



# SSH Academy Application Handbook

This tool has been prepared for applicants seeking to apply to the Society for Simulation in Healthcare Academy. The purpose of this document is to help the applicant understand the expected level of performance for a Fellow in the SSH Academy.

The examples given are for the purpose of describing the types of activities, level of performance, and ***impact*** of one's contributions that are evaluated for Academy-level consideration

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## Section 1: About the FSSH

### Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook is intended as a resource for individuals applying to become a Fellow in the Society for Simulation in Healthcare Academy (the acronym FSSH stands for Fellow of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare, which is an official designation awarded by the SSH Academy). This handbook provides useful information, guidance to help individuals prepare their applications, and background information on the SSH Academy. The information in the handbook expands on the information posted on the webpages at <https://www.ssih.org/ssh-academy>.

This handbook is intended solely for individuals preparing to become an FSSH or to learn about the SSH Academy. It may not be duplicated, reproduced, or used for any other purpose without the express written consent of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH).

### Disclaimer

This handbook provides general guidance only and should not be considered a complete and authoritative statement on the process of becoming a Fellow in the SSH Academy. Eligibility requirements, standards, fees, and guidelines are subject to change. SSH will keep the most up-to-date version of this document posted at <https://www.ssih.org/nominate>. Before participating in any available service through SSH, please confirm that you are viewing the most up-to-date information.

### The SSH Academy: Recognizing Leaders in Healthcare Simulation

The SSH Academy recognizes individuals whose sustained contributions have had an *impact* on the healthcare simulation field.

All healthcare simulation professionals who have established a strong foundation in the simulation discipline are invited to apply to the SSH Academy for Fellowship.

#### Fellows

- Contribute to the growth of SSH and/or to the healthcare simulation discipline.
- Contribute their time and talent to advance the SSH Academy's mission and goals.
- Are highly recognized among peers in the healthcare simulation community.
- Serve as role models, mentors, and ambassadors in healthcare simulation.
- Participate in internal and external “invitational” think tanks, advisory task forces, and committees.

## Vision

The vision of the SSH Academy is a world in which simulation is integral to delivering high-quality, safe healthcare.

## Mission

The mission of the SSH Academy is to recognize and convene a diverse community of simulation thought leaders who harness their collective wisdom and expertise to advance simulation excellence by nurturing leaders, cultivating the global simulation community, and promoting innovation across education, research, and healthcare safety.

## The Academy Background

The SSH Academy was established in 2016 to recognize and convene a diverse community of simulation leaders who have made significant, sustained contributions to the Society for Simulation in Healthcare and/or to the field of healthcare simulation. Its creation reflects a vision to advance the integration of simulation into healthcare systems worldwide and to emphasize its role in enhancing safety and quality.

The SSH Academy's purpose is multifaceted, focusing on:

- Acknowledging individuals who demonstrate exceptional expertise, innovation, and leadership across simulation-based education, research, and clinical practice.
- Fostering a collaborative environment where thought leaders can exchange ideas, strategies, and best practices to advance the field.
- Promoting excellence in simulation by advocating for its use in healthcare education, patient safety, and system improvement.
- Nurturing simulation leaders to influence healthcare practices worldwide, ensuring simulation remains a cornerstone of high-quality, safe patient care.

Since its founding in 2016, the SSH Academy has worked to foster innovation, mentor future leaders, and build a global network dedicated to advancing the science and practice of healthcare simulation.

## The FSSH Credential

Fellows of the SSH Academy are leaders and renowned simulationists who have made outstanding and sustained contributions to the Society for Simulation in Healthcare and/or the field of healthcare simulation. Benefits of becoming an FSSH include:

- Recognition of your contributions to SSH and/or to healthcare simulation.

- Influence or advance the art, science, and practice of healthcare simulation as part of the SSH Academy.

Fellows are expected to be active in the SSH Academy.

## Statement of Confidentiality

Only reviewers and those involved in the FSSH designation process will review or have access to the materials submitted by the FSSH applicant. All submissions will be kept strictly confidential and used solely to review the submitted materials for the purpose of determining whether the FSSH criteria are met.

The submission will not be used for any other purpose, nor will it be disseminated in any way without the applicant's express written permission.

## FSSH Applicant Mentorship

Having a mentor during the Fellows application process offers significant advantages for aspiring SSH Academy members. A mentor who is already a Fellow of the SSH Academy can provide invaluable guidance by reviewing professional documentation and helping applicants effectively showcase their achievements. Although focused specifically on the application process, the mentorship relationship enables applicants to receive expert feedback on their biosketch, narrative responses, and reference selections. Mentors bring their experience and understanding of the SSH Academy's requirements to help assess an applicant's readiness and ensure that their contributions to healthcare simulation are properly highlighted. This structured support system, which maintains strict confidentiality, helps applicants navigate the application process with greater confidence and maximizes their chances of success through expert guidance and constructive feedback.

This document is intended for both those seeking mentorship for the Fellows application process and mentors who want to better understand their responsibilities and support their mentees. Applicants are encouraged to seek mentorship from a current Fellow of the SSH Academy. Additionally, reviewers, SSH Staff, and members of the Academy Board of Governance may not serve as mentors or provide reference letters for applicants, thereby reducing conflicts of interest and preserving the integrity of the review process. An applicant may reach out to a mentor directly or contact SSH staff to be matched with one. To be matched, please see the details, deadlines, and contact information on the SSH Academy nomination website.

Both mentors and mentees are encouraged to review the application information available on the nomination webpage.

## Mentee Responsibilities

1. Provide their mentor with their biosketch, an application draft, and any relevant materials to help their mentor understand how they meet the criteria for becoming a Fellow.
2. Seek clarification on any items in the application that are unclear to them.

## Mentor Responsibilities

1. Review of draft application packet
2. Provide feedback to the applicant based on the assessment findings and next steps.
3. Maintain the confidentiality of the mentee's information and do not share feedback or any elements of the applicant's materials without their consent.

## Section 2: FSSH Application Process

### The criteria to become a Fellow include:

1. Membership in SSH for at least 7 years (years of service need not be consecutive)
2. Substantial and sustained contributions to SSH and/or to the field of healthcare simulation (see below).

## Reflective Questions

The following questions are intended to help FSSH applicants evaluate readiness to apply to the SSH Academy. Responses do not need to be extensive; however, they should clearly describe achievements and provide supporting evidence where applicable. Applicants may demonstrate substantial contributions to SSH, to the broader field of healthcare simulation, or to both. These reflective questions do not appear in the online application; rather, they are provided to help applicants understand the level of demonstrated performance expected of Fellows of the SSH Academy.

1. Substantial Contributions to SSH and/or the Field of Healthcare Simulation

Provide evidence\* of substantial contributions in one or both of the following areas:

- a. Contributions to SSH: Provide evidence of increasing leadership within SSH. Examples may include leadership roles on committees, task groups, sections, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), IMSH, regional meetings, or other SSH activities. Describe how you shaped agendas, influenced outcomes, advanced initiatives, or otherwise contributed to the organization.

- b. Contributions to the Field of Healthcare Simulation: Describe the area or areas of expertise for which you are recognized by your peers. Provide evidence of your substantial contributions to the field of healthcare simulation at the national or international level.

\*Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Consistent outstanding contributions over time.
  - Contributions with significant, measurable impact and outcomes.
  - Dissemination and the adoption of your substantial contributions to healthcare simulation.
  - Substantive honors, awards, and recognition by prestigious academies and organizations.
  - Extent of adoption of your research findings and/or innovations by others that have been used to guide changes in education, research, administration, policy, or practice.
2. Summarize the current and projected long-term outcomes of your influence and describe the ways you intend to expand and evolve your areas of influence.
  3. Explain why you wish to become a member of the SSH Academy and describe your unique skills, lived experiences, and/or innovative approaches you plan to bring to the SSH Academy.

## Online Application Questions

The following are the questions in the online application. Please be mindful of the character limits when copy/pasting. These prompts provide examples to help applicants draft responses. These examples will not be included in the application.

Applicants will be asked to attest that they have read the SSH Academy policies, procedures, and requirements.

Section 1 will ask for your name, title, organization, and contact email.

Section 2 will require you to upload your SSH Membership Verification Form. A blank SSH Membership Verification form will be available in the application for you to download.

Section 3 will require you to upload your Biosketch Form. A blank Biosketch form will be

available in the application for you to download.

Section 4 will ask about your contributions to SSH and/or the field of healthcare simulation. The sections are as follows:

- 4.1 Indicate your SSH service if applicable. A list is provided, and you will be asked to check all that apply. The list includes Elected SSH Board Officer (President, Secretary, Treasurer), Elected SSH at-Large Board Director, Appointed SSH at-Large Board Director, Committee/Council Chair or Vice Chair, Committee/Council Member, IMSH Meeting Co-Chair, IMSH Content Team Lead, Regional Meeting (e.g. SimOps, APMSH) Co-Chair, Regional Meeting Content Team Lead, Editorial Board, Journal Reviewer, Section/SIG/AG Chair, Working Groups/Task Force Chair, Working Groups/Task Force Member, SSH Certifications, Other Roles, None.
- 4.2 Provide detailed descriptions of roles. This is an open text box where you will be asked to describe the duties for the SSH roles selected above and details of involvement with any other professional healthcare simulation associations. Other professional healthcare simulation associations may include, but are not limited to, ASPIH, INACSL, NOVA, SESAM, SoFraSimS, ABRASSIM, ASSH, IPSS, NZASH, SESSEP, SOMESICS, ACS-CS, CMEA, ISSIH, PASSH, SIM-one, SPSim, ANPD, CNSH, JSISH, PediSTARS, SimGHOSTS, APSSH, DSSH, KoSSH, PSMS, SIMMED, SOESM, ASEPUR, FLASIC, MASSH, ROSOMED, SOCHISIM, ASPE, NLN, HKSSIH
- 4.3 Provide details of your performance and impact. This is an open text box where you will be asked to describe your demonstrated performance and impact in each role described above. Please answer this section with a specific focus on sustained contributions that resulted from your involvement and participation.

List your leadership and service roles within SSH and/or the broader healthcare simulation community. For each role, describe what you accomplished, contributed, or led and the resulting impact.

Section 5 will ask you to provide narrative responses that demonstrate your sustained engagement and leadership in healthcare simulation. You will be asked to share your reasons for joining the SSH Academy and to detail your specific contributions across several key areas. It is important to note that you are not expected to have significant contributions for each section. Answering “N/A” for a section not applicable to your experience will not automatically disqualify you from achieving the FSSH distinction. The sections are as follows:

- 5.1 Please share a personal statement on your reasons to become a Fellow (1500 characters max)
- 5.2 Please describe how you would contribute to the SSH Academy (1500 characters max)
- 5.3 This section will provide additional instructions for the following narratives. No response is requested for 5.3.
- 5.4 Please provide details about your healthcare simulation innovations and advancements. This prompt allows you to highlight your pioneering contributions to the field. Reviewers want to understand how your work has pushed boundaries, solved systemic challenges, or introduced new methodologies in healthcare simulation.

Describe your role in designing, developing, enhancing, or implementing innovative technologies, tools, processes, programs, or operational approaches that advance healthcare simulation. Examples may include simulators, software platforms, virtual or augmented reality, artificial intelligence applications, patented devices, new or expanded simulation centers, educational programs, quality-improvement initiatives, facility design, infrastructure development, resource allocation, staff training, or new operational processes adopted by other organizations. A patent is not required.

Explain what you designed, developed, implemented, or led; how the work addressed an identified need; and the measurable impact of the work on simulation education, operations, healthcare outcomes, or practice at the local, regional, national, or international level.

- 5.5 Please provide details about your healthcare simulation advocacy activities. This prompt allows you to demonstrate how you have actively championed, promoted, and advanced the field of healthcare simulation beyond your immediate job duties. Reviewers want to see how your efforts have raised awareness, influenced decision-makers, or driven systemic change at local, regional, national, or international levels.

Advocacy involves efforts to promote the value, adoption, and integration of simulation-based methodologies within healthcare education, research, legislation, and practice. These activities include engaging stakeholders, influencing policy, securing funding, and raising awareness of simulation's impact on improving patient safety, healthcare quality, and workforce competency. Effective advocacy fosters collaboration, drives systemic change, and strengthens the role of simulation in advancing global healthcare outcomes. Advocacy does include your institutional impact and how you advocate outside your institution. ***What is the impact and adoption of your advocacy efforts?***

- 5.6 Please provide details about your local, regional, national, and/or international contributions to healthcare simulation. This prompt gives you space to highlight service, leadership, and community engagement that extend beyond your primary employer. Reviewers want to evaluate the breadth and geographic reach of your involvement in the healthcare simulation community.

This involves creating, implementing, and advocating for simulation-based learning programs, activities, and practices. This includes developing curricula, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating simulation into institutional, regional, or national practices, and advancing the adoption of simulation as a critical tool for skill development, competency assessment, and patient safety. It also involves developing or expanding a simulation consortium or mobile simulation program. Successful efforts in this area contribute to a culture of continuous learning and innovation, improving the quality of healthcare delivery and outcomes. What is the impact beyond your healthcare institution?

- 5.7 Please provide details about your healthcare simulation mentorship and/or workforce development activities. This prompt allows you to demonstrate your commitment to investing in people and to building the future capacity of the healthcare simulation field. Reviewers want to evaluate how you guide, support, and elevate individual professionals, as well as how you contribute to pipeline development and professional pathways in healthcare simulation.

Mentorship in healthcare simulation involves guiding and supporting individuals or teams as they develop their skills, knowledge, and expertise. Effective mentors foster growth through personalized coaching, sharing experiences, providing feedback, and connecting mentees with opportunities for advancement. Mentorship strengthens the healthcare simulation community by cultivating leadership, innovation, and professional development, and it advances healthcare education and practice. ***How many individuals have you formally and informally mentored? How have these mentees impacted the healthcare simulation community as a result of your mentorship?***

- 5.8 Please provide details on your scholarly contributions. This prompt allows you to highlight how you generate, synthesize, and disseminate knowledge within the healthcare simulation community. Reviewers want to evaluate the depth and reach of your academic, empirical, or practice-based scholarly work. This section is not meant for you

to re-list scholarly contributions already included in your CV, but rather to describe the reach, impact, and outcomes of these contributions.

Encompasses activities that contribute to the body of knowledge, best practices, and leadership within the field of healthcare simulation. These efforts include conducting and publishing research, presenting at conferences, developing innovative methodologies, and contributing to professional organizations and standards. The section highlights activities where individuals drive the evolution of simulation-based education, training, and human factors; influence global practices; and foster a culture of excellence and collaboration in healthcare. It is valuable to include h-index, citation rate, adoption rate, etc. ***What are your contributions to the simulation community that advances healthcare simulation?***

Section 6 will ask you to provide the names and email addresses of the individuals you have selected to provide your letters of reference. Once you submit your application, the system will automatically email the reference forms to those individuals.

Section 7 will ask you to upload your simulation-specific CV. This section will also ask you to agree to the SSH hold harmless and attestation statements.

## Focusing Your SSH Academy Application

In all narratives, **BE SPECIFIC ABOUT YOUR ROLE AND USE “I” STATEMENTS.**

While reviewers understand the value of teamwork, especially in healthcare simulation teams, remember that **you** are applying to become a Fellow. Focus on the areas where you have made contributions, and enter N/A in sections that do not apply. A “N/A” response will not disqualify you from achieving Fellowship. Below are definitions for each category to clarify what is being asked. These definitions are not included in the application.

## Guidelines for Individuals Serving as References

The applicant will be asked to provide the names and contact information for two individuals in their application who will provide a professional reference. These individuals will not have access to the applicant’s application or any materials submitted with it. To help ensure a seamless experience, it is strongly recommended the applicant explain the submission process and deadline when these individuals are invited to support the application. Please clarify that they will receive an automated link to complete a structured online reference form instead of uploading a standard narrative letter. The completed reference form will serve as the letter of reference.

The reference form is intended to capture data that helps the reviewers understand the applicant, their work, and their contributions. ***This is an opportunity to provide personal insights, not to***

***reiterate exactly what the applicant has provided in their application.*** Individuals chosen to complete the reference form are advised to be specific about their relationship with the applicant and their capacity to evaluate the applicant's work in the field of healthcare simulation.

Applicants are evaluated based on their entire application package, including letters of reference. These letters provide insight into others' views of an applicant's contributions, qualifications, achievements, and professional character. Letters of reference enhance the depth of the application and underscore the applicant's potential to thrive as a Fellow and contribute to the SSH Academy. Reviewers expect well-crafted, genuine narratives that present a comprehensive view of the applicant's qualifications and alignment with the Fellows program.

The reference form will ask the following:

1. Briefly describe your relationship with the applicant and, if applicable, the applicant's role in your organization(s).
2. Provide specific examples and/or insight into the sustained contributions the applicant has made to the Society for Simulation in Healthcare and/or the healthcare simulation community. Provide detailed insight into the impact of these contributions.
3. Provide specific examples and/or insight into the sustained contributions the applicant has made to the healthcare simulation field. Provide detailed insight into the impact of these contributions.
4. Describe how you believe this person would contribute to the vision and mission of the SSH Academy.
5. Is there anything else the reviewers should know about the applicant?

## Section 3: FSSH Application Review Scoring Guidance and Examples

### Application Review Overview

Reviewers evaluate the applicant's contributions as demonstrated through service to SSH, the broader healthcare simulation community, or both. They recognize that an applicant is not required to demonstrate contributions in both pathways and that contributions outside SSH should receive the same consideration as comparable contributions within SSH.

Reviewer's scores reflect the applicant's level of responsibility, duration of involvement, scope of influence, demonstrated outcomes, and sustained impact. Reviewers do not base scores or judgements solely on the number of activities listed.

## General Scoring Scale

- 1 – Minimal or No Contribution: Little or no relevant activity or evidence of impact.
- 2 – Limited Contribution: Some participation or contribution, generally short-term, supporting, or limited in scope, with minimal evidence of broader impact.
- 3 – Moderate Contribution: Consistent, active involvement resulting in meaningful and measurable institutional, local, or regional outcomes.
- 4 – Substantial Contribution: Sustained leadership and significant impact at the regional, national, or international level.
- 5 – Exceptional Contribution: Transformative, distinguished, and lasting impact that has substantially influenced SSH and/or the broader healthcare simulation community.

## Examples of Scoring

### 1. Roles Within SSH and/or the Broader Healthcare Simulation Community

Examples include service on SSH committees, councils, sections, SIGs, task forces, and working groups, as well as roles in other healthcare simulation associations, societies, consortia, journals, conferences, or professional organizations.

- 1: Holds membership or attends meetings but provides no evidence of active service.
- 2: Participates occasionally in a committee, working group, conference activity, or other service role with limited responsibility.
- 3: Serves consistently as an active member and contributes meaningfully to projects, deliverables, or organizational activities.
- 4: Holds sustained leadership roles, such as chair, vice chair, project lead, board member, or conference lead, and demonstrates significant outcomes.
- 5: Provides distinguished, long-standing leadership that shapes organizational strategy, creates enduring programs, or substantially advances SSH and/or the healthcare simulation community.

### 2. Healthcare Simulation Innovations and Advancements

Examples include new technologies, educational methods, operational processes, assessment tools, standards, curricula, or approaches to healthcare simulation practice.

- 1: Provides no evidence of developing or advancing healthcare simulation practices.
- 2: Adapts or implements an existing practice within a single program, with limited evidence of impact.

- 3: Develops or substantially improves an innovation that produces measurable outcomes within an institution or regional network.
- 4: Develops an innovation that is disseminated, evaluated, and adopted at the regional or national level.
- 5: Creates a transformative innovation that is widely adopted and produces sustained national or international influence.

### **3. Healthcare Simulation Advocacy**

Examples include public education, policy development, legislative activity, interviews, position statements, funding initiatives, and advocacy for simulation-based education, quality, or safety.

- 1: Provides no evidence of healthcare simulation advocacy.
- 2: Participates in an isolated awareness or advocacy activity with limited reach.
- 3: Leads recurring institutional or regional advocacy efforts that result in greater support, visibility, funding, or policy consideration.
- 4: Influences significant organizational, governmental, or professional policy at the regional or national level.
- 5: Achieves transformative and sustained policy or public-impact outcomes that advance healthcare simulation nationally or internationally.

### **4. Local, Regional, National, or International Contributions to Healthcare Simulation**

Examples include healthcare simulation consortia, mobile simulation programs, collaborative networks, community initiatives, resource-sharing programs, and capacity-building efforts.

- 1: Participates only in routine activities without evidence of a distinct contribution.
- 2: Supports a small-scale or short-term initiative with limited responsibility or impact.
- 3: Develops or leads an initiative that produces measurable institutional, local, or regional outcomes.
- 4: Leads a sustained initiative that is replicated, expanded, or recognized regionally or nationally.
- 5: Establishes or transforms a program, network, or model that produces widespread and lasting national or international impact.

### **5. Mentorship and/or Healthcare Simulation Workforce Development**

Examples include mentoring healthcare simulation professionals, developing faculty or technicians, creating professional-development programs, supporting career advancement, and building a diverse healthcare simulation workforce.

- 1: Provides no evidence of healthcare simulation-specific mentorship or workforce development.
- 2: Offers occasional informal guidance without evidence of sustained outcomes.
- 3: Provides consistent mentorship or develops training that supports the growth and advancement of healthcare simulation professionals.
- 4: Creates or leads a sustained mentorship or workforce-development program with measurable regional or national outcomes.
- 5: Builds a transformative and widely adopted workforce-development model or demonstrates a distinguished record of developing healthcare simulation leaders who have advanced the field.

## **6. Scholarly Contributions**

Examples include peer-reviewed publications, presentations, research, standards, guidelines, textbooks, educational resources, and other scholarly products.

- 1: Provides little or no evidence of healthcare simulation-related scholarly activity.
- 2: Demonstrates limited scholarly participation, such as occasional presentations or supporting roles in research.
- 3: Produces a consistent body of scholarly work that contributes meaningfully to institutional or regional healthcare simulation practice.
- 4: Produces sustained scholarship that influences national or international healthcare simulation research, education, standards, or practice.
- 5: Produces a distinguished and influential body of scholarship that changes understanding, policy, standards, or practice and is widely adopted or cited.

## **7. Strength of the Letters of Reference**

Evaluate the specificity and credibility of the evidence provided—not merely the referee’s title, position, or organizational affiliation.

- 1: Letters are generic, incomplete, or provide little evidence of the applicant’s contributions or impact.
- 2: Letters are supportive but provide few specific examples or measurable outcomes.
- 3: Letters provide credible, specific examples confirming consistent contributions and meaningful impact.
- 4: Letters independently verify sustained leadership, significant outcomes, and regional, national, or international influence.
- 5: Letters provide compelling and detailed evidence of transformative, distinguished, and lasting impact within SSH, the broader healthcare simulation community, or both.

## Section 4: Awarding the FSSH

### Notification of Status

Applicants will be notified by email of the outcome following the completion of the review phase. For those who are unsuccessful, feedback will be provided on the areas where the Standards were not met.

### Decision Status

The decision sent to the applicant is final. The applicant has the right to appeal the decision if they believe their application and/or review was handled unfairly (e.g., bias or discrimination). The applicant may not appeal the decision if the decision status is based on incomplete information or on FSSH-level performance that is not well demonstrated. The SSH Appeals Policy posted on the website outlines the appeals process.

### Reapplication if Unsuccessful

If an applicant is notified that they have not demonstrated meeting FSSH criteria, then they may reapply for FSSH status during the next application cycle. Subsequent applications will require payment of the application fee.

### Rules of Use of FSSH Credential

Applicants who achieve Fellow status are permitted to use the designation “FSSH” after their names following induction at IMSH. Proper use of the credential is typically conveyed as the highest degree earned, license, certification, and fellowship appointments. Applicants will receive a certificate from SSH and the Academy Board of Governance during the Diamond Ball Ceremony at IMSH.

SSH reserves the right to publicly recognize any applicant who has successfully earned the FSSH credential.