

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE,  
NURSING AND HEALTH  
SCIENCES

# SIMULATED PARTICIPANT GUIDEBOOK



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh

# CONTENTS

<b>PAGE 3</b>	Introduction
<b>PAGE 4</b>	Our Mission
<b>PAGE 5</b>	Our Goals
<b>PAGES 6 - 8</b>	<b>What is a Simulated Participant?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What a Physical Exam may Involve.</li><li>• Who can be a Simulated Participant?</li><li>• Definitions</li></ul>
<b>PAGES 9 - 10</b>	<b>Becoming a Simulated Participant at NUI Galway:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to Become a Simulated Participant</li><li>• What is Unijobs?</li><li>• Tax Credit Alignment</li><li>• Orientation</li></ul>
<b>PAGES 11 - 16</b>	<b>The Pathway of the SP in Learning and Assessment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After Becoming a SP, What Happens Next?</li><li>• Selection</li><li>• Notification Process</li><li>• Training</li><li>• On The Day: Dos and Don'ts</li><li>• On The Day: SP Requirements</li><li>• Giving Feedback</li><li>• Performance Review</li><li>• Engaging with Faculty</li><li>• Being an Alternate/Back-up SP</li></ul>
<b>PAGES 17 - 18</b>	<b>SiPP Policies and Procedures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Audio/Visual Recording Policy</li><li>• Confidentiality</li><li>• Payment System</li></ul>
<b>PAGE 19</b>	Contact Details



# INTRODUCTION

## Welcome to the Simulated Participant Programme (SiPP) in the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at NUI Galway.

We are delighted to welcome you to our team of dedicated and experienced Simulated Participants who are committed to teaching and assessing the clinical and professional skills of our students.

The College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences is comprised of three schools: Health Sciences; Nursing and Midwifery; and Medicine. It has a long tradition of preparing healthcare practitioners to be the best in their field, across programmes at Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Postdoctoral levels. We work closely with our HSE clinical partners to provide programmes which best prepare students to meet the challenges of a changing healthcare environment.

Our Simulated Participant Programme is an important strand in our programmes. Our SPs have been carefully trained to simulate an actual patient, relative or healthcare provider in a healthcare setting for learning, training or assessment. This is a critical step in preparing our students for practice, before real clinical encounters.

We value the contribution of Simulated Participants to our healthcare programmes, to both develop our curriculum and support our learners to deliver patient-centred care.

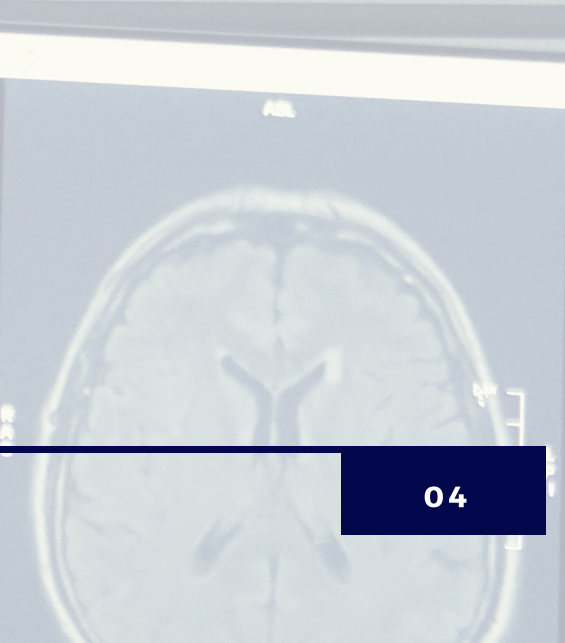
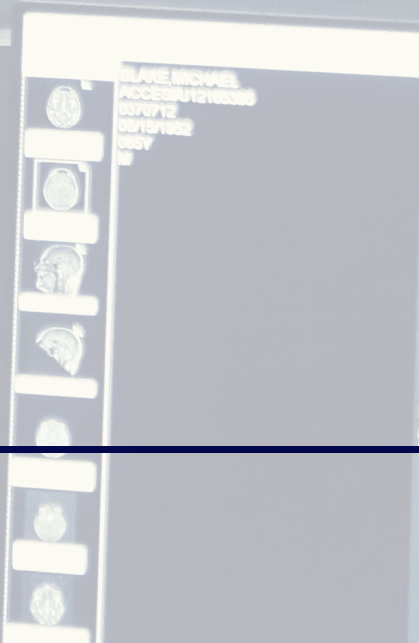
This guidebook will provide you with information about being a SP, ensure that expectations of you in your role are clear and act as a resource for any questions or queries you may have. We encourage you to read it in full and look forward to working with you as part of our programme.

*The SiPP Team*



## OUR MISSION

*To create a safe environment for student learning, to support their development as healthcare professionals who deliver patient-focused care.*



# OUR GOALS



The Simulated Participant Programme at NUI Galway has 6 main goals.

1. To make students' simulated experience psychologically safe, educational and enlightening through immersion in authentic scenarios, designed to help the student develop essential skills and competencies such as:

- patient-centred communication
- history taking
- physical examination
- problem solving and decision making
- counselling
- patient safety mind set
- ethical practice
- interprofessional working

2. To maintain an outstanding programme through recruiting, training and ensuring the highest standards in the use of simulated participants.

3. To learn from healthcare users and our community through the co-creation of authentic curricular content for learning and assessment.

4. To improve preparedness for practice in our graduates.

5. To develop, sustain and continuously improve a program of academic excellence, using evidence-based best practices for simulation-based learning and assessment.

6. To foster simulated participant research to contribute to healthcare education, processes and outcomes in healthcare programmes.

# WHAT IS A SIMULATED PARTICIPANT?

A Simulated Participant (SP, also known as a Standardised Patient or Simulated Patient) is a person who has been carefully trained to simulate an actual patient, relative or healthcare provider in a healthcare learning, training or assessment session. The SP supports student doctors, nurses and other healthcare professions to practice the skills of history taking, physical examination, communication and other clinical and non-technical skills. They support graduate attributes acquisition, in a simulated and safe setting. The role of an SP is also to contribute to the students' learning

experience by providing feedback to the learner from the perspective of the patient. Being a SP involves accurately and consistently portraying the medical background, physical condition and emotional state of the patient. SPs may be interviewed and/or examined by healthcare students. Below are the normal circumstances that you can expect during a physical examination. Each encounter, depending on the level of the student, may involve history taking, physical examination and delivering an assessment plan and counselling as needed.

## WHAT A PHYSICAL EXAM MAY INVOLVE

Physical examinations may be brief to focus on a complaint or encompass a full and complete exam. For example, the student may examine a patient by:

- Listening to the heart and lungs
- Examining reflexes of arms and legs
- Pressing on the stomach
- Taking a blood pressure
- Looking into the eyes, ears, nose and throat.

SPs are not required to participate in a physical examination unless they indicate they are willing to do so.



# WHO CAN BE A SIMULATED PARTICIPANT?

The College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences anticipates that SPs will come from 3 main backgrounds:

- 1) Members of the local community or University/Hospital.
- 2) Patients attending local affiliated hospitals or primary care services.
- 3) Actors, who may be required for more complex cases, such as portraying more distressed emotional states or more challenging communication scenarios.

Simulated Participants can come from any background and previous training or acting experience are not requirements as all SPs will be provided with training as part of the programme.

Key characteristics of Simulated Participants on this programme include good communication skills, reliability, flexibility and conscientiousness. SPs are interested in role-play and teaching healthcare students in a supportive and nurturing environment. SPs are respectful of others beliefs, opinions, gender, race, culture religion, sexual orientation, age and status.

Helpful skills for a Simulated Participant include:

- Attention to detail
- Professionalism
- Good memory, concentration and ability to stay in character
- Excellent listening skills
- Good communication skills to accurately portray the case
- Basic computer skills.

*Reliable*

*Professional*

*Empathetic*

*Supportive*

*Open*

*Authentic*

*Flexible*

*Consistent*

*Trained*

*Communicative*

*Skilled*

*Enthusiastic*

---

# DEFINITIONS

## Healthcare Simulation

# Dictionary



In healthcare simulation and medical education, there are a number of unique terms that may be used to describe different people, tools, events and phenomena. The **Healthcare Simulation Dictionary**, supplied in the resources section of the SiPP website, is a very useful document for you to refer to which defines many of the terms used in healthcare simulation. Throughout this document, we will use the terms:



### SP EDUCATOR

An SP educator is a person who is responsible for training and/or administering SP-based simulation. Some may be trainers who exclusively work with SPs, while some may be faculty who work with SPs as part of their clinical and/or academic roles.



### SP COORDINATOR

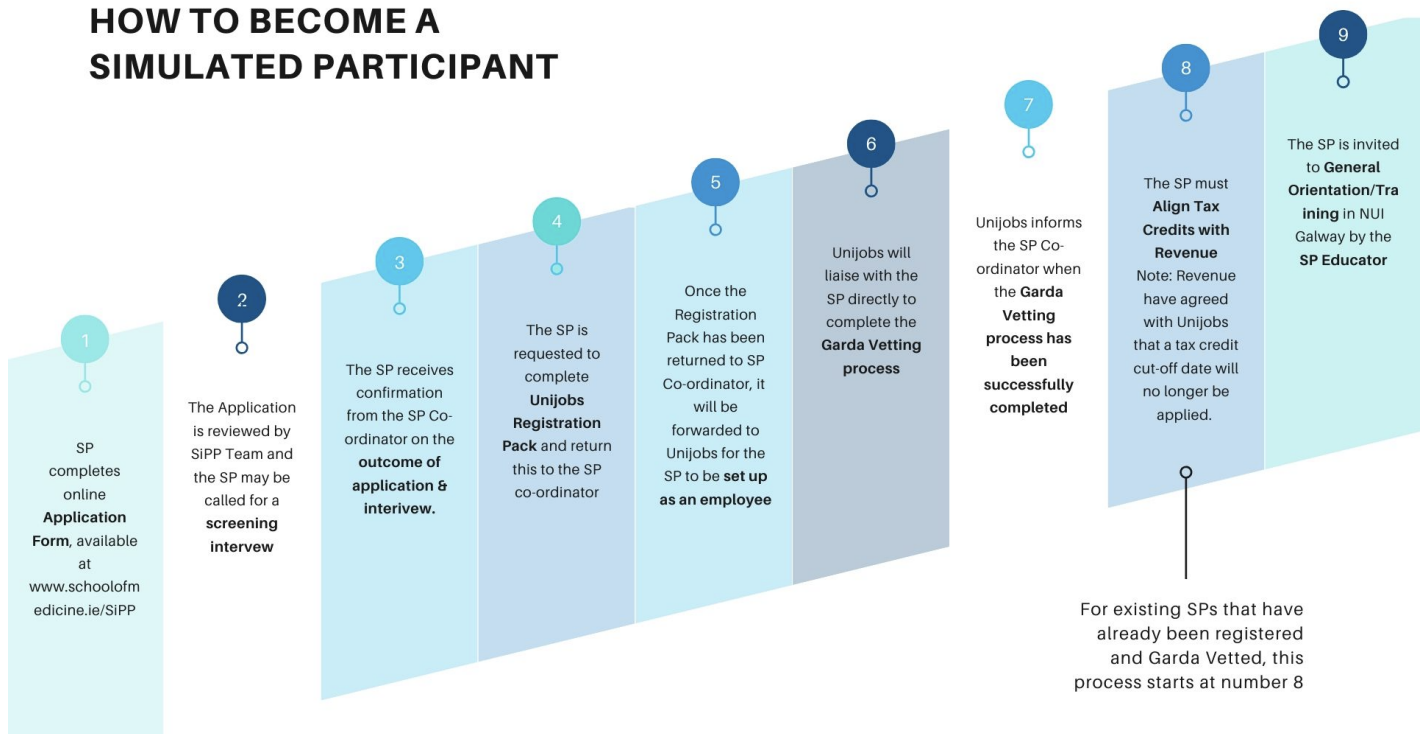
An SP coordinator oversees the running of the SP programme. They direct the recruitment, orientation, training and evaluation of SPs, provide administration and support to the programme and oversee attendance and payment processes.



# BECOMING A SIMULATED PARTICIPANT AT NUI GALWAY

As a Simulated Participant at NUI Galway, you will be familiar with the initial steps outlined by the timeline shown below that shows the process of application, interview and set up of SPs with Unijobs. This section of the guidebook aims to provide you with some further detail on becoming a Simulated Participant.

## HOW TO BECOME A SIMULATED PARTICIPANT



## WHAT IS UNIJOBBS?

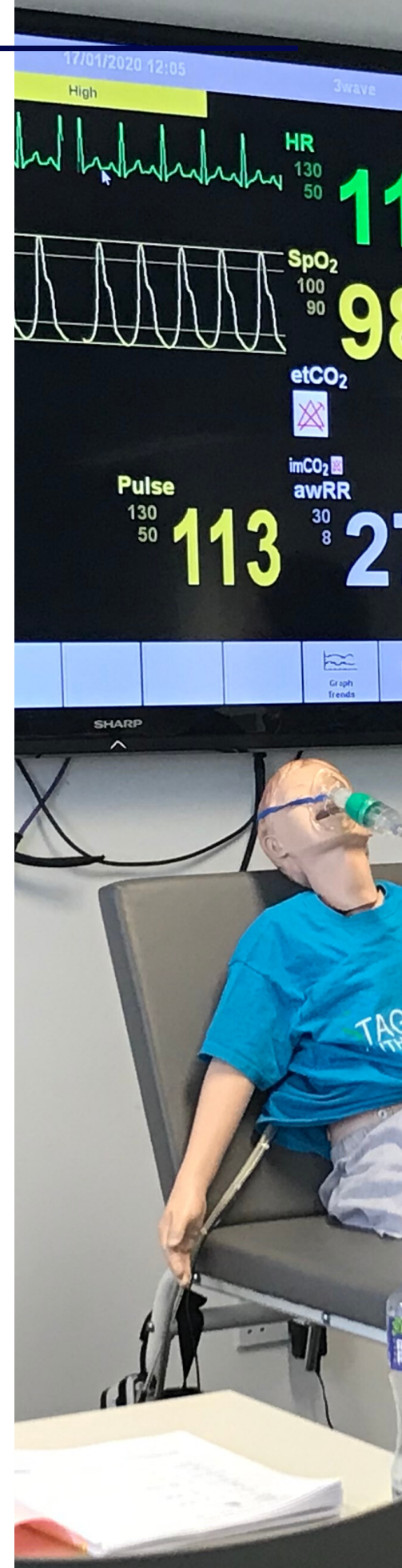
Unijobs is a standalone staffing agency that provides a workforce service to the public sector. Unijobs and NUI Galway work together in order to recruit and maintain a database of Simulated Participants and provide payment to those working as Simulated Participants. For more information about Unijobs, visit [www.unijobs.ie](http://www.unijobs.ie)

## TAX CREDIT ALIGNMENT

Everyone resident in Ireland is entitled to tax credits. The amount of tax credits a person receives varies on an individual basis and is indicated by your tax credit certificate, issued by the revenue office at the beginning of each year. Aligning your tax credits ensures that you pay an appropriate amount of tax on your income and avoids emergency tax. Further information can be found at [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie) and your personal tax information can be found by logging into the 'My Account' section of the Revenue webpage.

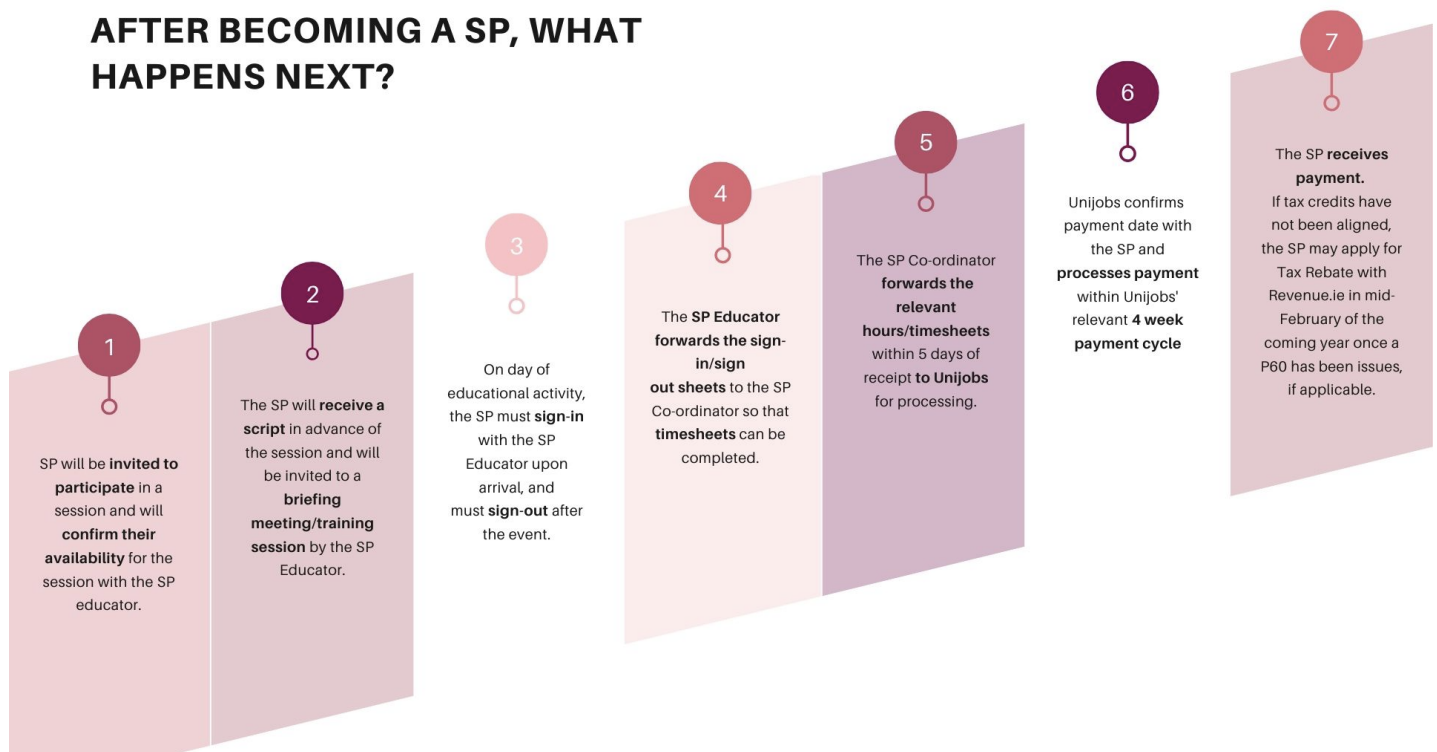
## ORIENTATION

On acceptance onto the programme, new Simulated Participants attend a new SP group orientation meeting, facilitated by an SP educator. General orientation to the College, School and Programme will be provided at this meeting, in addition to providing SPs with an opportunity to network with other SPs and to clarify any questions they may have concerning the programme.



# THE PATHWAY OF THE SP IN LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

## AFTER BECOMING A SP, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



## SELECTION

Simulated Participants are chosen for events in much the same way that actors are cast in a play. Many things are considered:

- Age, race, gender and certain physical characteristics which may be specified in the case.
- High stakes exams or assessments may require a more experienced SP
- Past experience/training in a particular case
- Previous performance
- Faculty requests.

Formal Requirements, which the SP will have completed, when applying for the post include:

- Character Reference
- Garda vetting (Completed post-acceptance onto programme)
- Signed policies and procedures document, including confidentiality statement, conflict of interest statement, recording consent form and disclaimer
- Completed Uni-jobs registration form.



## **NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

When selected, an SP will be contacted initially, via email, to determine their availability for an activity. This does not confirm a place at the event as the SP must respond via email, to indicate that they are available and interested in participating in the activity. If the slot is still available when the SP confirms, they will be assigned to that event and will receive a confirmation email. The confirmation email will include the training time and date along with the activity time and date. If an SP confirms their availability for an activity, it is expected that they will arrive at the scheduled times for training and the activity itself. SPs are not expected to be available for all activities and each SP has the right to turn down and choose those activities they wish to participate in.

## **TRAINING**

Initially the SP coordinator will provide the SP with the following information via email:

- The schedule for the day
- The type of activity (history only, history and physical, etc.)
- The type of student the SP will be seeing (1st - 4th year, final year, postgraduate learner etc.)
- The script and case materials which include the medical and personal facts about the patient the SP will be portraying.

Each SP is required to memorise the case material in advance of the training session. It is vital to know the script and understand it in order to portray the case accurately and anticipate any questions that may arise. The script will provide patient information and will indicate whether the information is offered to learners initially or only if asked. This is so students can learn the appropriate questions to ask in order to gather information. When the student asks a reasonable question, the simulated patient should supply information relevant to the question asked.

At times, students may ask questions for which there is not an answer provided by the script. Where appropriate, it is very acceptable for SPs to say "I don't know" or "I can't remember" rather than to ad-lib. If an SP responds to a non-scripted question, they do so in a neutral way without a lot of detail.

After receiving and learning the script and case materials, the SP will attend a training session in person at an appointed time and venue. This session will refine the SPs skills and prepare them to portray the details of the case in a learning or assessment session. It expands upon the work the SP has done in preparing the script.

Simulated Participants must attend all training sessions to which they are assigned. If at the end of the training process an SP does not feel prepared to perform, they should inform the SP Educator as soon as possible. The SP educator will support the SP by finding a substitute or providing additional training. It is important for each SP and for the SiPP that any concerns or confusion are discussed and addressed in advance of an activity.

### **ON THE DAY: DOS AND DONTs**

#### **On the day of an activity, an SP will always:**

- Arrive promptly at the designated time and venue. Early arrival time is built into the SP payment schedule
- Prepare thoroughly to portray the role and symptoms as directed
- Arrive dressed as instructed for the case (Unless instructed otherwise, the standard dress code is smart casual, with minimum jewellery, no facial piercings, minimal make-up or perfume/cologne unless they are called for as props in a case)
- Remain in role throughout the session
- Have lab results or exam details in an inconspicuous place, but easily accessible when asked for them
- Provide honest and objective feedback when asked on evaluation forms
- Keep all case material secure and use them only to review before sessions
- Remain in the exam room as much as possible while students are present.
- Work professionally with the CMNHS staff and students
- Adapt to change with flexibility and maintaining a positive attitude
- Respect faculty, SP Programme staff and SP educators
- Be aware of their facial expressions and body language before, during and after an encounter with a student.

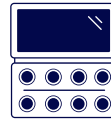
#### **On the day of an activity, an SP will never:**

- Discuss their role or share case material with anyone outside of the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences SiPP
- Discuss student performance/appearance with anyone but faculty or the SP Educator
- Place comments, updates, photos or tweets concerning their role on social media sites (mobile phones are permitted but must be on silent mode)
- Interject unscripted material into a case
- Evaluate students in ways other than specified and taught
- Consistently challenge the SP Educator or faculty and the material they present to you.



## FIDELITY

Fidelity refers to the degree to which the simulation replicates the real event and/or workplace; this includes physical, psychological, and environmental elements. It is the ability of the simulation/simulated participant to reproduce the reactions, interactions, and responses of the real-world counterpart.



## MOULAGE

Moulage is the term used to describe makeup techniques used to simulate injury, disease, ageing, and other physical characteristics specific to a scenario; moulage supports the sensory perceptions of participants and supports the fidelity of the simulation scenario. Moulage may often be applied to SPs for assessment and learning.

### ON THE DAY: SP REQUIREMENTS

- Stay “in character” whilst on location and refrain from interacting with students at the session in order to maintain the fidelity of the case.
- Breaks will be built into a long sessions and SPs should use the room provided during their lunch break and ensure that they return in time for the next encounter
- In some cases, a debriefing of the event may be requested at the end of the session. SPs will be instructed to stay a short time after the event for this debriefing and this will be built into their scheduled time.
- Feedback from SPs from the perspective of the patient is very valuable to students and SPs should aim to provide honest and constructive feedback to learners if indicated. If after a session, an SP has comments of a sensitive nature, they should schedule a time to share this information with the SP coordinator confidentially
- During some sessions, extended time periods may elapse during encounters with students. These pauses may be uncomfortable, however, the SP should wait patiently for the student to continue and refrain from volunteering information, prompting the student or making small talk. Although the SP will be familiar with their surroundings, they should try not to anticipate moves (prompt the student to pull out a footrest or offer an arm before the learner asks to take blood pressure)
- SPs may encounter the same student in more than one scenario, however, the SP should not express familiarity with the student when portraying a different patient
- SPs should be aware that video cameras and microphones are capturing footage during the entire encounter day. During each simulation, SPs should be aware that their performance is captured on an audio and video device. Further details on the capture, use and storage of audio visual footage is contained in the policies and procedures section of this document.

## GIVING FEEDBACK

Some cases may require written and/or verbal feedback. Please answer questions as accurately and honestly as possible. It is acceptable to respond with “do not recall” if you cannot remember a specific question. When giving feedback, be specific by providing examples. Keep comments to the patient’s perspective; and refrain from commenting on medical aspects of the encounter. Use descriptive words about how you felt by explaining what was effective or not effective in the interview. Verbal feedback should ONLY be given when requested by an examiner or faculty member.

### FEEDBACK IS...

- **Empathetic:** legitimising, reflecting, exploring
- **Non-Biased:** without judgement or expectation
- **Conversational:** not a lecture
- **Behaviour-Based:** what specific actions did you observe?
- **Just-in-Time/Current:** what happened in THIS encounter?
- **Portable:** behavioural changes translatable to every encounter
- **Facilitating:** of self-directed learning
- **Clear:** Unambiguous and concise.

### FEEDBACK IS NOT...

- **One-Sided:** assuming motive for behaviours without being curious as to their origin
- **Judgemental:** blurring the lines between our personal beliefs and expectations/goals of the encounter
- **An Opportunity:** to lecture, denying the student the opportunity to self-reflect
- **Arbitrary:** subjective and without behavioural examples
- **About Personal Feelings/Situations:** it's about the student.

### DESCRIPTIVE WORDS:

Reassured	Listened to
Understood	At ease
Encouraged	Frustrated
Relieved	Let down
Cared for	Rushed
Satisfied	Tentative
Guided	Confused
Cheered up	Demeaned
Comfortable	Foolish
Confident	Nervous
Grateful	Afraid
Appreciated	Embarrassed
Comforted	Alienated
Hopeful	Disconnected
Great	Judged
Pleased	Unsure
Important	Overwhelmed

### ASK YOURSELF:

- Is this still a conversation or am I the only one talking?
- Am I trying to 'stretch' feedback?
- Am I succinct in my statements?
- Am I confident of my observations or do I retract what I say with statements like: "I'm sure you didn't mean it"?
- Am I still present/engaged even when learners and facilitators are talking amongst themselves?
- What is my body language and facial expression saying to the learner right now?
- Have I attempted to engage with or give feedback to all participating learners?

## PERFORMANCE REVIEW

All personnel involved in healthcare consistently receive feedback to guide their performance. The performance of active Simulated Participants is reviewed regularly and on an as-needed basis which may include an annual performance review with the SP Educator. SP knowledge and expertise will be assessed using the following criteria:

Attendance and punctuality, portrayal of the case as trained including expression and details of the case; ability to be flexible and adapt to changes; maintaining a professional and positive attitude in working with faculty, staff, students and peers.

Annual review will provide the SP with an opportunity to give feedback to the program staff also.

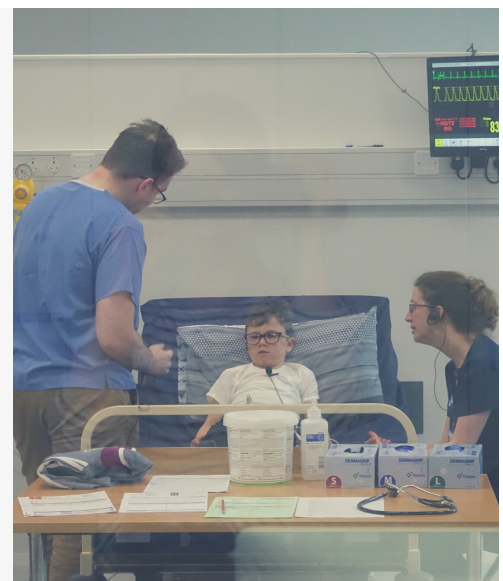
## ENGAGING WITH FACULTY

Simulated Participants can expect that faculty in the College will follow the College values of Professionalism, Compassion and Respect, Collaborative Teamwork and Equity and Honest Transparency. This will be reflected

- in the following practices:
- SPs will be treated with respect and consideration
- SPs will be contacted when they fulfil “cast call” criteria
- Faculty will understand if an SP refuses a role, without requirement of an explanation or be penalised in subsequent event SP selection
- SPs will be given general orientation, training and performance feedback
- SPs may be invited to contribute to scenario creation.

## BEING AN ALTERNATE/BACK UP SP

Every session requires an alternate/ back up SP. You may be asked to be an alternate. If every SP is present, you may be released for the day. Being an alternate means that you can step in the room and perform if necessary any case running in that session and therefore as an alternate you must know each case and be prepared.





# SIPP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## **AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDING POLICY**

As an SP, you may also be video recorded for educational purposes or so you may review your own performance or receive feedback from a SP educator. All SPs are required to sign an Audio-Visual Recording consent form at the time of interview.

Audio, photos and videos of SPs are stored on a secure database at National University of Ireland, Galway. Recordings are solely for educational purposes and debriefing opportunities with the appropriate faculty, staff and students. Videos of SPs will not be used for promotional purposes or displayed in any public forum without additional consent being obtained from the SP.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The content of scenarios and scripts may be sensitive in nature and scenarios may be re-used for both learning and assessment with multiple student groups. For this reason, it is essential that the content of the scenarios remain confidential. The SiPP values and prioritises a safe learning environment for its students and staff. In order to maintain this, we must ensure that student performance during a simulated encounter is not discussed outside of the feedback sessions the simulated participant has been instructed to give.

SPs must keep secure any copies of cases given to them, return paper copies to the SP coordinator and delete soft copies from any electronic devices. SPs must not duplicate or distribute any materials provided to me by the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, NUI Galway.

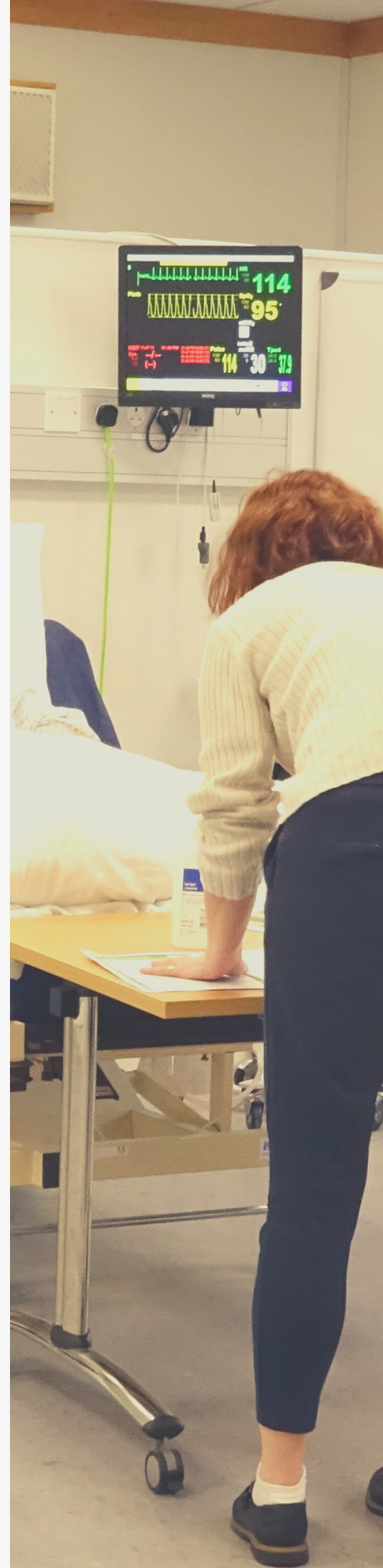
If an SP or a person close to them (e.g. relative, neighbour, friend) will be participating in the SP programme as a student, learner or a candidate in any simulation event, they must declare this to the programme coordinator.

## **PAYMENT SYSTEM**

SPs will be paid an hourly rate for work completed. Time will be scheduled and paid to include breaks, early arrival time and debriefing time if required. SPs will also be paid for attendance at training events.

SPs will be paid on a 4-weekly basis in line with the Unijobs payment cycle. Every attempt will be made to have payments available as soon as possible. Pay is subject to statutory deductions and completion of appropriate timesheets, which are to be signed off by the SP educator/co-ordinator following an activity.

Simulated Participants are responsible for ensuring their timesheets are completed after each training session or encounter.



# CONTACT US

**GENERAL ENQUIRIES:**  
SiPP@nuigalway.ie

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**  
Simulated Patient Coordinator,  
Room 1020, Clinical Science  
Institute, NUI Galway, University  
Road, Galway.

The preferred method for communication with Simulated Participants is via email. If you have special needs, please indicate so on your application form or by notifying the SP Coordinator directly. Thank you.

This guidebook, originally created in February 2020, will be updated on an annual basis. In the interim, any changes and additions will be made as an addendum to this original document.

