
SIMULATED PATIENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SIMULATED PATIENTS AT RCSI



RCSI

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INTRODUCTION

The RCSI Simulated Patient policies and procedures document helps to ensure that expectations are clear and that information is available on where to get support.

Further queries can be sent to **simulation@rcsi.ie**

Please read these policies thoroughly and keep them safe for future reference.

STAFF DETAILS

General Enquiries simulation@rcsi.ie

Finance Enquiries payroll@rcsi.ie

Postal Address Simulated Patients
RCSI Simulation
123 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

WELCOME

Welcome, it is great that you are willing to support the teaching of healthcare professionals at RCSI as a Simulated Patient.

RCSI has been at the forefront of educating healthcare professionals since 1784 when we were founded as the national training and professional body for surgery. Today we are Ireland's only focused health sciences institution, Ireland's largest medical school and one of the leading health sciences institutions in the world.

Based in Dublin, with students from over 80 countries and four overseas campuses, RCSI has a global reach through our network of Alumni in 97 countries. RCSI is ranked in the top 250 institutions worldwide and joint 1st place in the Republic of Ireland in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (2016-2017).

Core to RCSI's strategy is a commitment to providing our students with excellence in education, a positive student experience, world class facilities and support in achieving successful careers after graduation. We want all our students to achieve the best possible outcomes and in pursuit of this we adopt a holistic view in supporting our student body.

RCSI's Mission: To educate, nurture and discover for the benefit of human health.

We value your contribution as a simulated patient and endeavour to make sure that you are cared for, well trained and that the environment is friendly and welcoming. Your interest and dedication as a simulated patient is strongly valued.

SIMULATION

Simulated patients are people who are trained to play a specific patient role which allows a student doctor, nurse or healthcare worker to practice their communication, consultation skills and physical examination skills.

Simulated Patients are trained to realistically portray patient history, personality, physical findings and emotions of a real patient. They are also trained to give feedback on student performance.

Simulated patients act as a key stepping stone between the classroom and the clinic. They allow students practice in a safe environment before they meet 'real' patients in the clinic. Such interactions give students the valuable opportunity to practise in a safe environment.

RCSI PATIENTS AS PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Real Patients

Patients are involved in teaching where a real case history is required with the presence of physical findings. Students learn from encounters with real patients during their hospital and clinic rotations as well as during some of their examinations.

Simulated Patient (SP)

A simulated patient is a person who is trained to portray a real patient, often so well that a doctor cannot tell the difference between the simulated patient and the real patient. The SP represents not only the appearance of a patient but can also represent the physical symptoms, the body changes and the emotional and personal symptoms. The emphasis is on simulation. Two simulated patients with the same complaint (e.g. pain in the leg) can differ from each other (for example one has more or less pain than the other). SPs are often trained how to give feedback to students on their consultation skills.

Standardized Patients

A standardized patient is a standardized simulated patient. The emphasis lies on the standardization. A standardized patient is an SP who is trained such that two SPs with exactly the same complaint appear exactly the same (for example both have the same amount of pain). Standardized patients are used in exams.

Surface Model

A surface model is a person who participates in physical examination teaching to allow a tutor to demonstrate various physical examinations. Students also have the opportunity to practice the physical examination with the surface model. Surface models are generally used to demonstrate normal physical findings. Surface models usually wear shorts and have their upper body exposed.

Actors

Professional actors are used where more complex emotional states are required or for complex and challenging patient cases to allow students to practise higher levels of communication skills.

TRAINING AS A SIMULATED PATIENT

Initial training involves a number of half-day training sessions and is arranged as is required depending on teaching demands.

During the initial training you will have the chance to see what it is like to be a simulated patient and to practice. You will also be given training in specific patient cases. Additional training may also be given where specific skills are required.

Topics covered during the training include:

- An introduction to simulated patient methodology
- Developing simulated patient skills
- RCSI simulated patient cases
- An introduction to medical history taking, medical communication and consultation skills
- How to give feedback to students

TEACHING SESSIONS

The format of teaching session varies depending on the teaching objectives.

Most sessions take the format of a consultation between a healthcare professional and a patient. The simulated patient may speak to the trainee healthcare professional one on one or in a group. Sometimes one student is involved in the full consultation and in others the students rotate and each cover part of the consultation process. In some sessions students give each other feedback and in other sessions a tutor supervises and directs the consultation and feedback process.

Although many students are nervous before their first consultation, most students find it a very beneficial form of learning.

At the training you will be provided with a folder to store material relevant to being a Simulated Patient. You should store all training material carefully in this folder and bring this folder to all teaching and training sessions ensuring that you have the correct case for each day. You may wish to read over it before the teaching session starts or revise it if a student asks you an unusual question. Bring with you any notes you have on giving feedback.

You will be scheduled to arrive before the teaching session is due to begin. You will be briefed beforehand on the format of the teaching session and you can ask any questions you have about the teaching or role you are playing. It's also a nice time to chat to the other simulated patients.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Learn and be able to accurately portray a given patient case in a realistic manner according to the provided script
- Remain in role for the duration of each simulated consultation
- Be able to provide appropriate feedback, according to the RCSI guidelines, to trainee healthcare professionals on communication and consultation skills
- Retain a professional manner while involved in student teaching sessions
- Understand that the focus of simulated patient sessions is learning
- Keep student performance confidential and only discuss student performance with relevant staff
- Make staff aware if you are uncomfortable playing a certain role and only accept roles that you are comfortable portraying. Some people due to personal or family experiences with the healthcare system do not wish to play certain roles. This is understandable and you are free to refuse a role once you notify the programme in sufficient time in advance.
- Identify the days/times when you can be available, and please keep these appointments. Give as much notice as possible if your availability changes. If you cannot attend due to illness please notify the coordinator as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Ensure that the patient roles are not discussed with the students outside of the teaching sessions. Once the consultation is finished the patient is considered to have gone home / back to the ward so the case should not be discussed further.
- Listen to and take on board feedback provided to you by tutors and trainers
- Participate when requested in programme evaluations
- Bring to the tutors attention in a timely manner students who are struggling or act in a way that compromises the professionalism of the consultation
- Seek clarification about any issues you do not fully understand
- Be respectful of others beliefs, opinions, gender, race, culture religion, sexual orientation, age and status
- Inform RCSI of any potential conflict of interest with students, staff or others
- Arrive and smartly dressed
- Refrain from using mobile phones for the duration of teaching sessions

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Enjoy working with people especially students and be sensitive to their needs, have empathy, respect and enthusiasm for student learning and patience with nervous students or students having difficulties.
- Good communication skills
- Punctuality and reliability
- Basic computer skills
- Be interested in education and personal development

A positive attitude and eagerness to contribute to the student's learning

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

- Character Reference
- Photograph
- Signed videotaping, photo and observation consent form
- Signed confidentiality and conflict of interest form
- Finance form and proof of PPS Number
(Available from salariesdept@rcsi.ie)
- Graduate students at RCSI require a letter/email of permission from supervisor

BOOKING SESSIONS

- Simulated patients will be contacted and booked for specific teaching sessions. The session is only confirmed when a response has been received from the SP.
- The frequency of the work will depend on the requirement for a specific gender / age group and skill set of the teaching session.
- Rates of pay vary depending on the teaching session.
- In general transport costs to and from teaching sessions are not covered by RCSI.

CASUAL ENGAGEMENT

Type of Engagement

You may be engaged by the College from time to time as a casual worker. This is not an employment contract and does not confer employment rights on you. In particular, it does not create any obligation on the College to provide work to you and by entering into this engagement you confirm your understanding that the College makes no promise or guarantee of a minimum level of work to you and you will work on a flexible “as required” basis. It is the intention of both you and the College that there be no mutuality of obligation between the parties at any time when you are not performing any work for the College. You are free to accept or decline work offered to you by the College on any particular occasion.

You acknowledge that each offer of work by the College which you accept shall be treated as an entirely separate and severable engagement (an assignment). The terms of this engagement shall apply to each assignment but there shall be no relationship between the parties after the end of one assignment and before the start of any subsequent assignment.

The fact that the College has offered you work, or offers you work more than once, shall not confer any legal rights on you and, in particular, should not be regarded as establishing an entitlement to regular work or conferring continuity of employment.

Provision of Services

The College may offer you work from time to time as a Simulated Patient. If you accept any offer of work, your duties will include **those outlined in the “Responsibilities Section” of this document** and you will usually report to the Simulated Patient Co-ordinator. The precise description and nature of your work may be varied with each assignment and you may be required to carry out other duties as necessary from time to time. You will be informed of the requirements at the start of each assignment.

For the duration of each assignment, you will be required to conform to health & safety rules and procedures and other relevant College rules, regulations and codes of practice as they apply to you.

Location

The College may offer you assignments at various locations. You will be informed of the relevant place of work for each assignment in advance of same commencing.

Days/Hours of work

In respect of an offer of work which is made by the College and accepted by you, your hours will be as agreed with you on each occasion, although any hours so agreed and the days you have been asked to provide your services may be varied at the College's discretion.

Rate of Pay

You will only be paid for hours that you work. You will be paid monthly in arrears, subject to deduction of statutory deductions and subject to completion of appropriate timesheets, which are to be signed off by your designated supervisor on a monthly basis.

Annual leave

You shall be entitled to annual leave calculated as 8% of the hours worked by you per annum, subject to a maximum entitlement of 20 days per annum. Holiday and Public Holiday entitlements will be granted in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Sickness

If you have accepted an offer of work but are subsequently unable to work the hours agreed, you must notify your designated supervisor of the reason for your absence as soon as possible but no later than 10am on the first day of absence.

For the avoidance of doubt, as you are not an employee of the College, you will not be entitled to any employee benefits (including paid sick pay).

Termination

If you no longer wish to be considered for casual work by the College, you should inform the salaries department in writing to salariesdept@rcsi.ie. The College may remove your name from its bank of casual workers at any time on notice in writing to you.

RCSI shall be entitled in its absolute discretion to terminate your engagement should you act in a manner which breaches RCSI policies and procedures such as the Dignity at Work policy, Health & Safety policy, RCSI Code of Business Conduct Policy or do anything which in the reasonable opinion of RCSI brings or is likely to bring RCSI's name or reputation into disrepute.

For the avoidance of doubt, if the College decides to end this engagement you will not be entitled to any further payments from the College other than any outstanding remuneration and holiday pay.

Confidentiality

During periods when you are providing services to the College, you may have access to and be entrusted with confidential information. In respect of all such confidential information, you may not at any time (except in the proper performance of your casual duties, and then only to those who need to know such information) or afterwards (otherwise than with the prior written consent of the College or as required by law) use or disclose any confidential information to any third party and you must use your best endeavours to prevent the publication or disclosure of any such information. You should note, however, that these restrictions will not apply to information which has become available to the public generally, other than through unauthorised disclosure.

You should also ensure that all notes, memoranda and other records (including those stored on computer software) made by you whilst providing services to the College belong to the College and should be handed over to it upon request and in any event, at the end of any and all periods of work.

Data Protection

You consent to the College holding and processing, both electronically and manually, the data that it collects about you, in the course of your working relationship with the College, for the purposes of the administration and management of its staff and its business and for compliance with applicable laws, procedures and regulations and to the transfer, storage and processing by the College of such data outside the European Economic Area if and when required.

Intellectual Property

By agreeing to the terms of this letter, you expressly agree that the terms of the College Statute and Regulations relating to intellectual property apply to you; and that the College will be entitled in accordance with those terms to claim ownership of any intellectual property which you produce while carrying out work for the College.

Entire Engagement

This document is intended to fully reflect the intentions and expectations of both parties as to the parties future dealings and in the event of any dispute regarding your engagement as a casual worker by the College it shall be regarded as a true, accurate and exhaustive record of the terms on which the College has agreed to offer you a casual work relationship. Any variation to this will only be valid where it is recorded in writing and signed by both parties.

Photos and Videotaping

Photography and video recording is an essential aspect of modern medical education. It allows for a true reflection of performance which provides invaluable opportunities for learning and feedback for students, simulated patients and faculty.

By enrolling in the RCSI Simulated Patient Programme I consent to the use of photos and video recordings for the purpose of education and research.

I understand the images have educational value. I consent to the images being shown to students involved in the teaching session, appropriate professional staff and for use in research publications including text books and journals anywhere in the world.

As a result, I understand the images may be seen by the general public and may be uploaded by third parties to social media.

Once released, I realise that recovery of the images may not be possible and that once the images have been used this consent may not be withdrawn.

Confidentiality

I agree to keep simulated patient and student sessions confidential. All photo and video recorded data will remain confidential to RCSI.

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understood the terms and conditions on which I have been offered casual engagement with the College and I hereby confirm that I accept and agree to be bound by same.

Simulated Patient Name: _____

Simulated Patient Signature: _____

Date: _____

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