

## 'Womb' service for student midwives

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A pregnant robot will offer a helping hand to student midwives, as they learn to cope with the most complex of births before ever meeting a real mother.

Sheffield Hallam University has just taken ownership of a state-of-the-art mother and baby simulator to give student midwives practical experience of birthing mothers and newborns before they enter a real clinical setting.

The simulator, called Noelle, is computer programmable and can go through hundreds of different births - some short (warp speed is a full delivery in five minutes) and without complications and some longer (up to six hours) and much more complex, including breach births, caesarean sections, premature births and ventouse deliveries.

During the delivery healthcare students can monitor the heart rates of both mother and baby and can also keep a check on the baby's vital signs.

When the baby is finally born it can be programmed to have a number of complications and the students must care for both mother and baby in an appropriate manner.

Noelle is manufactured by Gaumard. Our technicians have named the full term baby Holly and the pre-term baby Ivy.

Linda Lang, Acting Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

explains, "The birthing simulator provides a realistic experience for students and allows them to experience difficult births that they may otherwise never encounter during their training.

"At Sheffield Hallam we teach in state-of-the-art realistic clinical settings so Noelle can find herself in an operating theatre having a caesarean at one moment, in a ward in the early stages of labour the next or even in a simulated home birth. This allows us the flexibility to provide our students with a much wider range of experience than they would otherwise receive, and it gives them a real edge in preparation for working in real practice settings.

"Noelle and her newborn are the latest additions to our human simulator family and mean that all of our health care students can now benefit from this new technology.

"The simulators allow us to teach in an inter-professional way so that nurses, midwives, paramedics, physiotherapists and other health care professionals can work together in a realistic environment. This mimics the way they will work when they qualify and develops their communications skills and confidence."

Source: Sheffield Hallam University

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