to portray.

Do I need to know anything about medicine or medical conditions?

No. The SP patient portrayal information will contain all information needed.

What if I know a CHSU student or I am related to a student?

If an SP is familiar with or related to a student, they will not be scheduled as a patient for that simulation experience.

Is my previous health history important?

Yes, it is important. If there are significant positive findings during a simulated physical exam, it could confuse the student. However, a surgical scar might not matter, or it could be written into the patient's case. Yet, a surgical scar on an appendectomy patient will disqualify that patient to be an appendectomy patient. An SP's answers on the medical database questionnaire will help match the SP to the appropriate patient cases.

How are Standardized Patients selected?

A wide range of skills help in selecting an SP. The ability to communicate effectively is important. Being comfortable with a wide variety of people in differing situations is valuable. Being able to express feedback verbally and in writing is extremely important for the student.

Punctuality, reliability and flexibility are imperative.

Do I need to be an actor?

No. Some SPs are trained and experienced actors, but most are not. You can be a very good SP without acting experience. There are some similarities to what actors do, but there are differences, too.

How often would I work?

This is a part-time, hourly position, reporting on an as needed basis. There is no guarantee for the number of hours worked.

How often does an SP work?

The number of days and hours worked are not guaranteed or consistent. It will depend on the particular exam and usually be a 4-5 hour session in a day.

What is the pay rate?

The hourly pay rate will be discussed during the interview.