



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

# CLINICAL SKILLS AND SIMULATION

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## REPORT ON ACTIVITIES 2025

**Clinical Skills Education Centre (CSEC)  
Centre for Medical Education (CME)**

**School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences**





## CONTENTS

• Welcome to our first annual report on activities 2025	3
• A foreword from our Centre Director	4
• A foreword from our School Manager	5
• Staff associated with clinical skills and simulation	6
• Our simulation and clinical skills curriculum at a glance	8
• Simulation and clinical skills 'By numbers'	10
• Spotlight on some of our people!	11
• Spotlight on our some of our simulation educational practice!	16
• Spotlight on our Scholarship!	26
• Spotlight on our outreach!	39
• And finally.....	45

## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Simulation is a powerful and engaging method of learning used across many industries. In medical education, we harness its potential to create meaningful learning experiences, helping students and doctors develop key skills to become competent, compassionate, and safe practitioners. At the Centre for Medical Education (CME) and the Clinical Skills Education Centre (CSEC), we're proud to have a vibrant and collaborative simulation and clinical skills learning community. We are indebted to wider CME community and our Health and Social Care Trust partners who provide valuable simulated learning experiences for our medical students at QUB. Together, we're committed to enhancing educational practice, advancing scholarship, and meaningful outreach activities.

In this report, we're excited to share updates on our activities, build new connections, and spark ideas about how simulation and clinical skills teaching could enrich your own teaching or research. This [\*\*short video\*\*](#) provides an overview of our work alongside this [\*\*narrative\*\*](#). Whether you're just starting out or already involved, we hope you find inspiration and opportunities to engage. Enjoy our first report of activities!

### **Gerry, Linda, Peter, Diane and Joanne (on behalf of their colleagues in CME)**

**Professor Gerry Gormley (Professor in Simulation, Director of CSEC)**

**Dr Linda Ní Chianáin (Lecturer in Simulation)**

**Dr Peter Mallett (Clinical Lecturer and simulation lead)**

**Dr Diane Wilson (Deputy Director of CSEC)**

**Joanne Fairley (CSEC Co-ordinator)**



**Short video overview of our work**



**Our work presented as a 'Case Study'.**

## A FORWARD FROM OUR CENTRE DIRECTOR

It is a privilege to introduce the 2025 report on Clinical Skills and Simulation from CME at Queen's University Belfast. This report reflects our continued commitment to excellence in medical education and the transformative role of simulation in preparing future healthcare professionals.

Over the past 5 years, aligned with our C25 curriculum and under the expert leadership of Professor Gerry Gormley, Dr Diane Wilson, Dr Linda Ní Chianáin, Dr Peter Mallett and Joanne Fairley, our Clinical Skills and Simulation programmes have evolved significantly, driven by innovation, collaboration, and a shared vision of patient-centred care. Learners develop clinical competence, teamwork, and decision-making skills in a safe, supportive environment, enhancing technical proficiency while fostering empathy, resilience, and adaptability.

I am deeply grateful to our dedicated faculty, staff, and partners whose clinical acumen and enthusiasm make these initiatives possible. Their work ensures students graduate with the confidence and capability to deliver high-quality care in an ever-changing healthcare landscape. As you read this report, I invite you to explore the achievements, research, and future directions that define our approach to clinical skills and simulation. Together, we continue shaping a learning culture that prioritises patient safety, interprofessional collaboration, and lifelong learning.

### **Professor Kathy Cullen**

Director of Education, Centre for Medical Education, SMDBS.

## A FORWARD FROM OUR SCHOOL MANAGER

At the Centre for Medical Education (CME) and the Clinical Skills Education Centre (CSEC), we take great pride in supporting the exceptional work of our dedicated staff and the modern facilities that enable high-quality learning. Simulation lies at the core of our teaching approach - an innovative, immersive method that allows learners to engage with realistic clinical scenarios in a safe and structured environment.

This experience helps future doctors develop confidence, competence, and compassion. Simulation is far more than technology; it is a deliberate educational technique designed to replicate or enhance real-world experiences through guided, interactive scenarios that reflect the essential elements of clinical practice. By doing so, it equips learners with the skills and judgment required for effective patient care.

Through close collaboration with passionate educators, we have built a dynamic learning community that values authenticity, teamwork, and continuous improvement. Together, we are preparing our students to become doctors who deliver safe, effective, and empathetic care.

**Carole Maslowski**

School Manager, SMDBS

## STAFF ASSOCIATED WITH SIMULATION AND CLINICAL SKILLS

### CSEC team



### CLINICAL SKILLS EDUCATION CENTRE

*Meet the team*

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**Wider CME academic staff members involved in clinical skills and simulation**

Dr Aoife Byrne (Consultant, BHSCT)

Dr Stephen Doherty (SK Chin ADEPT Fellow 25-26)

Dr Chris Lockhart (Consultant, BHSCT)

Dr Peter Mallett (CME Simulation lead, Clinical Lecturer in Simulation)

Dr Catherine Murphy (SK Chin ADEPT Fellow 24-25)

Professor Stephen O'Neill (Honorary Clinical Professor, BHSCT)

Dr Rick Plumb (Clinical Reader)

Dr Andrew Spence (Clinical Lecturer)

Prof Michael Williams (Clinical Professor)

and the wider CME academic and professional support teams.

## OUR SIMULATION AND CLINICAL SKILLS CURRICULUM AT A GLANCE

In 2020, under the leadership of Professor Neil Kennedy, the Centre for Medical Education embarked on an ambitious curricular reform of the medical degree programme at Queen's University Belfast. Grounded in pedagogical theory, the C25 curriculum was designed and implemented to prepare Queen's medical graduates to be outstanding graduate doctors. CME was proud to celebrate the graduation of the first cohort of this new curriculum in the summer of 2025.

To complement this innovative curriculum, an integrated, spiralling clinical skills and simulation-based taught programme was developed. The ethos behind this integrated simulation curriculum was to enhance the clinical competence of our graduates and further enhancing their preparation for clinical practice. Furthermore, it aimed to foster familiarity and engagement with simulation-based education methods. Importantly, we provide simulation to **scale** and **standard** with c.1470 medical students at QUB. See Figure 1 for an overview of the integrated simulation-based taught curriculum, with course details outlined below. Given the dynamic nature of modern healthcare and the evolving landscape of educational theory, it was essential that our efforts were informed by scholarship and research-led knowledge.

### CLINICAL SKILLS EDUCATION CENTRE MISSION STATEMENT

We aim to deliver excellence in the teaching of clinical skills that promotes competent, compassionate and safe patient care. With the Centre for Medical Education, we strive to provide a positive impact on learner's development as healthcare professionals of the future. In partnership with learners, enhancing a positive student experience is integral to the ethos of CSEC. Innovation and scholarship informs our approach to teaching and learning.

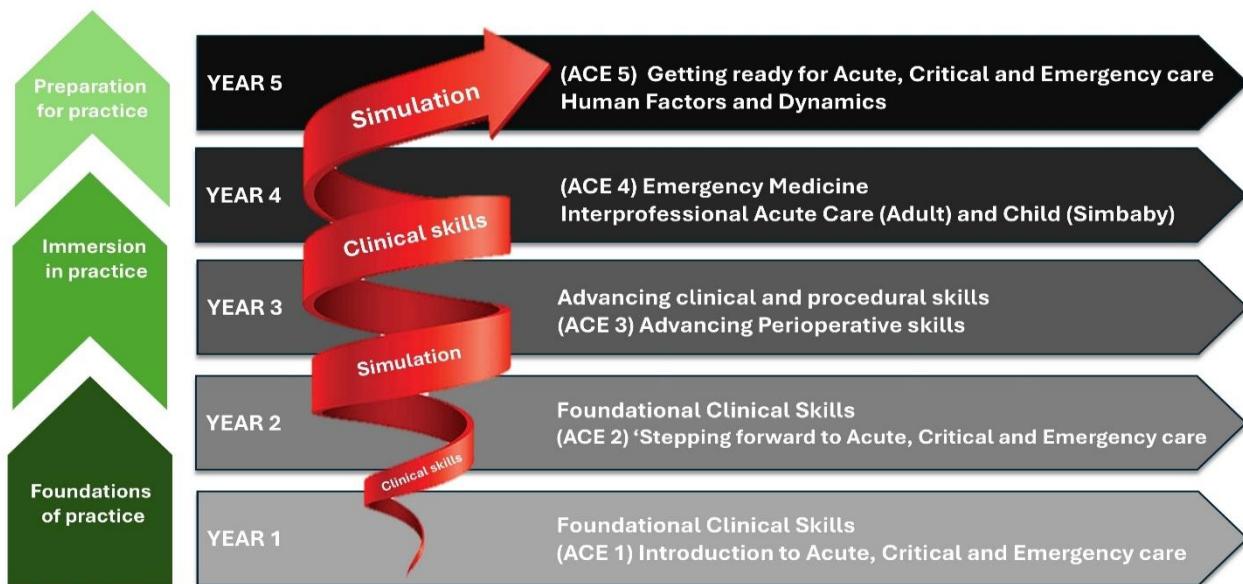


Figure 1: Overview of Clinical Skill and Simulation based curriculum in QUB medical degree programme

### Year 1

- First Steps to Acute Critical and Emergency care (ACE)
- Clinical Skills
- Self-directed and near peer simulation-based learning

### Year 2

- Clinical Skills
- Stepping Forward to Acute Critical and Emergency care (ACE)
- Self-directed and near peer simulation-based learning

### Year 3

- Introduce to year 3 including clinical and procedural skills
- ACE 3 perioperative medicine
- Advanced auscultation skills
- Self-directed and near peer simulation-based learning

### Year 4

- Ace 4 Emergency Medicine
- Interprofessional simulation (adult)
- Interprofessional simulation (Child 'Simbaby')
- Self-directed and near peer simulation-based learning

### Year 5

- Human factors and dynamics course
- ACE 5 Acute Care Course
- Self-directed and near peer simulation-based learning
- START course
- eALS course

## SIMULATION/CLINICAL SKILLS EDUCATION 'BY NUMBERS' IN CME



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

CENTRE FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION  
CLINICAL SKILLS AND SIMULATION

### BY NUMBERS

**1400+**

Medical students taught  
across **MULTIPLE**  
courses per year in clinical  
skills and simulation



**>1600**



Small groups  
facilitated in  
simulation / clinical  
skills training per year



**100%**

Our courses consistently attract high  
student ratings. A recent highlight:  
Year 2 Clinical Skills course achieved  
**100% POSITIVE FEEDBACK** in June 2025.



**16**

Peer reviewed publications  
(with several in our Q1  
journals) in the last  
academic year relating to  
simulation and clinical skills



**17**

Postgraduate Research and Taught  
Students researching clinical skills  
and simulation

**99%**

99% of our final-year medical students reported feeling  
more empowered to act as active bystanders after  
completing our **IMMERSIVE** Active Bystander Training



**1st**

Under the leadership of Prof Stephen O'Neill, we  
are the **FIRST MEDICAL SCHOOL IN THE UK** to  
host the prestigious **Systematic Training in Acute  
Illness Recognition and Treatment** course  
(Royal College of Surgeons England)



**1st**

We are the **FIRST UK MEDICAL SCHOOL** to offer  
**EMPATHEYES**-based VR training, further  
enhancing medical students' understanding of  
patients' experiences living with visual  
impairment

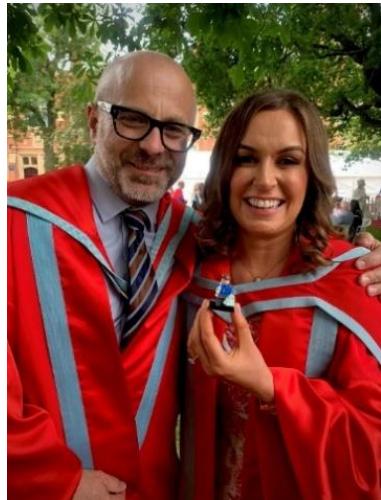
## SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF OUR PEOPLE!

### Academic staff: Dr Sarah O'Hare



Sarah is a Clinical Teaching Fellow in CME, as well as a practising GP and palliative care doctor. She recently completed her Doctorate in Medicine (MD) at Queen's University Belfast, where her research explored how simulation can support team and organisational learning in General Practice - particularly in managing acutely unwell patients.

Her work, carried out through the R&D-funded General Practice Academic Research Training (GPARTS) programme, has drawn attention both locally and internationally. Sarah has published two papers in leading international simulation journals, contributed to a book chapter, and presented her findings at major international conferences - including Society for Simulation in Europe (SESAM), where she was awarded **Best Research Prize**.



Click [here](#) to a link to her latest paper in the highly regarded journal **Instructional Science**.



But what stands out most is the real-world impact of her research. It has directly influenced patient care and has even been credited with saving lives - a powerful testament to the value of simulation in healthcare. Sarah's work continues to inspire, showing how thoughtful research can translate into meaningful change on the ground.

## Professional Support Staff: Joanne Fairley



Simulation-based education is a rich and immersive form of learning - but it's also resource-intensive and complex to deliver well. At the centre of making it all run smoothly is Joanne, our CSEC Co-ordinator and her other professional support team (Melissa McDonald and the wider professional support team in CME). In this pivotal role, Joanne oversees the coordination of simulation and clinical skills-based

learning activities. From organising teachers, students, SPs, and other professional support staff, to ensuring good governance and optimising resources - Joanne plays a key part in creating meaningful and high-quality learning experiences for our students. Put simply, we couldn't do what we do without Joanne and the many other members of our Professional Support team. They're the ones who 'make the magic happen' behind the scenes, turning complex logistics into seamless learning opportunities.

## Postgraduate student: Dr Carol Wilson



Carol is a Specialty Emergency Doctor working in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), with a deep passion for simulation-based learning. After successfully completing her Master's in Clinical Education in CME, Carol caught the simulation bug - and has now taken the exciting step of enrolling in a Doctorate in Medicine (MD) in CME.

In partnership with NHSCT and CME, Carol is exploring how simulation can be meaningfully blended with workplace-based clinical learning. Her work is prompting us to rethink

how simulation is delivered and how it can be better integrated with other forms of learning to enhance clinical practice. Carol's research is already sparking important conversations and helping shape the future of simulation in healthcare education. We wish her every success in her studies and look forward to seeing where her journey takes her next.

## Teaching Associate: Wesley Sterling



Wesley is one of our many dedicated Teaching Associates (TAs) in CSEC. In this role, he works alongside colleagues to deliver essential clinical skills and simulation-based learning across the curriculum. Drawing on his extensive nursing experience, Wesley helps equip medical students with the practical knowledge and confidence they need for clinical practice. Beyond teaching, Wesley and colleagues play a key role in preparing and developing simulation scenarios and clinical teaching sessions. He and the wider TA team are integral to the smooth running of our programmes - bringing expertise, energy, and a deep commitment to student learning.



One standout aspect of Wesley's contribution is his passion for student wellbeing and fostering a positive workplace culture. Alongside others, he helps organise the much-loved annual 'Final Year Musical' and the festive 'Big Sing' - where students and staff come together to sing, act, and dance in support of local charities, and to spread a little joy. If you'd like to see Wesley in action behind the keyboard, be sure to join us for this year's **Big Sing** in the **MBC Foyer** on **Tuesday 9th December, 12:00–14:00**. It promises to be a heartwarming event!

## Medical students: Cardiology and Cardiothoracic Surgery Society



CSEC interacts with many student societies. Below is an overview from the Cardiology and Cardiothoracic society lead:

'We are the Cardiology and Cardiothoracic Surgery Society, a student-led organisation at Queen's University, dedicated to promoting heart health awareness and education among students and the wider community. Our mission is to inspire and empower individuals to better understand the heart and the importance of maintaining good cardiovascular health. To achieve this, we focus on both education and outreach. Through engaging lecture series, expert-led tutorials, and conferences, we explore key topics related to heart health and clinical practice. With the support of the British Heart Foundation NI, we also host an annual Charity Colour Run - a vibrant event filled with colour, music, and energy - designed to encourage the community to stay active and embrace a healthy lifestyle.

In collaboration with the CSEC team, and with special thanks to Dr Davina Carr and Professor Gerry Gormley, we have expanded our outreach efforts to include teaching basic resuscitation skills in the community. Our goal is to equip individuals with the knowledge to recognise cardiac emergencies and feel confident in taking immediate action, including calling for help. Highlights of this initiative so far include sessions at the Balmoral Show and SistersIN event earlier this year.'

## Simulated Participants: Siobhan Hussey



Simulated Participants (SPs) are members of the public who are specially trained to support person-centred simulation learning and assessment for our medical students. They play a vital role in helping students practise and rehearse clinical and communication skills in a safe and supportive environment. SPs also provide valuable feedback-especially on interpersonal and relational aspects of care. Did you know that this year marks the **20th anniversary** of our dedicated SP scheme in the Centre for Medical Education. Siobhan Hussey was one of our very first SPs and continues to be an active and cherished member of the team. In Siobhán's own words:

*“As simulated participants, we greatly value the role we play in the education of medical students assisting them to become the highly educated, ethical and professional doctors of the future.”*

## A SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OUR SIMULATION AND CLINICAL SKILLS EDUCATION

### Near-peer teaching – a win-win-win story!



A dedicated team (including Dr Davina Carr, Dr Andy Spence, Dr Linda Ní Chianáin, Prof Gerry Gormley, Dr Stephen Doherty and Prof Kathy Cullen) have developed a Near Peer Teaching scheme that empowers senior medical students to deliver simulation-based education to their junior peers. These senior students complete a structured, evidence-based facilitator training programme,

equipping them with the skills and confidence to lead simulation sessions effectively. A flagship event of the initiative is the annual delivery of an introduction to Basic Life Support (BLS) and first responder training to over 300 first-year medical students - an impressive scale that reflects the programme's reach and impact.

The results have been remarkable. Junior students consistently rate the teaching highly, appreciating its relevance and relatability. Senior students gain valuable experience in teaching, leadership, and communication-skills that build confidence and support career development. Their participation can have their contributions formally recognised through the university's Future-Ready Award, further enhancing employability.

Beyond the classroom, the initiative has fostered meaningful social integration across year groups, helping ease the transition into university life. It has also extended into the community, with senior students delivering first aid demonstrations and outreach activities locally. Dr Carr mentions



*“This initiative is a powerful example of how simulation, collaboration, and peer-led learning can come together to create something truly transformative - for students, educators, and the wider community.”*

**IPE SimBaby marks its 20<sup>th</sup> birthday!!**

SimBaby is one of the jewels in the CME Simulation crown. It involves Year 4 Child Health medical students and Year 3 Children's nursing students working together through high-fidelity acute paediatric scenarios. First introduced in 2006, it is embedded firmly in both medical and nursing undergraduate curricula and is widely regarded as hugely successful programme and an exemplar of truly impactful and sustainable interprofessional education. As well as improving knowledge and paediatric clinical skills, mentored by expert nurse lecturers and paediatricians, students work on interpersonal and behavioural skills across a range of simulated scenarios. Students observe colleagues in real time and actively contribute to debrief and feedback process.

The SimBaby team include Mrs Pauline Cardwell and Ms Lynne Robinson (Lecturers and Teaching Assistant in School of Nursing) as well as Dr Warren McCue (SimBaby Medical Coordinator), Dr Peter Mallett (Year 4 Child Health Specialist lead) and Year 4 CME Professional Supports teams. Previous leads included Mrs Doris Corkin, Dr Kat Ferris, Dr Ben McNaughten, Dr Dara O Donoghue and Prof Neil Kennedy.

Crucially, SimBaby couldn't flourish without the dedication of many paediatric clinical facilitator volunteers from hospitals across the region.

## Empatheyes VR training of medical students....a first in the UK



Virtual reality (VR) has been used in CME since 2022 to give students life-like experience in pupil examination. Professor Williams co-created an app that allows students to examine the pupils of virtual patients with conditions like a third nerve palsy and signs like an afferent pupillary defect, allowing them to be able to recognise these reliably in their future clinical

practice, and to focus on the patient, having mastered the skill. In a pioneering new use of VR and new partnership between the charity Angel Eyes NI, the Centre for Public Health, and the Centre for Medical Education, Queen's University Belfast has become the first university in the UK to offer 'EmpathEyes' VR training to medical students. Created by Sara McCracken (CEO of Angel Eyes NI), EmpathEyes is a virtual reality experience that allows users to gain insight into what it's like to see through the eyes of someone with a visual impairment. This immersive training helps students develop deeper empathy and enhances their person-centred skills - crucial qualities in their future roles as doctors.

Dr Laura Cushley, Research Fellow in the Centre for Public Health, is leading the delivery of this training to all final-year medical students. Together with Professor Williams and Professor Gerry Gormley – they are conducting a study to explore its impact on students' attitudes and clinical practice. Sara McCracken, CEO and Founder, Angel Eyes NI & Empatheyes mentions:

*"Empatheyes offers medical students an immersive way to experience visual impairment through virtual reality, taking teaching to a new level by improving understanding, empathy, and knowledge retention. Our clinically calibrated simulations recreate real eye conditions and their progression, allowing future doctors to see the world through the eyes of someone with a visual impairment. We're excited to see the outcomes of this project and the lasting impact it will have. Our goal is to help students develop a better understanding of vision impairment and how this shapes the way they communicate and care for patients. We're proud to partner with Queen's University Belfast in leading the way in embedding empathy learning into medical education."*

**Sara McCracken, CEO and Founder, Angel Eyes NI & Empatheyes**



## A new 'arrival' to our team!

CME has welcomed its newest arrival - Harvey (Next Generation)! Harvey is a cutting-edge, full-body high-fidelity manikin designed to simulate realistic cardiac and respiratory conditions. With immersive features such as palpable pulses, pressure readings, heart sounds, murmurs, and breath sounds, Harvey offers an audio-tactile experience that brings clinical learning to life.



Led by Dr Diane Wilson, Dr Alyson McVeigh, and Dr Christopher Lockhart, Harvey-based teaching is a core part of the Year 3 medical curriculum. This hands-on experience provides students with a vital opportunity to develop their skills in assessing patients with cardiovascular and respiratory disease in a safe, structured environment. Dr Wilson reflects:

*"The newest generation Harvey Simulator has arrived in our Clinical Skills Education Centre this summer! This is a superb resource for teaching bedside cardiopulmonary assessment to year 3 students. Harvey complements our other Student Auscultation Manikin (SAM3G) and this enables students to build their confidence in the recognition of many clinical signs."*

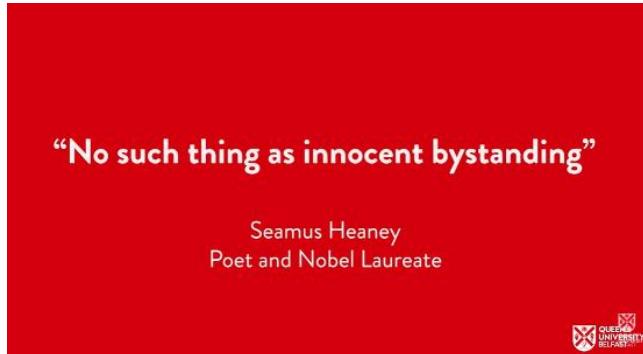
Harvey is more than just a manikin - it's a leap forward in experiential learning, helping our students build confidence and competence in clinical assessment.

## Immersive agency training – stepping up to racism



In a unique collaboration between the Drama Department and the Centre for Medical Education, an interdisciplinary team - Professor Gerry Gormley, Dr Stephen Harte, Dr Linda Ní Chianáin, Dr Paul Murphy, and Aoife Rafferty - have pioneered an innovative immersive theatre experience designed to enhance student's agency to respond to unprofessional behaviour. This educational approach places students at the heart of the learning process, allowing them to

navigate realistic and emotionally charged scenarios in a safe, simulated environment. Known as the *Immersive Active Bystander Training* (iABT), it has become a core component of the final-year curriculum. Student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Many report that the experience has had a profound impact on their confidence and readiness to challenge unprofessional behaviour and support colleagues in difficult situations. A short video showcasing the approach, along with powerful student testimonials, is available [\[here\]](#).



The iABT has also attracted significant external interest. Professor Cindy Chew, Honorary Professor at the University of Glasgow and President of the Society of Radiologists, attended a session and shared the following reflection:

*“I was fortunate to attend one of iABT sessions, as part of my own exploration of simulation to develop active bystander skills. The team are at the forefront of simulation as innovation in medical education. Not only are they pioneers and early adopter in embedding this into the curriculum, but he is also actively pushing the boundaries of how simulation can be applied to engender agentic learning and empowerment through immersive education across diverse disciplines and skills.”*

This initiative exemplifies how creative, interdisciplinary approaches can foster meaningful change in medical education - preparing students not just to be skilled clinicians, but courageous and compassionate professionals.

## Better together: developing a regional strategy for Undergraduate Medical Education simulation practice in Northern Ireland.

Led by Dr Stephen Doherty, Dr Linda Ní Chianáin, alongside Professor Gerry Gormley and Dr Peter Mallett, a new initiative is underway to develop a *community of learning* (CoL) across our clinical placement sites. This collaborative effort aims to recognise, support, and enhance the simulation-based education (SBE) opportunities available to medical students while on placement - without requiring them repeatedly travelling long distances across Northern Ireland back to QUB. A team from CME has been visiting Health and Social Care Trusts to explore the simulation-based learning already being offered. The team has been humbled by the unique, high-quality educational experiences being delivered locally, often tailored to the specific clinical environments of each Trust.



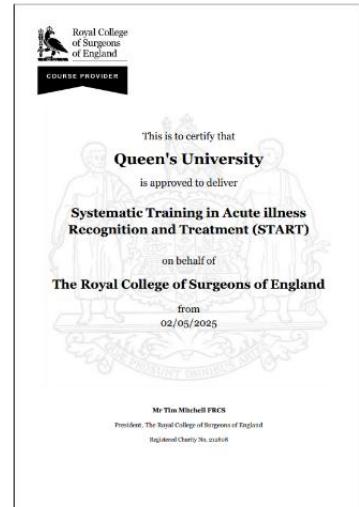
Following a scoping exercise, the team is now developing a strategic roadmap to support the growth of a connected community of practice and establish shared standards for undergraduate SBE in clinical settings-believed to be the first initiative of its kind in the UK. Importantly, the team is also engaging with the Sub-Dean of General Practice to explore opportunities for simulation-based learning in this vital clinical environment. This initiative reflects a commitment to partnership, innovation, and ensuring that all students-regardless of placement location-have access to meaningful, high-quality simulation experiences that support their development as future doctors.

## Getting off to good START! A first in the UK



Transitioning to becoming a junior doctor can be daunting. To address this, Queen's University Belfast became the first UK university to deliver the *Systematic Training in Acute Illness Recognition and Treatment* (START) course - developed by the Royal College of Surgeons of England—to final-year medical students. This initiative is led by Mr Stephen O'Neill Consultant Transplant Surgeon, Belfast City Hospital and

START enhances patient safety, clinical confidence, and understanding of human factors. It goes beyond the ABCDE framework, teaching algorithmic management of stable and unstable patients, and promoting timely escalation of care. QUB adapted the course for modular delivery, introducing group-based simulations to develop both technical and behavioural skills. Students worked in teams to manage realistic scenarios, fostering collaboration and reinforcing clinical decision-making. This innovative approach has strengthened student confidence and readiness for clinical practice. Mr O'Neill reflected that



*"The learning outcomes for the START course reflect all the things Senior Clinicians want Foundation Doctors to be able to do. However, Foundation Doctors should ideally have these competencies from their first day on the job! So, why not offer the START course during the Final Year of a medical degree? I did the START course myself in RCSEng London (many years ago!) as a Foundation Doctor. While the course has more than stood the test of time, it has been regularly updated over the years to reflect changes in practice and the educational needs of learners. The resources are excellent, and course set up is straightforward. The major challenge we faced in Queen's University was that we have more than 300 Year 5 students in each year, and they all were given the opportunity plus funding to do the course. Despite the challenges, course delivery has been very rewarding and there is a genuine feeling amongst faculty that Foundation Year Doctors who have done the START course as students will be more confident and situationally aware on the wards. The success of the course would not have been possible without the enthusiastic input and collaborative approach of many faculty members that came from a wide range of specialty backgrounds beyond just Surgery (e.g., Medicine, Critical Care and Anaesthetics). We also had great support from the Educational Team in RCSEng as well as significant administrative support from RCSEng and the staff in Queen's University Belfast."*

## Pass the bleep: stepping together beyond simulation to real patient care

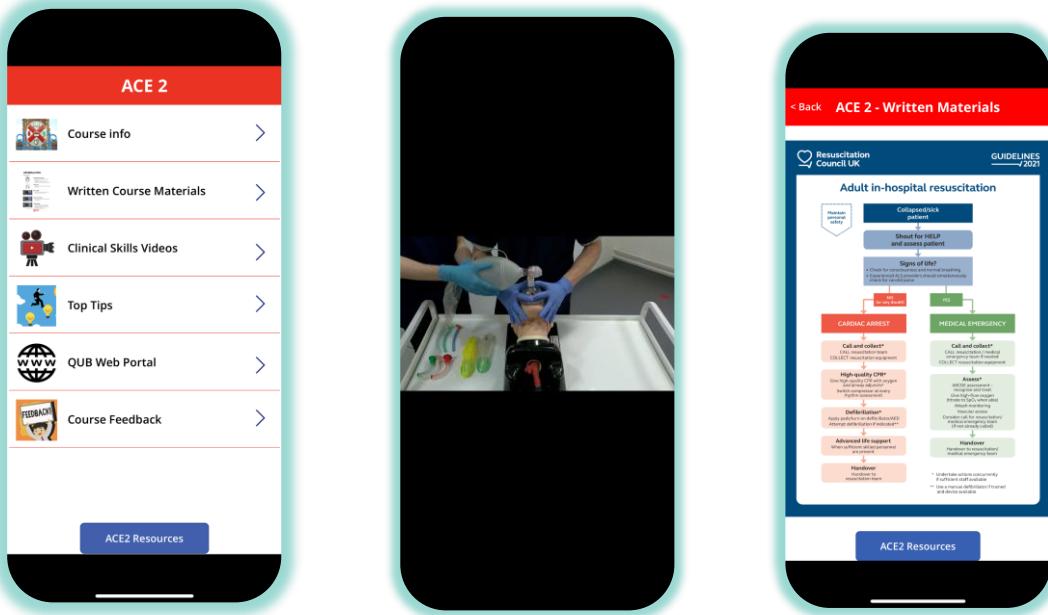


Simultaneous with the first cohort of students reaching final year of the new C25 curriculum, Pass the Bleep, previously piloted with smaller groups of students, became a compulsory aspect of the final year curriculum in 2024–2025. Lead by two previous medical students Dr Katherine Aiken and Anna Sturgeon, alongside Dr Rick Plumb, Pass the Bleep aims to create the conditions and opportunities for students to do more during their assistantships, and in particular take responsibility for real patient care in a safe and supported way.

Integral to this are two simulated sessions. The first, a job prioritisation workshop, tasks final year students with prioritising 18 jobs often delegated to Foundation Year 1 doctors; whilst experiencing interruptions from various members of the multidisciplinary team about a range of issues. This is often the first-time students have to consider a list of competing responsibilities, and requires them to use their clinical judgement and ultimately justify their rationale. The second is a set of simulated scenarios, all pertinent to work as a foundation year 1 doctor. These include a patient with chest pain, an unwitnessed fall on an oral anticoagulant, and verification of life extinct. The focus is on consolidating a thorough A-E approach, and then moving beyond assessment to management planning, escalation as appropriate, and documentation. These sessions require the development of technical and non-technical skills, and equip the students with the confidence they need to take responsibility for patient care during their final year, whilst supported by a foundation year 1 doctor and other members of the clinical team. Students are overwhelmingly positive about the programme and we are delighted it is now an integral part of their preparation for practice year.

## Creating innovative technology to enhance learning through mobile apps

Our own CME staff led the creation of mobile apps for several QUB educational courses. Combining expertise in pedagogy, clinical skills and computer science Dr Andy Spence, Dr Davina Carr and Professor Gerry Gormley developed mobile apps for the QUB Debrief Course and the ACE year 2 course. Utilising an evidence base, we coded these mobile apps which were used to house resources we developed in debriefing and clinical skills which could be used 'at the finger-tips' by both facilitators and learners before, during and after the courses. Following the success of the Debrief app, our team developed the ACE-2 mobile app which is used by year 2 student learners and facilitators, including QUB staff and year 5 students. The ACE-2 app contains a spectrum of infographics and instructional videos, including short hot demos where students can learn airway management, cannulation, defibrillation and handover of the acutely unwell patient, culminating in a simulation scenario walkthrough. This app has been used thousands of times by over 1400 different students and staff.



### The ACE-2 App

We presented the Debrief and ACE-2 apps on the international stage at the SESAM conference, showing QUB's innovative approach to teaching to a global audience. This innovative use of staff expertise showed the value of combining a variety of skillsets to produce a novel resource for both students and staff. There are plans to create even more impactful apps in the near future – so watch this space!

## SK Chin ADEPT Fellow 2024-25: Dr Catherine Murphy

Dr Catherine Murphy served as the inaugural SK Chin ADEPT Fellow for 2024–25. During this one-year fellowship, she contributed to a wide range of innovative simulation-based projects, taking an active role in teaching and leadership initiatives. She led two major projects focused on faculty development and interprofessional simulation-based educational research. This fellowship year was instrumental in her professional development, supporting future career aspirations in paediatric medicine and simulation-based interprofessional education.



The primary focus was the successful development and launch of **SimPACT**, a faculty development initiative designed to equip simulation educators with confidence and skills to deliver high-quality education. Dr Murphy conducted a comprehensive needs assessment involving 133 healthcare educators, revealing strong demand for formal training. In response, two tailored one-day courses - **SimPACT Core** and **SimPACT Research**—were introduced in June 2025. Both received excellent feedback, with ratings of **5/5** and **4.88/5** respectively.

Her second major project explored the longer-term impact of interprofessional simulation on medical and nursing students following a paediatric scenario embedded in the curriculum. This research, which secured ethical approval and involved interviews immediately post-simulation and three months later, is now in data analysis and targeted for publication later this year. Both projects were presented at the prestigious SESAM Conference in Valencia, where SimPACT was showcased as a poster and the research project as a short communication—underscoring the growing recognition and influence of this work within the international simulation community.

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SCHOLARSHIP

An important part of our simulation and clinical skills practice is to be informed by evidence. Our community of learning is active in researching new pedagogical methods to impact simulation educational practice locally and globally. It has been a busy year so far....and with many more projects in the pipeline!

### Scientific peer reviewed publications

- Gormley GJ, Nestel D (2025). 'Not just 'what you say' but 'how you say it': co-creating psychological safety through micro-communication skills in simulation-based education' In press *Journal of Healthcare Simulation*
- Behrens, C. C., Dolmans, D. H., Driessen, E. W., & Gormley, G. J. (2025). 'Dancing with emotions': an interpretive descriptive study of facilitators recognition and response to students' emotions during simulation. *Medical Education*, 59(4), 439-448. <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.15554>
- Gormley, G. J., Kelly, M., Murphy, P., & Ní Chianáin, L. (2025). Keeping patients at the centre of simulation-based education. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01410768251352704>
- McCaffrey D, Corr M, Fergie R, et al Transformative learning through communal documentary viewing: a mixed methods study on kidney transplantation and organ donation in medical education. *BMJ Open* 2025;15:e095404. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2024-095404
- Joyce, B., Carr, D., Smart, A., Armour, D., & Gormley, G. J. (2025). Learning better together? A scoping review of in-person interprofessional undergraduate simulation. *Advances in Simulation*, 10, Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41077-025-00351-5>
- Harte, S., Ní Chianáin, L., Murphy, C., Rafferty, A., Murphy, P., & Gormley, G. (2025). O7. 'No such thing as innocent bystander' (1): immersive active bystander (iABT) training for medical students. *Advances in Simulation*, 10(Supplement 1), Article 07. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41077-025-00360-4>

- O'Hare, S., Kajamaa, A., Conn, R., & Gormley, G. (2025). SimLab: an intervention to promote expansive learning and organisational change in team-based emergency care simulation. *Instructional Science*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11251-025-09734-7>
- Vage, A., Gormley, G., & Hamilton, P. K. (2025). The effects of controlled acute psychological stress on serum cortisol and plasma metanephrine concentrations in healthy subjects. *Annals of Clinical Biochemistry*, 62(3), 165-173
- Spence, A. D., Carr, D., Kajamaa, A., & Gormley, G. J. (2025). 'Overcoming and owning challenges': a qualitative study exploring the manifestation of agency in learners. *Medical Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.15631>
- Nestel, D., Bruun, B., Dieckmann, P., Tulloch, S., & Gormley, G. J. (2025). 'Tending' the 'garden' of psychological safety in simulation-based education. *Journal of Healthcare Simulation*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.54531/CPZH5763>
- Bevis, Z., Nestel, D., Kumar, A., Gibson, S., Kavanagh, M., Rosado, C., Ní Chianáin, L., & Battista, A. (2025). Instruction and guidance in healthcare simulation: a scoping review. *Journal of Healthcare Simulation*.
- Vage, A., Spence, A. D., McKeown, G., Gormley, G. J., & Hamilton, P. K. (2024). Simulate to stimulate? A systematic review of stress, learning, and performance in healthcare simulation. *The Ulster Medical Journal*, 93(3), 119-126.
- Ní Chianáin, L., Gough, S., & Nestel, D. (2024). A systematic approach to designing scenarios involving older adult simulated participants. In C. M. Smith, N. Alsaba, L. Guttman Sokoloff, & D. Nestel (Eds.), *Comprehensive healthcare simulation: geriatric simulation: a focus on older adults as simulated participants* (pp. 17-26). (Comprehensive Healthcare Simulation). Springer Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-65742-9\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-65742-9_3)
- Savage, M., Spence, A., & Turbitt, L. (2024). The educational impact of technology-enhanced learning in regional anaesthesia: a scoping review. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*, 133(2), 400-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bja.2024.04.045>

- Korimbocus, B., Wilson, H., McGuckin, A., & Gormley, G. J. (2024). 'Having skin in the game': guiding principles for incorporating moulage into OSCEs. *Advances in Simulation*, 9, Article 34. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41077-024-00307-1>
- Kearney, G. P., Gormley, G. J., Johnston, J. L., Hart, N. D., & Corman , M. K. (2024). "We lie about what we do. We lie to our students about what they're going to do": Unstandardizing standardized ways of knowing in health professions education. *Social Science & Medicine*, 5, Article 100368. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2023.100368>

## Presentations at scientific meetings (2025)

### National

#### Association for the Study of Medical Education (ASME) Annual Scientific Meeting. July 2025 Edinburgh, UK

- Digging deep into meaning where AI fails to reach: an intra-conference session on elicitation techniques in qualitative interviews (**Workshop**) (*GJ Gormley, S Smith and V Tallentire*)
- ‘On the crest of a wave’: realising the full potential of simulation in medical education (**Symposium**) (*GJ Gormley, S Smith, A Barrett, V Tallentire*)
- What are the conditions for agential learning to flourish in simulation? (**Oral presentation**) (*A Spence, D Carr, A Kajamaa, G Gormley*)
- Dance with emotions in simulation (**Oral presentation**) (*GJ Gormley, E Driessen, D Dolman and C Behrens*)

#### Royal College Emergency Medicine (RCEM) Educators’ Conference (Oct 24)

- Longitudinal simulation: a novel way to educate final year students on acute medical emergencies. (**Oral presentation**) Wilson CP, Kinnear N, Gormley G. (In top scoring submissions category)

### International

#### International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare (IMSH) ASM January 2025 Florida, USA

- Instruction and Guidance in Healthcare Simulation: A Scoping Review (**Oral presentation**) *A Battista, Z Bevis, D Nestel, L Ní Chianáin, M Kavanagh, S Gibson, A Kumar, C Rosado*

#### International Clinical Skills Conference Biannual Scientific Meeting. May 2025 Prato, Italy

- SimLab: enabling collaboration and organisational transformation through theory guided interprofessional simulation in general practice (**Oral presentation**) *S O’Hare, R Conn, A Kajamaa, GJ Gormley*

### Academic General Practice Ireland – ASM, March 2025 Belfast

- Domestic Abuse Disclosure in General Practice; What are medical student's lived experiences of Forum Theatre learning? **(Oral presentation)** *C McPeake, H Reid, GJ Gormley*

### Association of Standardized Patient Educators (ASPE) ASM, May 2025 Quebec, Canada

- Including individuals with lived experiences in simulation-based education (SBE): A collaborative workshop **(Workshop)** *L Ní Chianáin, L, Gormley GJ, J Driscoll.*

### Society for Simulation in Europe (SESAM) ASM, June 2025 Valencia, Spain.

- Does teamwork really make the dream work? An explorative longitudinal qualitative study on the impact of simulation-based interprofessional education **(Oral presentation)** *C Murphy, L Ní Chianáin, P Mallett, D Corkin, GJ Gormley*
- ‘No such thing as innocent bystander’\*: immersive active bystander (iABT) training for medical students **(Oral presentation)** *GJ Gormley, S Harte, L Ní Chianáin, C Murphy, P Murphy and A Rafferty*
- “It’s more than just timetables!” – a qualitative explorative study into the enablers and barriers to delivering undergraduate simulation-based interprofessional education. **(Oral presentation)** *D McCaffery, D Carr, A Smart, S Haughey, L Lawther, V Adams, GJ Gormley*
- Domestic Abuse Disclosure in General Practice; Exploring medical students' lived experiences of Forum Theatre learning **(Oral presentation)** *C McPeake, H Reid, GJ Gormley*

### The International Association for Health Professions Education (AMEE) ASM August 2025, Barcelona, Spain

- Real patient engagement in simulation: Ensuring relevance in health professions education **(Pre-conference workshop)** *D Nestel, C Smith, L Ní Chianáin, W Eppich, A Doyle, GJ Gormley*

### Sim Pro annual conference (Gothenburg, Sweden) April 2025

- Transforming future doctors' perceived preparedness through longitudinal blending of simulation and work-based learning. **(Oral presentation)** *Wilson CP, Kinnear N, Gormley G.*

## Prizes and measures of esteem

- Winner of the Prof William 'Bill' Shannon Prize for Best Trainee presentation, Academic General Practice Ireland international Scientific Meeting March 2025 (Belfast) **Dr Claire McPeake** 'Nurturing conditions for domestic abuse disclosure': a longitudinal phenomenological study of forum theatre-based learning' (Supervisors Professor Gerry Gormley and Professor Helen Reid)
- Winner of the Prof George Irwin Prize for Best Education presentation, Academic General Practice Ireland international Scientific Meeting March 2025 (Belfast) **Dr Claire McPeake** "Nurturing conditions for domestic abuse disclosure": a longitudinal phenomenological study of forum theatre-based learning' (Supervisors Professor Gerry Gormley and Professor Helen Reid)
- Winner of the Innovation in Training Award, NIMDTA 2025. **Dr Paula Houton** "Use of Forum Theatre in the immersive InterAgency Training of patients who are experiencing a mental health Crisis (Supervisors Professor Gerry Gormley and Professor Helen Reid)
- International Union of Physiology Sciences (IUPS) 3rd place Poster Prize Winner Mrs. Patricia Hegarty, Dr. Mairead Corrigan, Dr. Christopher Johnson, Dr. Linda Ní Chianáin and Dr. Sean Roe
- Selected as part of Best Abstract Submission at 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of SESAM: Harte, S., Ní Chianáin, L., Murphy, C., Rafferty, A., Murphy, P., & Gormley, G. (2025). O7. 'No such thing as innocent bystander' (1): immersive active bystander (iABT) training for medical students. *Advances in Simulation*, 10(Supplement 1), Article 07.
- Selected by simulation community at AMEE ASM 2025 as best simulation papers in the last year
  - Behrens, C. C., Dolmans, D. H., Driessen, E. W., & **Gormley, G. J.** (2025). 'Dancing with emotions': an interpretive descriptive study of facilitators recognition and response to students' emotions during simulation. *Medical Education*, 59(4), 439-48
  - Bevis, Z., Nestel, D., Kumar, A., Gibson, S., Kavanagh, M., Rosado, C., **Ní Chianáin, L.**, & Battista, A. (2025). Instruction and guidance in healthcare simulation: a scoping review. *Journal of Healthcare Simulation*.



## A Must read!

Did you know that scholars from Johns Hopkins University and Harvard Medical School USA, identifying one of our recent publications as a “must-read” paper in medical education ([click here for link](#))? (Spence, A. D., Carr, D., Kajamaa, A., & Gormley, G. J. (2025). ‘Overcoming and owning challenges’: a qualitative study exploring the manifestation of agency in learners. Medical Education. Advance online publication <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.15631>)

## Visit by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer



We were honoured to welcome our Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Lourda Geoghegan, to the Centre for Medical Education and CSEC. We had enriching conversations around our work in undergraduate medical education (UGME), particularly in simulation-based learning. While simulation is well known for teaching important procedural skills, we also explored its potential in preparing students in many other ways including having challenging conversations, speaking up, and collaborative practice. Together with our Health and Social Care partners, we also discussed our plans to coordinate a regional approach to UGME simulation. It’s an exciting time to be involved in simulation and to explore its contribution to workforce development

## Royal Recognition for Simulation and Clinical Skills



Professor Gerry Gormley and Margaret Sterling BEM were honoured to attend the *Education and Skills Garden Party* at Buckingham Palace, alongside Professor Judy Williams and other colleagues. The event celebrated contributions to education across the UK. Gerry and Margaret were invited to showcase the innovative work in simulation and clinical skills - highlighting how immersive learning continues to shape the future of medical education at Queen's University Belfast.

## Keynotes and invited talks

- Dr Linda Ní Chianáin and Professor Gerry Gormley Invited seminar as part of ASPIH SIG group <https://aspih.org.uk/events/webinars/Co-production and Inclusion in simulation design, delivery and evaluation>
- Professor Gerry Gormley. Shinning 'theoretical' light into the black box of transformative simulation University of Illinois, Chicago, USA 2025
- Professor Gormley, Dr Vicky Tallerine, Dr Sam Smith and Dr Eve Purdy Simulation...but not as you might know it! Invited ASME Megbite seminary  
<https://www.asme.org.uk/events/simulation-but-not-as-you-might-know-it/>
- Keynote Professor Gerry Gormley Wrong sided surgery: the science of laterality errors Western Anaesthesia Symposium, Galway Ireland 2025
- Keynote Professor Gerry Gormley Harnessing the untapped power of simulation in medical education National Association of Medical Education Management, United Kingdom, Belfast 2025
- Keynote Professor Gerry Gormley Opening the black box of how simulation enables transformation Scottish National Simulation conference Aberdeen 2025

## Grants

- ASPE Research and Project Award 2025: Dr. Linda Ní Chianáin, Prof. Gerry Gromley 'Empowering Excellence, Enabling Esteem: Appreciative Inquiry of Simulated Participants in an SP Healthcare Education Programme.' (\$2,000)
- ASPIH Research Grant 2025: Dr Linda Ní Chianáin, Dr. Mairead Corrigan and Prof. Gerry Gromley 'Embracing 'our' perspectives: A phenomenological exploration of simulation experiences among neurodivergent medical students'. (£2,500)

## Postgraduate student projects

### Postgraduate Research (PGR) students

- **Dr Claire McPeake (MPhil)** (Funded by R&D NI as parts of GPARTs scheme) (Supervisors: Professor Gerry Gormley Professor Helen Reid) Domestic Abuse Disclosure in General Practice; Exploring medical students' lived experiences of Forum Theatre learning
- **Dr Carol Wilson (MD)** (Supervisors: Dr Grainne Kearney, Dr Neil Kinner and Professor Gerry Gormley) Exploring of the affordances of integrating interprofessional simulation and work-based learning longitudinally.
- **Dr Rachel Henderson (MPhil)** (Funded by R&D NI as parts of GPARTs scheme) (Supervisors: Professor Nigel Hart and Professor Gerry Gormley) Harnessing experiential theatre to enhance GP consultations in a trauma informed approach
- **Dr Charlie Irwin (MPhil)** (Funded by R&D NI as parts of GPARTs scheme) (Supervisors Professor Gerry Gormley and Dr Mairead Corrigan) Using simulation to enhance cultural harmonisation of IMG doctors.
- **Nouf Ilthawadi (PhD)** (Collaboration with Mohammed Bin Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa Specialist Cardiac Centre, Bahrain and the School of Health Professions Education, Maastricht) The use of VR in Interventional cardiology training. (Supervisors: Dr Nynke de Jong, Dr Elshami Wiam and Professor Gerry Gormley)
- **Aoife Rafferty (PhD)** Immersive bystander training and promoting agentic responses (Supervisors Dr Paul Murphy and Professor Gerry Gormley)
- **Dr Clare McPeake (PhD commencing January 2026)**. Giving 'voice' to simulated participants in simulation. (Supervisors: Dr Linda Ní Chianáin, Dr Mairead Corrigan and Professor Gerry Gormley)
- **Mr Aaron Vage (PhD)** Funded via Department for Education. Explore the intersection between Stress Physiology, Educational Psychology and Healthcare Simulation.

## Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students

- **Dr Carol Wilson (MClinEd)** Exploration of blended medical student simulation and work based learning (Supervisors: Professor Gerry Gormley and Dr Neil Kinnear)
- **Mr Peter Eves (MClinEd)**. Impact of the Systemic Training in Acute Illness Recognition and Treatment course (START), when delivered in undergraduate training, on the preparedness of F1 doctors as they transition into clinical practice (Supervisors: Professor Stephen O'Neil and Professor Neil Kenndy)
- **Dr Ruth Bingham (MClinEd)**. Handing over the baton: assessing the impact of simulated multi-patient handover training on Final Year medical Students' confidence and preparedness (Supervisor: Professor Neil Kennedy)
- **Dr Katherine Aiken (MClinEd)**. Step up: how do medical students experience responsibility for patient care? (Supervisors: Dr Hannah Gillespie, Dr Rick Plumb, Professor Tim Dornan)
- **Dr Anna Sturgeon (MClinEd)**. Stepping up: A qualitative study on how foundation year resident doctors experience responsibility (Supervisors: Dr Hannah Gillespie, Dr Rick Plumb, Professor Tim Dornan)
- **Dr Diarmuid Mc Laughlin (MClinEd)** Development of Paediatric Musculoskeletal Medicine teaching and resources for undergraduate medical students. (Supervisor: Dr Peter Mallett)
- **Dr Warren Mc Cue (MClinEd)** Learning *beyond the Sim*: Implementation & evaluation of digital micro-learning resources in a postgraduate, interprofessional education setting. (Supervisor: Dr Peter Mallett)
- **Dr Kate Mullan (MClinEd)** *Making it real or playing it safe*: In-situ versus suite-based simulation for medical undergraduates. (Supervisors: Dr Peter Mallett Dr Tom Bourke)
- **Dr Claire Martin (MClinEd)** *'When all is said and done'*: A mixed-methods study exploring outcomes of faculty development training. (Supervisor: Dr Peter Mallett)

## Postgraduate Projects

- **Dr Astrid Camilla Wiig (Norway), Professor Anu Kajemma (Finland) and Professor Gerry Gormley.** Artifacts in action: The role of material-semiotic artefacts in simulation-based learning
- **Dr Chara McGovern Banks (Specialist Foundation Programme Doctor).** The lived experiences of left-handed medical students (Collaborators: Professor Gerry Gormley, Dr Grainne Kearney and Dr Paul Hamilton).
- **Dr Davog McCaffery (Specialist Foundation Programme Doctor).** Exploration of how to operationalise undergraduate interprofessional simulation-based learning opportunities (Collaborators: Professor Gerry Gormley, Dr Davina Carr, Professor Sharon Haughey, Dr Vicky Adams, Dr Lorna Lawhter and Alison Smart)
- **Dr Nicole Gormley (Specialist Foundation Programme Doctor).** ‘Silent signals’. Harnessing simulation to train medical students in providing emergency care with non-verbal patients (Collaborators: Professor Gerry Gormley, Dr Stephen Doherty and Dr Andy Spence)
- **Dr Catherine Murphy (SK Chin ADEPT Fellow 2024-5).** Beyond the Simulation Suite. An explorative impact study on what happens after interprofessional simulation training. (Collaborators: Dr Linda Ní Chianáin, Dr Peter Mallet, Doris Dorkin and Professor Gerry Gormley)
- **Dr Catherine Murphy (SK Chin ADEPT Fellow 2024-5).** Needs assessment of simulation faculty development in Northern Ireland. (Collaborators: Professor Gerry Gormley)
- **Dr Stephen Doherty (SK Chin ADEPT Fellow 2025-26).** Kick start the heart. Exploration of organisational change enabled by insitu simulation in sports facilities (Collaborators: Dr Davina Carr and Professor Gerry Gormley).

## Undergraduate Projects

- **Chloe Wagstaff (Intercalated Medical Student).** Through Their Eyes': A Qualitative Study on the Impact of Virtual Reality on Parents' Understanding of Visual Impairment. (Collaborators: Professor Michael Williams, Dr Jonathan Jackson, Ms Rebecca McCracken, Ms Sara McCracken, Professor Gerry Gormley)

## Selected as University case study for excellence in education

Under the leadership of Dr Davina Carr, Dr James Reid and Alison Smart, the Acute Care Course Team won a Teaching Award in 2023. Following this achievement, they were selected by the university as a (click here: [case study](#)) to showcase excellence in teaching and reputation.



## SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF OUR OUTREACH!

### Simulation Debrief Training for the Air Ambulance (Northern Ireland)



The Northern Ireland Air Ambulance service provides an invaluable emergency service, often operating in highly challenging environments. Simulation plays a vital role in preparing staff to deliver the highest standard of care in these critical situations.

Staff from the Centre for Medical Education were recently invited to support the service by delivering 'Train the Trainer' sessions focused on simulation

debriefing. This collaboration aims to further strengthen the Air Ambulance's training programme and enhance reflective learning for their teams.

### Point of view Simulation training for staff at Belfast City Airport



Dr Elaine Nelson and Professor Gerry Gormley were recently invited by staff at Belfast City Airport to deliver Point of View simulation-based training. In this immersive experience, participants wore specialised equipment to simulate the sensory changes associated with ageing—such as hearing loss or visual impairment.

The training offered staff a powerful insight into what it might feel like to live with these challenges, helping to deepen empathy and enhance interpersonal skills when supporting passengers with additional needs.

This collaboration highlights the value of simulation in promoting inclusive, person-centred care beyond traditional healthcare settings.

## Balmoral Show

In partnership with the NI Agri Rural Health Forum, staff from the Centre for Medical Education (CME) have helped harness the power of simulation to support public health messaging in rural communities. Farmers are known for their dedication to livestock, crops, and machinery - but often place their own health lower on the priority list. Due to regular exposure to dust, chemicals, and moulds, they face a higher risk of occupational lung disease. To address this, the NI Agri Rural Health Forum launched the '*Don't Take My Breath Away*' campaign, in collaboration with the Health & Safety Executive NI, and charity partner Asthma + Lung UK. CME contributed by using simulation-based methods to help farmers experience the impact of poor lung health and learn practical steps to protect themselves. Professor Gerry Gormley shared: "*It's vital that we connect with farmers and communicate the importance of protecting their lung health. Through simulation, we helped individuals gain a deeper understanding of the risks and empowered them with realistic, actionable strategies.*"



At the campaign launch at the Balmoral Show, a viral video featuring a 'jar of dust'—representing what's inhaled from a tractor cab - reached over **2.3 million views**. Simple messages, like regularly sweeping out cabs to reduce mould exposure, resonated widely. Spirometry testing also proved popular on the day. The campaign continues with events and awareness initiatives throughout the year, promoting early detection and prevention of lung disease in farming communities. **Dr Bryan Monson (Deputy Chief Executive, Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) commented**

*"The work carried out by Professor Gerry Gormley and the Queen's University Belfast team in developing and demonstrating engaging simulations was instrumental in delivering a successful presence at the Balmoral Agricultural Show and subsequent events. Their innovative approach helped clearly communicate the importance of preventative measures in tackling occupational lung diseases. This was reflected in the strong interest shown by attendees and the significant social media engagement that followed"*

## Immersive active Bystander training for GP trainees



Professor Gerry Gormley and PGR student Dr Charlie Irwin in CME recently collaborated with the General Medical Council (NI) to deliver *Immersive Active Bystander Training* (iABT) to GP trainees across Northern Ireland. This simulation-based training is designed to empower trainees to confidently intervene when faced with unprofessional behaviour in clinical settings. This has sparked wide interest in the Postgraduate Arena and the team are keen to extend their reach with this powerful learning activity.

## Spotlight on Multiagency Mental Health Simulation Training



In a unique partnership between NIMDTA, the Department of Social Work at QUB, the Centre for Medical Education, PSNI, and the Office of Social Services (Department of Health, NI), a collaborative training initiative was developed for Approved Social Worker trainees, GP trainees, and PSNI officers. Led by Dr Paula Houton NIMDTA (a

former MD student in CME), the programme harnesses the immersive power of Forum Theatre to simulate complex mental health crisis scenarios. This innovative approach enables professionals from different sectors to work together, building confidence and competence in supporting individuals during moments of acute distress. Importantly, this simulation-based learning activity was co-create and delivered with individuals with lived experience of mental health



### **(See video)**

The scheme has been hugely successful, fostering interprofessional understanding and collaborative practice. **Aine Morrison, Chief Social Worker at the Office of Social Services, Department of Health (NI)**, commented:

*“The use of Forum Theatre has been a very rich addition to the support and training of Approved Social Work (ASW) students. The experiential learning allows ASWs to develop their skills in a safe and supportive space. ASWs are typically involved in very complex, emotionally charged and high-risk situations and forum theatre, by allowing them to experience a controlled version of the stress of that, supports them to manage the real-life impact of their role. The multi-disciplinary and multi-agency nature of the Forum Theatre approach to ASW assessments has also been highly valuable in developing shared understanding of best practice and improved partnerships between all those involved. The teams skills and strengths in communication, facilitation and partnership working have been instrumental in achieving these very positive outcomes.”*

## SistersIN – Inspiring the Next Generation of Doctors



Staff from the Centre for Medical Education were proud to contribute to the annual SistersINPIRE event at Queen's University Belfast, welcoming sixth-form girls from across Northern Ireland to explore careers in medicine ([See video here](#)). Through hands-on simulation sessions, participants had the chance to try out clinical skills and interact with current medical students—offering a realistic and engaging glimpse into life as a future doctor. The day proved a great success, sparking curiosity, building confidence, and inspiring many young women to consider a career in medicine. Obi one of medical student facilitators comments

*'Helping teach resuscitation and BLS skills for the SistersIN event was a very rewarding experience. I hope that by demonstrating these skills it will help encourage the girls to learn more about first aid and ways that they can help make a positive impact to those around, including pursuing a career in healthcare. The lower sixth students were all very engaged and eager to learn, they listened closely to instructions and actively participated in the events without fear of embarrassment in front of their peers. The informal environment allowed the girls to feel more comfortable asking questions, and by the end of the session they all mentioned feeling more confident regarding their knowledge on AEDs. This is in part due to the fantastic mannikins that we were able to purchase thanks to the (Queen's Annual Fund) QAF. Having the students practice placing the pads themselves, instead of either watching someone else or using images, helped enhance the experience. As a whole, I believe this event demonstrated the work being done by the CME to promote medical education to the next generation and help broaden their horizons.'*

## Spotlight on Inspiring STEAM Students Through Simulation



As part of the *Activate Your Curiosity – A Science Summer School Event*, Professor Gerry Gormley joined leading voices—including physicist and broadcaster Professor Brian Cox—to inspire over 400 young people at The Braid, Ballymena. Spearheaded by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and part-funded by the Department for Communities Labour Market Partnership, the event combined STEAM seminars, hands-on experiments, and career insights to spark curiosity and ambition.

Professor Gormley introduced students to the science of simulation in healthcare—demonstrating how immersive learning supports safety and decision-making in high-risk clinical environments. The session offered students a glimpse into how simulation blends science, empathy, and innovation to shape future-ready professionals.



## And finally.....



Did you know that Northern Ireland has a rich legacy in simulation-based innovation? Professor Frank Pantridge and colleagues invented the world's first portable defibrillator—revolutionising emergency cardiac care.

During its development, simulation was used not only to train individuals in defibrillator use and CPR, but also to enhance the readiness and processes of the cardiac ambulance service. This early use of simulation laid the groundwork for modern approaches to immersive healthcare training.

If you're keen to learn more, CSEC is currently displaying a series of interpretive posters about Professor Pantridge's work, kindly donated by the Naughton Gallery at QUB.





