

ASPE Accreditation in Human Simulation- Preparing for a Successful Application

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Accreditation in Human Simulation



Disclosures

The presenter has no financial conflicts to disclose.

Background

- ASPE is the leading global organization on best practices in **human simulation**
- Other simulation organizations have accreditation/endorsement pathways to recognize centers adhering to best practices in simulation practices (SSH, SESAM, INACSL), however our scope is dedicated to human simulation
- ASPE's inaugural cycle was completed in May 2025
- A total of 19 programs, from around the globe, applied during the 2025 inaugural cycle
- 18 received full accreditation
- 1 received provisional accreditation



Process Vision

- As the global leader in human simulation, ASPE will provide a distinctive accreditation pathway for recognition of programs and institutions who demonstrate an ongoing commitment and adherence to best practices in SP Methodology.



Value

- **Provides validation of meeting standards of practice by the global leader in human simulation**
 - Certificate of Accreditation to be provided to all accredited programs for display
 - Accredited programs will be highlighted on ASPE's website
 - Adds additional support and expands on other accreditations and endorsements in simulation



Commitment

- **Represents an SP program's commitment to quality educational programming and assessments thus ensuring ongoing quality control**
 - Demonstrates assurance to institution that learners are receiving the highest quality SP-based educational programming and assessments
 - Verifies commitment to transparency to all stakeholders and institution of an SP program's policies and procedures
 - Authenticates quality programming for future learners and potential stakeholders enhancing program's reputation
 - Supports home institution's accreditation pathways



Guidance

- **Provides essential guidance to new SP programs or existing SP programs on how to conduct operations in accordance with standards of practice**
 - Reinforces commitment to utmost safety of the work, learning, and assessment environment
 - Demonstrates commitment to SPs to adhere to best practices in all onboardings, trainings, and all work-related activities
 - Aids in providing justification of the ever-evolving needs of programs



Institutional Approval

- Use the ASPE Accreditation Justification Toolkit as a guide to communicating with leadership



ASPE Accreditation
Justification Toolkit



WHAT YOUR INSTITUTION NEEDS TO APPROVE APPLYING

You recognize the value of seeking ASPE Accreditation in Human Simulation, but how do you communicate that to those responsible for approving your request?

One of the best ways to get approval is to share the benefits of accreditation with leadership. In this document, we provide some information on value and benefits from accreditation that you can share with leadership. It is our hope that this will help you so you can make a strong case for applying for accreditation.

This justification tool kit provides everything you need to “make the case” to your institution for applying for ASPE Accreditation in Human Simulation.

In this packet, you’ll find:

- A letter/email template
- Value and Benefit worksheet
- Expense worksheet
- “Q&A” fact sheet

Feel free to tailor these materials for your unique needs and the needs of your organization. If you need any other information or would like additional support, don’t hesitate to email your ASPE headquarters staff. We’re here to help you!

How to start
preparing?



Accreditation Recognizes Adherence to Best Practices

INNOVATION

Open Access



The Association of Standardized Patient Educators (ASPE) Standards of Best Practice (SOBP)

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Abstract

In this paper, we define the Association of Standardized Patient Educators (ASPE) Standards of Best Practice (SOBP) for those working with human role players who interact with learners in a wide range of experiential learning and assessment contexts. These human role players are variously described by such terms as standardized/simulated patients or simulated participants (SP or SPs). ASPE is a global organization whose mission is to share advances in SP-based pedagogy, assessment, research, and scholarship as well as support the professional development of its members. The SOBP are intended to be used in conjunction with the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) Standards of Best Practice: SimulationSM, which address broader simulation practices. We begin by providing a rationale for the creation of the ASPE SOBP, noting that with the increasing use of simulation in healthcare training, it is incumbent on ASPE to establish SOBP that ensure the growth, integrity, and safe application of SP-based educational endeavors. We then describe the three and a half year process through which these standards were developed by a consensus of international experts in the field. Key terms used throughout the document are defined. Five underlying values inform the SOBP: safety, quality, professionalism, accountability, and collaboration. Finally, we describe five domains of best practice: safe work environment; case development; SP training for role portrayal, feedback, and completion of assessment instruments; program management; and professional development. Each domain is divided into principles with accompanying key practices that provide clear and practical guidelines for achieving desired outcomes and creating simulations that are safe for all stakeholders. Failure to follow the ASPE SOBP could compromise the safety of participants and the effectiveness of a simulation session. Care has been taken to make these guidelines precise yet flexible enough to address the diversity of varying contexts of SP practice. As a living document, these SOBP will be reviewed and modified periodically under the direction of the ASPE Standards of Practice Committee as SP methodology grows and adapts to evolving simulation practices.

Keywords: Patient simulation, Simulation training, Standards, Simulated patient, Standardized patient, Simulated patient methodology, Standardized patient methodology, Case design, Feedback, Training

Introduction

Human simulation is a recognized methodology that involves human role players interacting with learners in a wide range of experiential learning and assessment contexts. At the inception of the practice, the human role players portrayed patients and were commonly referred to as standardized or simulated

patients (SPs). In more recent years, SPs may portray an expanded scope of roles (e.g., clients, family members, healthcare professionals). There is increasing recognition that SP methodology can be applied to the work of any individual portraying a human in any simulation modality (e.g., confederates, learners playing roles other than themselves, technicians operating a manikin). At the same time, there also may be distinctions in the nature, scope, and function of those who portray roles. For example, confederates have been described as health professionals who are

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Application Overview

A fully complete application will consist of both written narratives, addressing the key elements in each domain, and supporting documentation, to provide evidence of adherence to each the elements within the SOBPs

- Domain 1: Safe work environment
- Domain 2: Case development
- Domain 3: SP training
- Domain 4: Program management
- Domain 5: Professional development

What are Elements?

ASPE Standards are met by following principles and practices within each of the 5 SOBP domains.

There are numerous principles and practices under each SOBP domain.

Elements are a combinatorial representation of a set of principles, under any domain, and practices to a more reasonable number to address.

Examples of Elements

Essential Elements Encompassing ASPE Standards Of Best Practice	Evidence of Adherence
Domain 1: Safe Work Environment	Supporting Documentation
<p>The Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Element 1.1 Ensures safe working conditions across all activities, recognizing - potential cognitive, physical, psychological, and occupational hazards to SP safety. Element 1.2 Ensures SPs and other program staff understand and maintain principles of confidentiality and protect the privacy of personal information of all individuals working or participating in SP-based programming (e.g., learners, faculty, and programs). Element 1.3 Manages client or partner expectations of SPs' possibilities and limitations and respect SPs' self-identified boundaries. Element 1.4 Creates processes to provide SPs with adequate information, including compensation, for informed decision-making before taking a role. Element 1.5 Develops processes for proper selection of SPs for any role, and structure time and processes for deroling and debriefing SPs. 	<p><u>Narrative:</u></p> <p>Describe policies and procedure in place to assure physical and psychological safety of all individuals working or participating in any SP-based programming. This includes, SPs, learners, staff and participating faculty.</p> <p>Discuss how confidentiality and privacy is maintained at the highest possible level in all program activities and operations.</p> <p>Describe SP recruitment and scheduling practices that ensure transparency of SP roles and expectations for any activity or event.</p> <p>What successes and challenges did you face in meeting the standard? Describe future opportunities to improve.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specific policies/procedures in a single document (or can reference sections from policy/procedure manual submitted as an appendix) Provide excerpts from SP Handbook regarding safety (SP handbook can be submitted as an appendix) Can include specific language around safety in onboarding materials and training protocols Can provide confidentiality agreements, contracts Discuss or include debriefing/deroling protocols Examples could also include safety training sessions outlines/agendas (e.g., bias mitigation, implicit bias, crisis management and procedures)

Process

Step 1

- Program reviews SOBP and completes application.
- Program submits application and documentation to ASPE HQ.

Step 2

- Program applications will be assigned to a review team.
- Programs notified of review process initiation.

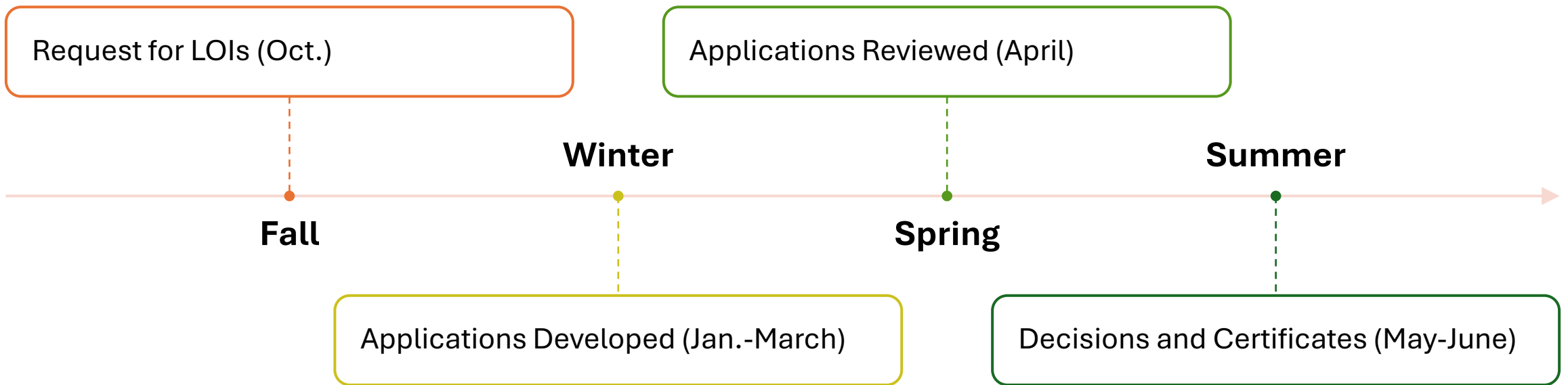
Step 3

- Review process completed by review team.
- Program will receive a feedback report summarizing recommendations and decisions.

Letter of Intent

- Any program seeking accreditation during any cycle must submit a letter of intent by the published deadline.
- This letter of intent to submit an application should confirm institutional support for seeking accreditation.
- LOI's should be written to highlight why your center is considering applying and why you think your program is ready for accreditation.
- Up to one page is sufficient.

Typical Timeline



2026 Accreditation Cycle Timeline

Timeline (2026 Cycle)	Process
October 13, 2025	Letter of Intent submission opens
November 3, 2025	Letters of intent due
December 8, 2025	Application submission opens
March 1, 2026	Applications due
April 20, 2026	Decisions notified to applicants*

Full Accreditation

- Institutions who have fully met the criteria under each Domain of the ASPE SOBP.

Provisional Accreditation

- Institutions who have partially met the criteria for full accreditation may receive a conditional or provisional accreditation and will be given one (1) year to resubmit along with a filing fee and be reevaluated for receiving full accreditation.

Keys to Success

- Start early
- Review application
- Read through the domains and gather evidence
- Data should be able to go back ~2 years
- Use the application as your template
- Answer each element, by element.
- Recognize evidence can be used more than once

Organizing Your Application

- Use the application as your blueprint
- Use the elements as headers
- Answer each element fully
- Provide evidence for each element to support your narrative

Essential Elements Encompassing ASPE Standards Of Best Practice	Evidence of Adherence
Domain 1: Safe Work Environment	Supporting Documentation
<p>The Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Element 1.1 Ensures safe working conditions across all activities, recognizing - potential cognitive, physical, psychological, and occupational hazards to SP safety. • Element 1.2 Ensures SPs and other program staff understand and maintain principles of confidentiality and protect the privacy of personal information of all individuals working or participating in SP-based programming (e.g., learners, faculty, and programs). • Element 1.3 Manages client or partner expectations of SPs' possibilities and limitations and respect SPs' self-identified boundaries. • Element 1.4 Creates processes to provide SPs with adequate information, including compensation, for informed decision-making before taking a role. • Element 1.5 Develops processes for proper selection of SPs for any role, and structure time and processes for deroling and debriefing SPs. 	<p>Narrative: Describe policies and procedure in place to assure physical and psychological safety of all individuals working or participating in any SP-based programming. This includes, SPs, learners, staff and participating faculty.</p> <p>Discuss how confidentiality and privacy is maintained at the highest possible level in all program activities and operations.</p> <p>Describe SP recruitment and scheduling practices that ensure transparency of SP roles and expectations for any activity or event.</p> <p>What successes and challenges did you face in meeting the standard? Describe future opportunities to improve.</p> <p>Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specific policies/procedures in a single document (or can reference sections from policy/procedure manual submitted as an appendix) • Provide excerpts from SP Handbook regarding safety (SP handbook can be submitted as an appendix) • Can include specific language around safety in onboarding materials and training protocols • Can provide confidentiality agreements, contracts • Discuss or include debriefing/deroling protocols • Examples could also include safety training sessions outlines/agendas (e.g., bias mitigation, implicit bias, crisis management and procedures)

Formatting Your Application

- Create a table of contents
- Evidence is provided in appendices

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Formatting Your Application

- Use the Domains and Elements as headers for your narrative

Domain 2: Case Development

SP trainers collaborate with subject matter experts to co-author scripts, ensuring that each case reflects relevant clinical scenarios. These scripts are then reviewed by clinical faculty or course instructors who ensure valid medical issues align with curriculum goals and measurable learning objectives. This vetting process ensures cases support intended educational outcomes and adhere to best practices in healthcare simulation.

Element 2.1: Ensures adequate case creation and/or review of the purpose, objectives and outcomes, logistics, and case materials of the activity. Ensures that cases align with measurable learning objectives. (See Healthcare Simulation Standard: Outcomes and Objectives).

Each case developed for clinical skills learning and assessment begins with detailed and ongoing communication between the faculty and the client. To ensure adequacy, specific requirements are established early in the process, including: the discipline being served, whether the exercise is formative or summative, the learners' level (M1, M2, NURS, PA, etc.) available resources, and potential for other needs.

Depending on the complexity of the exercise, SP request forms, adaptable existing cases, or case-writing templates can be provided to faculty to facilitate the development process and ensure alignment with curricular needs and measurable learning objectives. Purpose, objectives, and logistics are established first, and, as needed, case materials and SP checklists are designed to align with expected outcomes. Faculty observation, grading, video assessments, meetings with learners, learner-created notes, and more also contribute to ensuring desired results.

The Case-Writing Template aligns with the ASPE Case Development Template and can be adapted to the needs of the full range of the ASPE Case Development Template's Human Simulation Continuum Model. Adjustments are efficient with simple addition or deletion of required categories. In addition to case-writing materials for clients, the faculty developed and implemented an SP Case Format template. The SP Case Format refocuses case details for optimum results of SP study, training, and delivery. Examples of completed cases for both templates are found here: Faculty Written Case Example, SP Format Case Example.

Element 2.2: Engages relevant subject matter experts to assist in the creation of material and allow sufficient time to draft, review, and edit case materials prior to implementation

The faculty maintains communication with clients throughout the creation and production of all cases. Details and materials are requested as far in advance as possible and

Formatting Your Application

- Embed reference to evidence

2.2 – Subject Matter Expertise and Review

Engages relevant subject matter experts to assist in the creation of materials and allow sufficient time to draft, review, and edit case materials prior to implementation.

Cases are written and reviewed in a timely manner by the appropriate subject matter experts, usually several months in advance, to provide adequate time for subsequent refinement based on a collaborative review of case objectives, design, content, methodology, and associated assessments. This advance planning also ensures sufficient time for a thorough review by CUSOM Lead SPs and Director of Standardized Patients.

If further review, including that performed by CUSOM Lead SPs, reveals any discrepancies, concerns, or suggested changes in content or language, updates to the scenario are made in sufficient time for SP training and scenario implementation.

Scenario Development & Storage

Source: Section 3.2 of the CUSOM Simulation Center Policy and Procedure Manual

Procedure:

1. Simulation and OSCE Cases are developed using a standardized template. ([Appendix H](#) and [Appendix I](#))

QR Code to Application

2026 Accreditation Application and Guidelines

Accreditation Application Guidelines

Please note that the 2026 call for LOIs will open on October 13.

Resources

Justification Toolkit

Sample Application



*For full application, click on **Guidelines**

“Getting Started” Activity: Think-Reflect- Share



1

Pick one of the
Domains of the
ASPE SOBP

2

Name 3 areas of
strength where
you feel
confident

3

Name 3 areas of
focus where you
have opportunity
for growth

Domain 1: Safe work environment
Domain 2: Case development
Domain 3: SP training
Domain 4: Program management
Domain 5: Professional development

Domain 1: Safe Work Environment

Essential Elements Encompassing ASPE Standards Of Best Practice	Evidence of Adherence
Domain 1: Safe Work Environment	Supporting Documentation
<p>The Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Element 1.1 Ensures safe working conditions across all activities, recognizing - potential cognitive, physical, psychological, and occupational hazards to SP safety. Element 1.2 Ensures SPs and other program staff understand and maintain principles of confidentiality and protect the privacy of personal information of all individuals working or participating in SP-based programming (e.g., learners, faculty, and programs). Element 1.3 Manages client or partner expectations of SPs' possibilities and limitations and respect SPs' self-identified boundaries. Element 1.4 Creates processes to provide SPs with adequate information, including compensation, for informed decision-making before taking a role. Element 1.5 Develops processes for proper selection of SPs for any role, and structure time and processes for deroling and debriefing SPs. 	<p><u>Narrative:</u></p> <p>Describe policies and procedure in place to assure physical and psychological safety of all individuals working or participating in any SP-based programming. This includes, SPs, learners, staff and participating faculty.</p> <p>Discuss how confidentiality and privacy is maintained at the highest possible level in all program activities and operations.</p> <p>Describe SP recruitment and scheduling practices that ensure transparency of SP roles and expectations for any activity or event.</p> <p>What successes and challenges did you face in meeting the standard? Describe future opportunities to improve.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specific policies/procedures in a single document (or can reference sections from policy/procedure manual submitted as an appendix) Provide excerpts from SP Handbook regarding safety (SP handbook can be submitted as an appendix) Can include specific language around safety in onboarding materials and training protocols Can provide confidentiality agreements, contracts Discuss or include debriefing/deroling protocols Examples could also include safety training sessions outlines/agendas (e.g., bias mitigation, implicit bias, crisis management and procedures)

Domain 2: Case Development

Domain 2: Case Development	Supporting Documentation
<p>The Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Element 2.1 Ensures adequate case creation and/or review of the purpose, objectives and outcomes, logistics, and case materials of the activity. Ensures that cases align with measurable learning objectives. (See Healthcare Simulation Standard: Outcomes and Objectives). Element 2.2 Engages relevant subject matter experts to assist in the creation of materials and allow sufficient time to draft, review, and edit case materials prior to implementation. Element 2.3 Ensures that cases are based on authentic problems and respect the individuals represented in a case to avoid bias or stereotyping marginalized populations. Element 2.4 Ensures that changes arising from dry-runs or other piloting processes are addressed prior to implementation of the case. Element 2.5 Ensures case components include the necessary elements as outlined in the ASPE Standards of Best Practice. 	<p><u>Narrative:</u> Describe process of working with partners or clients to develop learning objectives and case materials detailing your process for case development. Include processes for case validation (e.g., piloting, etc..).</p> <p>Discuss how subject matter or content experts assist with the development of materials for activities and how authenticity in cases is maintained during resource development. Describe the review and editing process supporting case development.</p> <p>What successes and challenges did you face in meeting the standard? Describe future opportunities to improve.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specific policies/procedures in a single document (or can reference sections from policy/procedure manual submitted as an appendix) Provide general timelines and process of case development. Include process or strategy of working with content experts to develop a case Include sample case templates. Discuss how the template aligns with the ASPE Case Development Template. Include examples of final cases Provide sample final checklists Titles/roles of common partners or program faculty involved in case development and establishing learning objectives

Domain 3: SP Training

Domain 3: SP Training	Supporting Documentation
<p>The Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Element 3.1 Creates training plans that are responsive to the context and format of each activity. Includes processes for gathering training resources, administration documents, and special instructions necessary for training and address any existing knowledge gaps. Element 3.2 Informs SPs of the key objectives, responsibilities, context (e.g., formative, summative, level of learner, placement in curriculum, assessment instruments) and format (e.g., length of encounter, type of encounter) of each activity. Includes how SPs are engaged in discussion and practice of role portrayal features (e.g., affect, signs and symptoms, behaviors). Element 3.3 Ensures consistency and accuracy of role portrayal of SPs, and ensure SP readiness for the simulation activity through repeated practice and targeted feedback, while providing SPs with strategies to deal with unanticipated learner questions and behaviors. Element 3.4 Reviews with SPs the fundamental principles of feedback and logistics as they relate to the planned activity, including feedback objectives and level of the learners with whom they will be learning. Element 3.5 Ensures that SPs understand both the principle and receptive experience of any physical exam maneuvers they will be assessing. Element 3.6 	<p><u>Narrative:</u></p> <p>Describe review/training processes when addressing elements</p> <p>Describe how SPs are informed of key essentials of any event/activity. This should include learning objectives, SP responsibilities, key characteristics in role portrayal and understanding the checklist.</p> <p>Address ongoing quality control efforts and initiatives. This should include consistency and accuracy of role portrayal and checklist accuracy.</p> <p>Discuss how SPs are trained or prepared for physical exams.</p> <p>Describe how the program reflects on operations and satisfaction both within the program and among partners and clients.</p> <p>What successes and challenges did you face in meeting the standard? Describe future opportunities to improve.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specific policies/procedures in a single document (or can reference sections from policy/procedure manual submitted as an appendix) Provide excerpts from SP Handbook regarding SP training (SP handbook can be submitted as an appendix) Submit training protocols (by type, e.g. onboarding, feedback, case) Include example cases/checklists that have been used for training Provide program's feedback training protocols Provide documentation of any activities to enhance role portrayal and SP readiness

Domain 4: Program Management

Domain 4: Program Management	Supporting Documentation
<p>The Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Element 4.1 Articulates a mission statement for the program. Develop program goals. Identify measurable objectives for each goal (where appropriate). Element 4.2 Develops and documents policies to guide program activities which take into consideration disability access and inclusion. Element 4.3 Develops and documents business processes and procedures, including but not limited to creating financial management, business, and strategic plans. Element 4.4 Ensures policies and procedures are kept current and accessible, and distribute policies to relevant schools, clients, programs, and faculty. Element 4.5 Collaborates with subject matter experts to develop a system for reporting learner performance to all core partners, clients and 	<p><u>Narrative:</u></p> <p>Provide mission statement for program. Include and vision and goals set by the program.</p> <p>Include documentation of business plans that could include financial management strategies and strategic plans.</p> <p>Describe how policies and procedure for program operations are developed and the process of ongoing review.</p> <p>Include process of quality control review and how quality control initiatives are implemented.</p> <p>Explain efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion across program workforce (staff, SPs, etc...)</p> <p>Describe how confidentiality is maintained across all program operations. This should include events and activities, as well overall operations (e.g., data storage, employee/independent contractor information, learner data and information, etc...).</p> <p>What successes and challenges did you face in meeting the standard? Describe future opportunities to improve.</p>

Domain 5: Professional Development

Domain 5: Professional Development	Supporting Documentation
<p>The Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Element 5.1 Promotes acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to SP-based simulation across all staff and SPs. Encourages professional development and advocate for growth of leadership skills (e.g., collaboration, team building, change management, interpersonal effectiveness, conflict resolution). Element 5.2 Encourages and supports team in membership of professional simulation societies (e.g., ASPE, ASPIH, INACSL, SESAM, SSH). Promotes professional development through active participation in simulation society activities (e.g., committee work, abstract reviewer, conference facilitator). Element 5.3 Promotes personal management skills (e.g., time management, wellness strategies, career planning) across the team, including SPs. Encourages mentorship to support SPs and other SP educators within one's institution and within the community of practice. Element 5.4 Fosters both understanding and participation in the range of opportunities for scholarship in SP methodology. Encourages and supports contributions to the evolution of best practices through innovation, research, and dissemination of emerging methods in various venues (e.g., publications, presentations). 	<p><u>Narrative:</u> Include process of ongoing encouragement and review of professional development achievements across all staff and SPs.</p> <p>Discuss current institutional support for professional development opportunities for the staff and SPs.</p> <p>Discuss past, current and future scholarly opportunities which allows for dissemination of best practices in SP methodology (innovations, enhancements and research).</p> <p>Discuss pathways for mentorship across program staff and SPs.</p> <p>What successes and challenges did you face in meeting the standard? Describe future opportunities to improve.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specific policies/procedures in a single document (or can reference sections from policy/procedure manual submitted as an appendix) Provide listing of Simulation Society membership by staff member (include any SPs) Include staff CVs/Resumes Provide examples of team-building activities promoting wellness, time management, etc. Include any evidence of scholarship in SP methodology Provide excerpts from SP Handbook regarding professional development within the program (SP handbook can be submitted as an appendix)



Questions

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