



SIMULATED PATIENT (SP) JOB DESCRIPTION

Primary purpose

The Clinical Learning Resource Centre (CLRC) Simulated Patient Program provides critical learning experiences for health science students in a safe, nonthreatening environment.

A simulated patient—or SP—is an individual trained to portray patients, family members, and healthcare team members in learning sessions, assessments, and examinations while under the supervision of a licensed instructor.

As part of the educational team, SPs support simulation-based education and experiential learning for health science learners and CLRC community partners. Learning objectives may include developing communication and interprofessional skills, demonstrating non-invasive physical procedures, or a combination of both.

The participation of trained simulated patients in the SP Program is the foundation from which University of Saskatchewan (USask) students are able to apply newly acquired attitudes, skills, and knowledge in a simulated healthcare environment.

Nature of work

Under the general supervision of the simulated patient educators, simulated patient program coordinator, and faculty, simulated patients present specific behavioral and/or disease symptoms in a role-play context while interacting with health science students during simulated patient encounters in a simulated medical environment. USask learners may include students from the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Nutrition, or other USask units as required.

Scripted scenarios or physical exam overviews are provided to the simulated patient for each event. SPs are trained and coached to accurately and consistently recreate a standardized simulation. In performing the simulation, the SP presents the complete picture of the patient being simulated—not just the history, but the body language, the physical findings, and the emotional and personality characteristics as well.

Simulated patients aid in the teaching and assessment of:

- history taking and interviewing
- physical examination skills
- communication skills
- patient management
- physical exam etiquette
- interpersonal and interprofessional skills

During teaching or assessment activities, SPs can expect to be interviewed, counselled, and/or physically examined by a student learner. At times, this work can be physically and emotionally demanding for SPs. Simulation activities may also be audio recorded or videotaped (with SP consent) for future reference.

This position is offered Monday through Friday during daytime hours on a casual, as-needed basis with occasional opportunities to work evenings and weekends.

Typical duties

- Participate in scenario training sessions to study nuances and details specific to the CLRC learning or assessment activity.
- Commit complex scripts to memory in order to simulate specific scenario aspects (such as emotions, behaviors, and signs of disease) in a standardized, accurate, and consistent manner.
- Work in a professional manner when interacting with learners, university faculty, supervisors, and peers while remaining punctual and reliable for all scheduled activity.
- Accept ongoing feedback from simulated patient trainers and incorporate it into case simulations.
- Provide feedback to learners and faculty as trained and appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with the educational team.
- Maintain confidentiality of records, activities, and all other sensitive information as required.
- Self-assess personal wellbeing after simulation activities and seek assistance or debriefing as needed.

Qualifications

Experience

No specific training or experience is necessary before joining the SP Program—the USask Clinical Learning Resource Centre regularly provides SPs with all necessary training and support resources prior to their involvement in each simulated exercise. While current and retired healthcare professionals, teachers, and performers are well-represented in the SP pool, anyone has the potential to be a simulated patient.

With that said, experience in role playing, acting, or a health-related field is considered an asset. Experience being comfortable in front of camera is also an asset.

Skills

- Ability to speak effectively, listen carefully, and communicate through non-verbal cues such as body language and simulated behaviours.
- Ability to memorize large amounts of complex information related to scenario specifics.
- Ability to accurately, convincingly, and consistently interpret and present symptoms and/or information as cued by student learners in a simulated environment.
- Ability, when requested, to provide consistent, objective and focused feedback and evaluation to student learners.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality of records and information.
- Ability to negotiate personal boundaries and request assistance if needed.
- Ability to work with others in a respectful manner.

Education

Completion of Grade 12 is required for simulated patients in events requiring adult participation.

Parental permission

Permission from a parent or guardian is required for simulation events requiring participation of minors.