

Simulation in a forensic setting

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One of the biggest obstacles to teaching forensic science is highlighting the consequences when investigators do not follow procedure and protocol. Students cannot be allowed to enter active crime scenes, but describing the correct protocols from textbooks alone does not convey the necessary weight and gravity of the situation, nor does it give students first-hand experience of how their actions can influence the crime scene.

Over the past two years we have given our forensic science students first-hand crime scene experiences using realistic simulation provided by Edith Cowan University's Health Simulation Centre. ECU's Health Simulation Centre has been offering an immersive and simulation-based learning environment for medical and healthcare applications since 2007, providing unique opportunities to both ECU students and external stakeholders. This collaboration was the first time the facility had been used to simulate a forensic environment. We undertook several different simulations, including a murder scene and a room in disarray, and used the environment to provide a more realistic view of the role of a forensic investigator, and to highlight the challenges associated with sensitively moving in and through an active crime scene.

Not only did the simulation allow for a visual demonstration of techniques and methods, it also provided an opportunity to give immediate feedback so techniques could be corrected *in situ*. This collaboration has opened new avenues for extending the scope of demonstrations that ECU's Health Simulation Centre is able to present, and has highlighted the opportunity to provide enhanced learning environments to a more diverse range of students.