

University of Newcastle Australia

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The University of Newcastle's School of Biomedical Sciences recently undertook an extensive program to upgrade and modernize their current teaching and research facilities housed in the Callaghan campus Medical Sciences Building.

One aspect of the program was to redesign the principal teaching spaces associated with the Master of Pharmacy program, offered by the University's Faculty of Health. Led by their Master of Pharmacy Program Convenor Dr. Rohan Rasiah, the aim of the project was to construct two Clinical Skills Units and a Demonstration Pharmacy to assist in the teaching of pharmacy students enrolled in the Master of Pharmacy program. The focus of the teaching space design was to create an environment



Crestron Australia technical support provided assistance in developing a total design solution to meet the complex control and signal switching requirements of this project.

that would showcase and support major aspects of the program, while introducing modern, easy-to-use, innovative technologies to foster active, appealing and interactive learning.

The university's Teaching Spaces Audio Visual Support unit (TSS) was engaged to design, develop and oversee the installation of all AV and room control features, including appropriate lighting and color schemes. From the outset, it was obvious that a significant level of AV engineering would be required.

A mention of the project to Crestron Australia technical support person Vicky Dayal (during one of his regular onsite support visits) brought an immediate offer of assistance in developing a total equipment design solution. During two very full days of design work, Crestron Australia, together with senior technical members of the University's Teaching Space Support unit, successfully designed a system to fulfill the teaching space requirements.

In considering room and equipment design, emphasis was on addressing all teaching space needs. For example, each Clinical Skills unit would consist of four student pods seating a total of 24 students. It is anticipated that the total number of Pharmacy students using the facility in each of the two years of the program will be between 75 and 96.

Each unit was designed to consist of a teaching and demonstration area to help pharmacy students gain skills including clinical dispensing, counseling, visualization of medical conditions, developing an understanding of diagnostic techniques used clinically, and applying knowledge of clinical pharmacy delivered in Pharmaceutics, Pharmacotherapeutics and Pharmacy Practice.

Using small group and self-directed educational programs, the students will be exposed to these clinical skills before being exposed to the Area Health Services and the community.

The Demonstration Pharmacy was designed to replicate all the aspects of a practicing pharmacy, (counseling bays, a dispensing area, controlled drug safe and vaccine refrigerator) to allow students to practice in a realistic pharmacy environment.

The AV equipment in the clinical skills units will enable interactive video conferencing to occur internally and between sites, particularly for those students located at remote locations or the University Departments of Rural Health. All teaching sessions will have full video recording facilities, allowing local and distance students to review their work and further develop their dispensing skills.