



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Standardized  
Patient Program

# STANDARDIZED PATIENT USER GUIDE

**A special thank you to the SPP Staff for their input and time in preparing and reviewing every procedure, to the University of British Columbia (UBC), Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), The Centre for Collaborative Clinical Learning and Research (C3LR) Dalhousie University and Touchstone Institute for the use of their online resources and providing information for this guide.**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Module 1 - ABOUT THE SPP</b> .....	4
<b>Standardized Patient Program (SPP), University of Toronto</b> .....	4
<b>SPP Office Information</b> .....	4
<b>SPP Services</b> .....	5
<b>Diversity Statement</b> .....	5
<b>What is a Standardized Patient/Client?</b> .....	6
<b>Skills Required of a Standardized Patient</b> .....	6
<b>SP Reporting Relationship</b> .....	7
<b>SP Expectations</b> .....	7
<b>Module 2 – SP SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT</b> .....	9
<b>How SPs are incorporated in Medical Education</b> .....	9
<b>How SPs are selected for an assignment or project</b> .....	9
<b>SP recruitment for projects</b> .....	9
<b>Recruitment Email</b> .....	10
<b>Module 3 – SP TRAINING AND PROJECT ROLE</b> .....	11
<b>SP Training</b> .....	11
<b>Dry Run or Rehearsal of Role</b> .....	12
<b>Project or Assessment</b> .....	12
<b>Alternate SPs (Alts)</b> .....	12
<b>What is an OSCE Assessment?</b> .....	13
<b>What is a Rotation?</b> .....	13
<b>Types of Roles Standardized Patients Are Booked For</b> .....	13
<b>Support Staff</b> .....	14
<b>Module 4 – PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION INFORMATION</b> .....	15
<b>How are SPs compensated?</b> .....	15
<b>Online Pay Statements and access to T4 statements</b> .....	15
<b>Two-hour minimum compensation</b> .....	15
<b>Cancellation policy</b> .....	15
<b>Parking and Travel</b> .....	15
<b>Module 5 – CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b> .....	16
<b>Casual Employment</b> .....	16
<b>Newsletter, Bulletin Board and Professional Development</b> .....	16

<b>SPecial Edition</b> .....	16
<b>Bulletin Board</b> .....	16
<b>Events and Professional Development</b> .....	16
<b>Video Recording</b> .....	16
<b>Personal Information and Photographs</b> .....	17
<b>SPP Contact Information</b> .....	17
<b>Module 6 – SP HEALTH AND SAFETY</b> .....	18
<b>UofT Basic Health &amp; Safety Awareness Training</b> .....	18
<b>Standardized Patient’s Responsibility</b> .....	18
<b>Trainer’s Responsibility</b> .....	18
<b>Tips for staying fresh, safe and injury-free all day</b> .....	19
<b>Module 7 – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)</b> .....	20
<b>Frequently Used Acronyms</b> .....	21
<b>References</b> .....	22
<b>Suggested Reading</b> .....	22
<b>Module 8: APPENDICES</b> .....	23
<b>Appendix 1: Sample Recruitment Email Template</b> .....	23
<b>Appendix 2: Sample Assignment Confirmation Email Template</b> .....	24
<b>Appendix 3: Bi-Weekly Payroll Schedule 2020</b> .....	25

# Module 1 - ABOUT THE SPP

## Standardized Patient Program (SPP), University of Toronto

Welcome to the Standardized Patient Program at the University of Toronto. The SPP at the University of Toronto began operations in 1984 and has a team of over 1000 SPs. It continues its long history of providing teaching, simulation and assessment services to the MD Program in the Faculty of Medicine. The SPP provides simulation services to the St. George (Downtown) and the Mississauga Academy of Medicine (MAM) campus. In addition, the SPP collaborates with a diverse group of clients, including other UofT faculties (e.g. Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Dentistry), hospitals, community-based programs, licensing bodies, and researchers.

The SPP's primary goal is to support the teaching of medical students within the UofT Faculty of Medicine, along with other clients. Our work also includes administering Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs) in the healthcare field, and providing expertise on SP-related issues and facilitating the role of SPs as a dynamic teaching and learning resource.

Welcome to our team!!

## SPP Office Information

### Hours of Operation:

Monday to Friday – 8.45am to 5.00pm (September Labor Day weekend to June 30)

Monday to Friday – 8.45am to 4.30pm (summer hours from July 1 to Sept, Labor Day weekend)

Saturday, Sunday and Statutory holidays - Closed

### SPP Office locations:

#### SPP Main Office

88 College St  
Toronto, ON M5G 1L4  
Canada  
Phone: (416) 978-3465

#### SPP – University of Toronto, Mississauga Academy of Medicine (MAM) Campus

Terrence Donnelly Health Sciences Complex  
3359 Mississauga Rd,  
Mississauga, ON L5L 1C6  
Canada

For more information on the SPP, visit [www.spp.utoronto.ca](http://www.spp.utoronto.ca).

## SPP Services

The SPP is involved in a variety of projects across the healthcare education spectrum including community-based projects and education projects at other institutions. The activities of the SPP include but are not limited to -

### Teaching:

SP-based learning incorporates immediate face-to-face and learner based feedback for:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Faculty development
- Continuing education and remediation

### Assessment:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate assessments
- Performance-based testing for national licensure
- Provincial certification

### National consulting services:

- Expertise in SP methodology
- Case development
- Facilitation
- Feedback delivery

### Knowledge dissemination:

Leading workshops on:

- Community-based education – e.g. People With Aids, Bob Rumball Canadian Centre of Excellence for the Deaf, Transgender health in medical education etc.
- Conflict Resolution
- Inter-professional Education
- End of Life Care

## Diversity Statement

**The University of Toronto is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes applications from racialized persons / persons of colour, women, Indigenous / Aboriginal People of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ persons, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.**



The Standardized Patient Program is committed to creating a culturally diverse SP pool, and to being equitable and fair in providing work opportunities to SPs.

### University of Toronto - Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence

## **What is a Standardized Patient/Client?**

A Standardized Patient/Standardized Client (SP/SC) is an individual trained to simulate the symptoms of a real patient in a reliable and valid manner, thereby affording the student or candidate an opportunity to learn and/or to be evaluated on learned skills in a simulated clinical environment.

SPs participate in communication and clinical skills assessments, education and quality assurance for the following groups:

- Medical students
- Pharmacy students
- Medical Residents
- Physicians
- Physician Assistant students
- Pharmacists
- Physiotherapists
- Nurses
- Nurse Practitioners
- Other healthcare students and professionals

## **Skills Required of a Standardized Patient**

An SP should be -

- Able to retain information
- Reliable and punctual
- An active listener
- Able to work with others in a professional and respectful manner
- Able to receive constructive feedback
- Able to follow detailed instructions and reproduce simulation consistently
- Able to provide feedback to learners

## SP Reporting Relationship



- The SPs report directly to Lorena Dobbie, Training and Recruitment Specialist
- For individual projects, SPs can raise concerns or provide recommendations to SP Trainers
- The SP Trainer will bring the concerns to the Project Manager who will either problem solve or escalate to the Training and Recruitment Specialist
- The Training and Recruitment Specialist will escalate an issue or concern to the SPP Director if the need arises.

## SP Expectations

- Work in accordance with UofT statements, policies and guidelines. Examples include:
  - Confidentiality – includes but is not limited to SPP, SP, Client, and role information.
  - [Conflict of Interest](#) – real, perceived or otherwise
- Exhibit professional and ethical behavior at all times
- Respect the authority and knowledge of other professionals
- Exhibit sensitivity and respect for other beliefs, opinions, gender, race, culture, religion, sexual and gender preferences, and status
- Abstain from speaking with candidates/learners “out of role” before or during the session; SPs should not be seen by any of the candidates/learners unless in role with the exception of teaching sessions.
- To not receive any advice or recommendations from a physician tutor during the course of any sessions as constituting individual medical care or advice
- When simulating a physical role, should an abnormal finding be found, SPs can expect to be informed and advised to seek medical evaluation and treatment from the SP’s personal physician/healthcare provider
- Neither the learners nor the faculty should provide any medical advice to SPs nor should SPs seek medical advice from them except as required in role

- Keep all scenarios, cases, procedures, communications and other related information of the SPP confidential
- To not discuss learner performance, behaviors, or interactions outside of simulation
- To not consume food or drink in any SP simulation, unless required by the scenario
- SPs may bring a water bottle into the clinic room, but this must be kept out of sight during simulation
- Keep personal belongings out of sight within the clinic room during simulation
- Turn off all mobile phones and electronic devices during training and simulation, and store all electronic devices with belongings during large licensure exams
- Maintain proper hygiene, grooming, and cleanliness at all times
- The University of Toronto is asking for voluntary cooperation towards a [scent-reduced environment](#).
- Understand and agree that drinking alcohol, vaping, smoking or consuming drugs prior to or during a simulation session is expressly prohibited.



## Module 2 – SP SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

### How SPs are incorporated in Medical Education

In Medical Education, SPs are incorporated in:

- Assisting in the teaching of clinical, communication and interpersonal skills
- Providing a safe space for students to practice:
  - Physical exam skills
  - Psychosocial interviews (e.g. breaking bad news)
  - Diagnosis, treatment and management
- Introducing professionalism
- Assisting with evaluation of communication and clinical skills
- Providing immediate patient feedback (patient feedback increases a student's awareness of verbal and non-verbal behaviors and how their behavior affects the patient)

### How SPs are selected for an assignment or project

The SPP endeavors to distribute work equitably among our SPs – to those who have longstanding experience with proven reliability and expertise, and to those who are newer and require the opportunity to build their experience and skill. The SPP also has an obligation to our clients to provide SPs that match exam/project blueprints.

Below are a few criteria on how SPs are selected for a project:

- Client specifications or exam blueprint (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, physical characteristics)
- Ability to integrate feedback, if required
- Case requirements (e.g. affect to be portrayed, case difficulty, life experience)
- Past training and experience of SP with requested case
- SP response time to booking email and availability to booking request
- Client preferences – client may request a specific SP, or ask us not to send a specific SP

### SP recruitment for projects

- All SPP recruitment is done by email
- Recruitment for large exams begins 4-6 weeks before training commences
- If there are time constraints, a case may be recruited on a 'first-come, first-served basis' (this means that a large number of SPs receive the recruitment email, and those that sign up first will be hired for the project)
- When you receive any recruitment email, reply with your availability (or let us know you are not available) – even if spots are full, we will keep you on a waitlist in case another SP drops out of the project
- SPs who do not reply to recruitment emails are tracked for being unresponsive
- Recruitment emails are confidential and cannot be shared, not even with other SPs

- We recruit SPs based on specific needs of a case, which include age, gender, physical attributes, etc.
- Once confirmed for a project, you must make note in your calendar of the project name, trainer's name, training dates and times, and date, time and location of simulation. A reminder email is often sent by the recruiter or trainer, but this is not guaranteed and it is the responsibility of the SP to note what/when they have agreed to.
- **Note** – All Recruitment emails from SP Recruiters or Project Managers will be sent on a University of Toronto email address (@utoronto.ca)

## Recruitment Email

Recruitment emails contain the following information (see [Sample Recruitment Email Template – Appendix 1](#)):

- Project name
- Dates for project, training, dry run (if required)
- Location/address of project
- The name of the person you are to check-in with, if required
- Pay rate for training, dry run and simulation
- Whether the case is a history, physical, or a combination of both
- Possible screening questions (e.g. no abdominal scars for this role)
- Content related to sensitive topics may be included
- If applicable, attire to be worn for the role (e.g. hospital gown over shorts and sports bra) – your trainer will clarify expectations for attire either before or at the first training.

## Module 3 – SP TRAINING AND PROJECT ROLE

### SP Training

- Training typically occurs one to two weeks prior to the simulation.
- Trainings are generally booked for two hours in a face-to-face group setting with a trainer.
- An SP trainer leads the training session, with anywhere from one to fifteen SPs learning the role.
- SPs are trained with a case that is provided by the client.
- Training includes a read-through of the case and standardization of any affect, emotional or physical.
- SPs are not to change their portrayal from the way they were trained, and are expected to stay in role at all times when in the presence of learners/candidates.
- If there is a need to change information of the case after the training has taken place, the Project Manager or Trainer assigned to the project will provide the change(s) to the SPs as soon as possible.

In your training, the following will occur:

- Your trainer will review the case with the group of SPs, highlighting important information and answering questions from the group, including:
  - The project and the nature of the case you are assigned to
  - The level of students or candidates that you will encounter
  - The objectives of the assessment or teaching session
- If the role is a physical, the trainer will discuss the details of the physical exam components.
- If applicable, the trainer will clarify what you will be wearing for the simulation.
- Emotional or physical affects, if required, will be reviewed and standardized (e.g., a sad affect for a case dealing with mental health or walking with a limp for a case dealing with a sore ankle).
- Some trainers will do a “round robin”, which is a group interview where SPs take turns answering questions.
- The trainer may ask an SP to simulate a one-on-one interview to highlight how the case may run.
- For projects that have a dry run (e.g. large licensing exams), details will be given so that SPs will be able to come prepared to it (e.g. off-book/fully memorized).

Materials you will receive at training:

- Case materials
- For large licensing exams: a consent/confidentiality form, case materials, exam day information form, and payment form
- You must bring this package with you to each training and to the simulation

**Note – Case materials are secure and the property of the client and must be handled with care and returned immediately after the project has ended.**

## **Dry Run or Rehearsal of Role**

In addition to the initial training, certain roles/projects will involve a second training (specified in the booking email) called a dry run.

- Dry runs are reserved for licensure or high stakes exams (not every project or exam requires them) and are an opportunity to run the case and ensure standardization – think of it as a dress rehearsal.
- Dry runs happen approximately one week after the training.
- A clinician or content expert will be present, along with your trainer, to lead each SP through the case.
- Dry runs take place in front of the SP group to allow SPs to standardize with one another.
- You are expected to come to the dry run with your case fully memorized.
- The dry run is the final session with your trainer before the simulation.
- Dry runs are generally booked for two hours.

## **Project or Assessment**

- Registration location and time, as well as information on the project, will be specified in your booking email.
- Trainers will also provide or review this information at your training.
- For larger exams, you may also receive a reminder email days prior.
- You will be informed who to report to upon arrival on project day.
- Arrive on time (arriving early is even better).
- For most projects, there will be someone from the SPP who will do an orientation for all SPs.
- For some projects, SPs will sign in with a Medical Education Coordinator who does not work for the SPP and who is located at each teaching hospital.
- SPs have the right to decline if asked to portray something other than the role they were booked for.
- To the best of our ability, SPs will not be given additional content or an additional case on the day of the simulation.

## **Alternate SPs (Alts)**

- An Alternate SP (Alt) will be trained along with the other SPs booked for the role, and will be kept in reserve in case an SP is unable to do the simulation (e.g. sickness, family emergency).
- Often the Alt is assigned after all SPs have been trained for the role (i.e. the Alt may not know in advance that they have been assigned as Alt).
- If the Alts are not needed in role, they may be assigned to other duties on the day of the project (e.g. support staff duties such as being a timer, being a hall monitor, collecting test sheets).
- Sometimes Alts are booked for a shorter time than the other SPs, with the understanding that they should be available to stay longer if needed. In these situations, they will be released once the site coordinator has determined they are not needed.
- Sometimes Alts are paid to stay home for a predetermined amount of time and must be prepared to travel to a project if required.
- SPs who are chosen to be Alts are extremely important for any project; they are selected for their ability to play the role well and to be able to get into role at a moment's notice.

## What is an OSCE Assessment?

- An Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) is a performance-based test that is a key component of most high-stakes assessments for health professionals.
- In an OSCE, candidates engage in a variety of clinical encounters with a standardized patient, who portrays a role designed to assess the candidates' competencies.
- Candidates rotate between a number of stations (clinic rooms), each with a different SP scenario.
- Each station in an OSCE will typically have an SP, an examiner (healthcare professional), and a candidate.
- The candidate spends the allotted time examining/interviewing the patient, while the examiner scores the candidate on a test sheet. At the end of each round, the candidates move to their next station, until all candidates have completed all stations (generally five to ten stations).

## What is a Rotation?

- In some physically or emotionally demanding roles there may be two or three SPs taking turns in a station, meaning these SPs are on a "rotation".
- A "rotation" is a schedule that enables SPs to have regular breaks during an OSCE.
- Your trainer will inform you if your role will have a rotation, if so, you will be given a rotation schedule illustrating when you will be in role and when you will be on break. It is vital that you keep track during the day of when you go back into role and relieve your fellow SP.

## Types of Roles Standardized Patients Are Booked For

### History

- History roles unfold as a conversation between the candidate/learner and the SP in a clinic setting, where the candidate/learner asks the SP questions and the SP answers based on the information provided in their case.
- Some roles contain sensitive topics, and SPs may be required to portray a high affect e.g. simulate behaviors associated with depression, anger, breaking bad news or mental health diagnoses.

### Physical

- Physical roles unfold in a clinic setting, with the candidate/learner performing a physical exam on the SP – the physical exam tests to be performed maybe linked to a history case the SP will be trained on (e.g. respiratory exam, back pain, abdominal exam) or maybe a purely physical exam with no trained role.
- No invasive physical exams will be performed on SPs, unless the SP has been specifically booked for and agreed to such an exam (e.g. breast exam, prostate exam).
- Pay rates for invasive exams are higher, and SPs who are booked for these types of exams have informed the SPP that they are comfortable with this work.
- SPs will be trained on what type of physical assessments may occur during the simulation.
- Attire for physical roles will vary; often SPs are required to wear a hospital gown over shorts (shorts and sports bra for women).
- You will not be asked to do a physical role that will cause physical pain. If you are experiencing pain or discomfort, tell a site coordinator on-site so that something can be done.

## **History/Physical**

- Some roles are a combination of history and physical.

An SP can decline any role you are not comfortable with without explanation (for example, portraying a case with Alzheimer's or Dementia when one of your family members has recently been diagnosed with either illness). Declining a role will not preclude you from other SP work. If you have already accepted a role but realize at training that you are not comfortable portraying it, it is important to let the trainer and/or recruiter know as soon as possible so a replacement can be found.

## **Support Staff**

An OSCE has many logistical challenges; for this reason, some SPs who are not simulating are given the opportunity to work as Support Staff to ensure that the OSCE runs smoothly. Some examples of Support Staff jobs:

- Hall Monitor – helps with setup and teardown of the exam, and on exam day ensures things run smoothly and that candidates move to their proper stations.
- Group Leader – acts as a guide for a group of candidates, guiding them through the exam process from registration to sign-out, ensuring candidates get to where they need to be once the exam administration has started, Group Leaders also work as Hall Monitors.
- Timer – timekeeper for the exam uses a stopwatch or other timing system to signal when the exam starts, when candidates need to move to the next station and when the exam ends.
- Clerical staff – sort and code exam test sheets.
- Catering – assist the Catering Team with breakfast, breaks and lunch setup and teardown.
- Equipment – assist the Equipment Team moving all supplies from the SPP to an exam site; moving any tables, chairs and/or exam beds.

## Module 4 – PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION INFORMATION

### How are SPs compensated?

- Standardized Patients are compensated on a bi-weekly schedule. Please refer to [Appendix 3 – 2020 Bi-Weekly payroll schedule](#)
- Contact your trainer or project manager if you have questions about your rate of pay or how many hours you worked.
- After a training or simulation session, the SP trainer or project manager will submit your hours to the SPP payroll staff.
- Every two weeks the SPP payroll staff submits your hours to UofT Payroll for processing.
- Your pay will be made by direct deposit.
- You will receive an email giving you a specific breakdown of your pay (you can then compare this with your own records).
- Pay for the Medical Council of Canada (MCC) licensing exam is paid directly by the client and can take up to six to eight weeks. Paystubs and T4s for MCC exams are not provided by U of T.
- For information on pay deposit schedule, issues with your direct deposit, or any changes to your personal or banking information, contact Asta Baltakys, SPP Finance Assistant at [a.baltakys@utoronto.ca](mailto:a.baltakys@utoronto.ca).

### Online Pay Statements and access to T4 statements

- UofT Payroll sends login instructions to new SPs when they are hired
- With these login instructions, UofT casual staff can access a pay statement online and T4 statements (<https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>).
- Within the online portal, you can select whether you prefer to receive your T4 statements electronically or via mail.

### Two-hour minimum compensation

SPs are compensated for a minimum of two hours for each training and simulation session.

### Cancellation policy

- For large licensure exams and other projects if a project **is cancelled within 14 days of the project date**, the SP will be paid the full amount that they would have earned on the project day, excluding travel pay.
- SPs will not be compensated if the University of Toronto is closed and a project is cancelled due to inclement weather. The Project Manager or Trainer will inform the SP if the University is closed.

### Parking and Travel

- SPs are not reimbursed for parking or travel expenses, with some exceptions.
- SPs working at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, North York General Hospital, and Scarborough General Hospital are paid a flat rate travel of \$20 in addition to their regular pay. Travel pay applies equally to SPs driving or using public transit.
- SPs working out of town (e.g. Hamilton, Oshawa) will be informed of parking and travel compensation at the time of booking.

## Module 5 – CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Casual Employment

- SPs are considered casual employees of University of Toronto. This means the SPP cannot guarantee a fixed minimum or maximum number of hours of work.
- SP work hours are irregular and sporadic in nature, since they are dependent on multiple factors – projects, UofT academic year, etc.
- Casual employees are members of USW1998 casual unit.

### Newsletter, Bulletin Board and Professional Development

#### SPecial Edition

The SP newsletter is emailed quarterly to all SPs. It contains information on SP recruitment, SP current affairs, new trainers, etc. Each issue may include a profile of a staff member, a trainer, a recruiter, or an SP.

#### Bulletin Board

The SPP Bulletin Board is located inside the front door at 88 College Street and contains notices from the SPP on office closures, statutory holidays, etc. You will also find promotion information like business cards, theatre ads, and brochures of SPs' work outside of the SPP.

The SPP also has a separate locked bulletin board from USW1998 (United Steel Workers Union) to casual staff inside the SPP office

#### Events and Professional Development

From time to time, we hold social events for our SP community, such as the SP Arts and Crafts Fair. The SPP may offer professional development sessions twice a year. Information will be in the newsletter or sent by email.

#### Video Recording

On some occasions, simulations may be video recorded or observed for educational or quality assurance purposes. Video recording serves several purposes: it provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their skill level, and it provides faculty and staff with the opportunity to re-watch interactions with learners who might need additional support.

SPs will be informed in advance that the project or interaction will be recorded. No personal information will be shared or referenced during a video recording. SPs will be identified by the case name and information that was provided during training.



## Personal Information and Photographs

In order to recruit appropriate SPs for specific simulations, it is necessary for the SPP to receive and maintain specific personal information about SPs (e.g. contact information, height, weight, surgical scars, relevant physical characteristics, health issues, etc.). This personal information is kept electronically in the SP database at the SPP.

Photographs (head shots or equivalent) will be requested of every SP and will be kept on file with other SP contact and personal information. SP information and photographs will not be divulged or shared with anyone other than SPP staff.

## SPP Contact Information

- If your availability has changed, will be changing soon, you have moved or have changed your contact and/or banking information contact Asta Baltakys, [a.baltakys@utoronto.ca](mailto:a.baltakys@utoronto.ca)
- For information on SP relations or questions contact Lorena Dobbie, [l.dobbie@utoronto.ca](mailto:l.dobbie@utoronto.ca)
- For information and signing up for the online Health and Safety Training, contact Fatima Ijaz, [Fatima.ijaz@utoronto.ca](mailto:Fatima.ijaz@utoronto.ca)
- For specific questions about a booking or role, contact your trainer or recruiter.
- [SPP staff contact information](#)

## Module 6 – SP HEALTH AND SAFETY

### UofT Basic Health & Safety Awareness Training

All workers and supervisors in Ontario are required by law to take basic health and safety awareness training. This government regulation took effect on July 1, 2014. This training is mandatory for all full-time and casual UofT staff. Here is a link to the [online training](#).

Please contact Fatima Ijaz, [Fatima.ijaz@utoronto.ca](mailto:Fatima.ijaz@utoronto.ca) to schedule an online 10-minute training at the SPP office.

### Standardized Patient's Responsibility

- Do not accept a booking if you have a pre-existing injury or condition that would present a safety risk for you in this role.
- If you have a pre-existing medical condition or injury that we should know about, or are uncomfortable or sensitive with a particular topic, please email Asta Baltakys ([a.baltakys@utoronto.ca](mailto:a.baltakys@utoronto.ca)), who will record the information in your file; or if you prefer, you can call the office and speak with someone directly. Information you share is used only to ensure you are not booked for a role that may compromise your safety or comfort.
- If you have a safety concern about a role that you are being trained for, discuss this with your trainer as soon as possible – if necessary, you can withdraw from the role after discussion with your trainer.
- Ask for help any time you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or in pain, either physically or emotionally.
- Complete the University of Toronto health and safety training at this link - <http://main.its.utoronto.ca/hsa/>
- If you have a safety concern on simulation day, or if you experience injury, pain or discomfort, you can:
  - tell the candidate or learner to stop the physical maneuver
  - ask for help from SPP staff on site.
  - speak with the examiner/assessor in your room.
  - speak with the tutor/facilitator of the session.

### Trainer's Responsibility

- Review and confirm all project details of your booking.
- When preparing for each role, your trainer will discuss and/or demonstrate the expectations of that role in relation to:
  - physical exams or maneuvers
  - emotionally difficult issues that might arise
  - feedback when required
- Your trainer will also discuss the unexpected – what might happen during simulations and how SPs should react.
- Where appropriate, your trainer will demonstrate exercises and techniques that SPs can do during their breaks that will alleviate body stress.
- Find answers to any questions or uncertainties that came up during your training.

## Tips for staying fresh, safe and injury-free all day

### Physical Roles

- When doing a physical role do NOT wait until you start feeling stiff – use the read time between rounds, or take time on your breaks to take care of your body.
- Here are some tips to help relieve body stress:
  - If you are holding a posture or a joint in a stiff position, stretch it in the opposite direction.
  - Send breath into the “affected” area to prevent it from becoming stiff.
  - Neck rolls, shoulder rolls or simply standing or sitting up can help blood flow and keep you energized.
  - We have ice packs on hand at most large exams – please ask if you need one or more.
  - Think ahead – if you feel you would like to use an ice pack, let your trainer know and we will be sure to have some on hand.

### High Affect Roles

- When simulating an emotionally challenging role
  - Try booking yourself something fun to do after the session (e.g. coffee with a friend).
  - Try a simple mindful meditation before and after the simulation by acknowledging the work you are about to do, or have just done.
  - Write down your thoughts and feelings (journaling is an effective way to decompress and process events).
- While high affect roles may have no effect on you after the fact, it is also perfectly normal to have some lingering effects. Recognize that psychological and emotional distress is not always felt during or immediately after simulations, but may take time to manifest. It is not unusual to feel the effects when you get home or even days after at which point you can call your trainer or project manager if you would like to debrief after a simulation.

## Module 7 – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### 1. Who can and cannot be an SP?

Individuals aged 16 and older are eligible to be SPs. Due to conflict of interest, we cannot accept any pre-med or medical, pharmacy, and physiotherapy students.

### 2. What is the time commitment of being an SP?

Trainings generally take place between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. All high-stakes licensure OSCEs take place on weekends. Most other projects take place on weekdays. We do not offer trainings on weekends or on statutory holidays. Cases requiring teenagers or Health Professionals train in the evening.

### 3. Do I need to be an actor to work as an SP?

No, although a background in acting can be an asset.

### 4. How is SP work different from acting?

SP work has nothing to do with finding dramatic moments or “playing to an audience”. When working as an SP it is important that you portray the case the same way for every student or candidate who interviews you. There are parameters built within each case which allow for learning objectives and/or standardization to be educationally achieved for each case and project.

If it is an important element of the case, it may be appropriate for you to appear anxious, irritable, confused, etc. The trainer will let SPs know during training what level of affect is required, and it is important that all SPs illustrate the same level of affect in order for the role to be standardized. You do not have to be an actor to do these cases.

### 5. Do the medical students and pharmacy students know we are not real patients?

Yes. Students are aware that you are SPs and are told to proceed just as they would with patients they may see in clinic or clinical settings. Working with SPs is a regular practice for medical, pharmacy and other healthcare students.

### 6. How often can I expect to be called for work?

Our needs vary based on the demographics required for each project. You may be recruited as seldom as once or twice per year or dozens of times per year. We cannot guarantee any frequency of work and appreciate your understanding.

### 7. Being an SP sounds like easy money. Can anyone do it?

Being an SP is hard work and can involve long days. The focus that is required during the simulations as well as the detail-oriented study and preparation makes SP work a skill that is not suited for everybody.

**8. I have a friend in the Mississauga area who wants to be an SP. Is there work out there?**

Yes. The SPP administers MD Program teaching and simulation at the UofT Mississauga Academy of Medicine (MAM). If you know anyone in the Mississauga/Oakville/Burlington/Brampton area who you believe would be interested and appropriate for this kind of work, please ask him or her to fill out an SP application form, available on the SPP website.

**9. What if I am booked for a project as an SP and have to cancel?**

As an SP, once you have committed yourself to a specific event, we expect you will honor that commitment unless you have extenuating circumstances. SPs should provide at least 24 hours' notice; last minute cancellations or 'no shows' for a simulation (without a valid reason) could impact future involvement with the SPP. Reliability is an essential component of our SP programming.

**10. Can I bring my cellphone and personal belongings to a project?**

SPs should not use electronics such as cell phones during training or events, as they are distracting to learners, SPs, and staff. If electronics are used during simulations there is a risk that the learner may be disrupted and lose the opportunity to gain valuable educational practice and feedback. Some programs and licensure exams will explicitly ask that no cell phones or electronics be brought to the examination site.

For licensure exams, SPP staff organize 'bagging and tagging' on site. SPs are welcome to keep their personal belongings stored in the secure rooms during events. The SPP does not accept liability for any lost or damaged personal items.

## Frequently Used Acronyms

Within this document and within your work as an SP, the following acronyms may be used:

<b>CAPR</b>	Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators
<b>CDO</b>	College of Denturists of Ontario
<b>CE</b>	Chief Examiner
<b>EC</b>	Exam Coordinator
<b>HP</b>	Health Professional
<b>HX</b>	History
<b>IOSCE</b>	Integrated Objective Structured Clinical Examination
<b>MAM</b>	Mississauga Academy of Medicine
<b>MCC</b>	Medical Council of Canada
<b>OSCE</b>	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
<b>PEBC</b>	Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada
<b>PM</b>	Project Manager
<b>PX</b>	Physical
<b>SP/SC</b>	Standardized Patient/ Standardized Client
<b>SPR/SCR</b>	Standardized Patient Recruiter/Standardized Client Recruiter
<b>SPT/SCT</b>	Standardized Patient Trainer/Standardized Client Trainer
<b>SS</b>	Support Staff

## References

- University of Toronto, MD Program [www.md.utoronto.ca](http://www.md.utoronto.ca)
- Association for Standardized Patient Educators
  - a. <https://www.aspeducators.org/>
  - b. [The Association of Standardized Patient Educators \(ASPE\) Standards of Best Practice \(SOBP\)](#)
- University of Toronto
  - a. [Smoke Free Policy](#)
  - b. [Guidelines on the Use of Perfumes and Scent Free Products](#)
  - c. [Health and Safety Policy](#)

## Suggested Reading

- Barrows, Howard S. (1999). Training Standardized Patients to Have Physical Findings. Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.
- Wallace, Peggy, (2007). Coaching Standardized Patient for Use in the Assessment of Clinical Competence. Springer Publishing Company.

## Module 8: APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Sample Recruitment Email Template

Hello <<**First Name**>>,

I am contacting you to determine your availability to work as a Standardized Patient for our \_\_\_\_\_ (**Exam/Project**) on **Date/Month/Year**.

Please read this email in its entirety before committing to this job.

This is a << Information on Role>>. You will be on rotation so you will have breaks throughout the day.

**You must be available for the training time AND the dry run time AND the full exam day.**

Training: <<**Date and Time**>>

Dry Run: <<**Date and Time**>>

Trainer: << Trainer Name>>

Training Location: SPP Office, 88 College St

Exam Date: <<**Date**>>

Exam Time: <<**Time**>>

Exam Location: <<Location Address and transit stop information>>

Job # <<Number>>

Rate of Pay: Training and dry run pay; Exam day pay

Other information:

- Please let me know as soon as possible, **either way, if you are available or not** to participate. If you are available for the exam date but the training or dry run does not work, let me know, as I may be able to place you in another role.
- If you are no longer available to work as an SP, please let me know so I can update your file.

Thanks so much,

SP Recruiter

Standardized Patient Program, University of Toronto

## **Appendix 2: Sample Assignment Confirmation Email Template**

Dear <<First Name>>,

Thank you for confirming your participation in the <<Project>>.

You will receive a reminder closer to the orientation or training or session or exam day.

Thanks,

**Name of SP Recruiter**

[www.spp.utoronto.ca](http://www.spp.utoronto.ca)



### Appendix 3: Bi-Weekly Payroll Schedule 2020

<b>Bi-Weekly Payroll Schedule for 2020</b>			
<b>Pay Period</b>	<b>Payroll Period</b>		<b>Pay Date</b>
1	15.12.2019	28.12.2019	Friday, January 3, 2020
2	29.12.2019	11.01.2020	Friday, January 17, 2020
3	12.01.2020	25.01.2020	Friday, January 31, 2020
4	26.01.2020	08.02.2020	Friday, February 14, 2020
5	09.02.2020	22.02.2020	Friday, February 28, 2020
6	23.02.2020	07.03.2020	Friday, March 13, 2020
7	08.03.2020	21.03.2020	Friday, March 27, 2020
8	22.03.2020	04.04.2020	Thursday, April 9, 2020
9	05.04.2020	18.04.2020	Friday, April 24, 2020
10	19.04.2020	02.05.2020	Friday, May 8, 2020
11	03.05.2020	16.05.2020	Friday, May 22, 2020
12	17.05.2020	30.05.2020	Friday, June 5, 2020
13	31.05.2020	13.06.2020	Friday, June 19, 2020
14	14.06.2020	27.06.2020	Friday, July 3, 2020
15	28.06.2020	11.07.2020	Friday, July 17, 2020
16	12.07.2020	25.07.2020	Friday, July 31, 2020
17	26.07.2020	08.08.2020	Friday, August 14, 2020
18	09.08.2020	22.08.2020	Friday, August 28, 2020
19	23.08.2020	05.09.2020	Friday, September 11, 2020
20	06.09.2020	19.09.2020	Friday, September 25, 2020
21	20.09.2020	03.10.2020	Friday, October 9, 2020
22	04.10.2020	17.10.2020	Friday, October 23, 2020
23	18.10.2020	31.10.2020	Friday, November 6, 2020
24	01.11.2020	14.11.2020	Friday, November 20, 2020
25	15.11.2020	28.11.2020	Friday, December 4, 2020
26	29.11.2020	12.12.2020	Friday, December 18, 2020
27	13.12.2020	26.12.2020	Thursday, December 31, 2020
2021			
1	27.12.2020	09.01.2021	Friday, January 15, 2021

- Family Day: Monday, February 17, 2020
- Good Friday: Friday, April 10, 2020
- Victoria Day: Monday, May 18, 2020
- Canada Day: Wednesday, July 1, 2020
- Labour Day: Monday, September 7, 2020
- Thanksgiving Day: Monday, October 12, 2020

