# Recruitment of Muslim Actors for Objective Structure Clinical Exams (OSCEs) in 2023

In the academic year 2022-2023, the Assessments Team in MBChB undertook a project to **recruit several muslim simulated patients** (simpats – essentially actors that perform the role of a patient in roleplay scenarios) for OSCEs in 2023.

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**Work supported by:**

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(Previous Medical Assessment Administrator)

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(Previous Medical Assessment Administrator)

## Why do it?

**There is a well-documented award gap in the MBChB programme at Bristol - that in exams light-skinned students gain higher marks than dark skinned students.**

**We recognise the role of the institution in the creation of this gap.** This award gap exists in both undergraduate and postgraduate education in the UK and in other academic subjects.

In 2018 Ellayne Fowler and colleagues in the Centre for Medical Education ran focus groups of BAME students to explore possible reasons for this award gap. One was the fact that the patients and examiners in OSCEs did not look like them. To address this in 2020-21 **Abdi Vora successfully recruited more dark-skinned actors.**

*One student said:*

### "This is the first time I saw a patient who looked like me in an OSCE."

After this change we decided to create OSCE stations that tested students' understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity, with **the intention of making the OSCE more inclusive.**

Most recently we created a station in which the students had to test the hearing of a woman who wore a Hijab. To make this station authentic we wanted to recruit Muslim women.

## What was the effect?

**We successfully ran two stations centred around consulting with patients of Muslim background in the 2023 OCSEs – one for each year group.**

Muslim actors recruited were invited to join our simpat database for future teaching and assessment sessions – whether in muslim roles or in more general simpat sessions.

approx
# 90%
**representation of genuinely muslim simpats in muslim stations in 2023 OSCEs.**

## How was it done?

**After developing an understanding of why the work was important, we adopted a two-pronged approach to recruiting actors from muslim backgrounds:**

**1** ### Social Media/Word of Mouth

We engaged our current actors community to bring them into the project and asked for recommendations of actors for muslim role-players to contact and South West actors communities to reach out to.

**2** ### Casting Agencies

We used specialised casting agencies to find muslim actors, some with medical roleplay experience that would help us achieve a standardized experience for all students at the OSCEs.

From this recruitment drive, **we engaged around 30 separate simpats of muslim faith for these roles** – of which we ended up using 20.

All actors engaged for this work were invited to attend Online OSCE Training and those whom had the least role-play experience were also invited to an in-person training session to guide them on the simpat's role in medical education more generally. We paid actors for their time at both sessions.

## Lessons learnt:

**It illustrated that further representation of marginalised communities is possible** through teaching and assessment in MBChB and encouraged us to work on more stations at OSCEs that test students ability to engage effectively with patients from marginalised communities.

**Indicated the budget needed** to be considered when undertaking recruitment – to achieve our aim of representing muslim actors genuinely, we agreed to additional expenses.

**Indicated the resourcing needed** within assessments team to support this work – work undertaken by Bev Toms, a temporary addition to the assessments team was crucial to the success of the work.