What is an ATOSCE?

You are about to participate in an OSCE designed to examine a student’s ability to effectively function asynchronously in a healthcare team while successfully navigating a patient through the ambulatory healthcare system. Many health sciences education institutions already employ the assessment method known as the Objective Structured Clinical Examination, or OSCE. In such an assessment:

* Trained examiners often use a checklist to evaluate the performance of the student
* Every participant is presented with the same problem or situation, expected to perform the same tasks, in the same time frame
* Students are presented with a planned clinical encounter representative of those that may be faced in real clinical situations
* Students are assessed through direct observation

# So, What is an OSCE?

**OSCE** is an acronym for:

* **O**bjective
* **S**tructured
* **C**linical
* **E**xamination

OSCEs are proven to be effective for evaluating areas that are most critical in the performance of the healthcare professional: The ability to establish rapport and communicate with the patient, obtain information, interpret data, and solve problems.

## The WesternU ATOSCE

WesternU has developed the Ambulatory Team Objective Structured Clinical Examination (ATOSCE), which is a collaborative standardized patient encounter in which the student health care provider interacts with professional actors portraying a patient, caregiver (live actors), and other health providers (live actors communicating via telephone).

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| Ambulatory | The interaction between student and standardized patient occurs in an ambulatory care setting, rather than in an acute care setting. |
| Team | The experience is designed to examine a participant’s ability to demonstrate interprofessional competencies in a clinical scenario. These interprofessional competencies may be either synchronous or asynchronous. |
| Objective | Trained examiners will use a checklist for evaluating the performance of the student. |
| Structured | Every participant will be presented with the same problem/situation, expected to perform the same tasks, in the same time frame (allowing for profession situational differences as needed). |
| Examination | Direct observation is used to evaluate each student participant’s clinical competencies. |

## An Effective Assessment

Studies have demonstrated that these exercises (OSCEs) are effective for evaluating areas that are most critical in the performance of the healthcare professional:

* The ability to establish rapport and communicate with the patient
* The ability to obtain information, interpret data, and solve problems

The format of the ATOSCE adds the ability to also assess interprofessional and team-based care skills.

**Observation** – Trained observers will score/rate the student using a standardized scale/checklist to determine the level of student competency in a set series of objectives. These encounters will be viewed live and will be recorded for later review.

**Structure** – You are to arrive at the Clinical Skills Lab Lobby 10 minutes before your scheduled ATOSCE for any orientation and last minute instruction. You will be taken to the room where your patient encounter will occur and have time to review any pertinent information. You will meet with a Standardized Patient (SP) for (up to) 12 minutes. This will be followed by a period not to exceed 8 minutes in which you may make calls and write up a plan for the patient. You will then then receive feedback on your communication skills from the SP which will give you valuable insight from the patient’s perspective.

**Clinical** – The clinical situation will vary depending on the skills/competencies being examined. Evaluation criteria are based on the course objectives and the student learning activities leading up to the OSCE.