

Aston University unveils new £1.5m healthcare teaching facility

A new £1.5 million healthcare facility has opened at a Birmingham university which will help to simulate real-life medical situations to aid students' learning.

The centre [at Aston University](#) will be used by those studying medicine, pharmacy and optometry and will give them the chance to practise in emergency settings using high-quality manikins.

These will simulate treating people for acute conditions such as a heart attack or learning how to intubate a patient onto a ventilator.

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The acute care simulation room will also be equipped with recording facilities, a debrief room and control room alongside training equipment such as a hospital grade bed. The

new centre also has an ocular simulation facility which Aston University said was unique in Europe.

It allows students to refine their skills in examining the health of the front and back of the eyes and to experience a wide range of eye diseases.

One of the simulators even allows students to use their smartphones to practise at home from which they can gain direct feedback and be assessed by the simulators, allowing more flexible learning.

The facilities were part funded by the Government regular Office for Students which awarded the university £806,226 to set up the high-fidelity simulation A&E room with further expenditure by Aston University on the ocular simulation unit.

Professor Anthony Hilton, executive dean of the college of health and life sciences, said: “We are delighted these new facilities have opened in time for the start of the new term and that students can benefit from practising their clinical skills in a variety of scenarios.

“The acute care simulation room will allow for simulated emergency resuscitation scenarios that are very difficult to teach in real-life situations, such as heart attacks, acute breathlessness and severe allergic reaction and will be of great value in training students of medicine, pharmacy and optometry.”

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The new centre was officially opened at a ceremony by Erdginton MP Paulette Hamilton, who said: “I know from my time as a nurse how important it is to have access to good training and the latest equipment.

“These fantastic facilities will give students the best possible learning experience as they prepare to enter their profession, providing healthcare in Birmingham and beyond.”

Aston University vice-chancellor Professor Aleks Subic added: “The launch marks an important milestone in the development of our digital health precinct within the Birmingham Knowledge Quarter.

“By establishing world-class medical imaging, advanced visualisation and digital diagnostics capabilities, we are in fact bringing Industry 4.0 to healthcare.

“Our students from the Aston Medical School and School of Optometry in particular will benefit immensely from this development as they will be able to detect a wide range of clinical conditions and diseases and explore different interventions and scenarios, safely within a simulated

environment.”

Professor Liz Moores, deputy dean of the college of health and life sciences, said: “The enhanced facilities will help to support many of our healthcare students, including those now applying for our new nursing degree.

“It will also support us with the introduction of the new pharmacy and optometry education standards, providing a step change in our ability to simulate a wide range of clinical scenarios.”

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