Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC), the world's largest healthcare free zone, and Queen's University Belfast, one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities, today announced their partnership to develop the Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences (MBR-UMHS) and its College of Medicine.

Queen's will assist in the development of the MBR-UMHS and the College of Medicine, including curriculum development, recruitment and selection of staff, and student selection and admissions.

The College of Medicine is expected to open for applications in Autumn 2015 with the first cohort of medical students to be welcomed in September 2016.

Leading up to the launch, Dubai Healthcare City and Queen's University will focus on course development, recruitment of high quality academic and professional service staff and the provision of the necessary infrastructure.

Dubai Healthcare City will work closely with Queen's to devise and implement a strategy that addresses the healthcare education, training and research needs of Dubai and other regional communities.

Marwan Abedin, Chief Executive Officer, Dubai Healthcare City, said: "The Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences' objective is to advance healthcare in the UAE by developing human capacity, graduating medical professionals to the highest level of skills and expertise and fostering world-class research. The strategic partnership with Queen's University will help deliver on our mission."

Professor Patrick Johnston, President and Vice-Chancellor, Queen's University Belfast, said: "I am both delighted and excited about today's announcement, in which Queen's University Belfast will partner Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC) to develop the new University of Medicine and Health Sciences, including the College of Medicine. We see this as part of a long-term

partnership and collaboration in education and research, with mutually beneficial outcomes for both partners.

"It is an extremely important project, where our longstanding experience in this field will make a major contribution, as an international partner, to deliver a project that addresses the healthcare education, training and research needs of Dubai and other regional communities."

While in Dubai to support Northern Ireland companies at Arab Health, Arlene Foster, Northern Ireland's Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment said: "The promotion of the quality of Northern Ireland's higher education capability is high on the agenda of the Northern Ireland Executive's strategy and through our growing links developed by Invest Northern Ireland's local team in Dubai, with the United Arab Emirates, I am delighted that Queen's has been chosen as a partner for Dubai's new University of Medicine and Health Sciences. This relationship emerged from a visit to Northern Ireland by Dubai Businesswomen's Council last May. I'm especially pleased that we have been able to make this announcement while I'm here at Arab Health where so many innovative Northern Ireland companies are exhibiting."

Dr Amer Ahmad Sharif, Managing Director – Education, Dubai Healthcare City, said: "With the target opening in mind, we will be working closely with Queen's University Belfast to develop a detailed project plan to achieve our goals and maintain momentum ahead of the first intake of students in September 2016. This project timeline will detail the key faculty appointments and critical stages in student recruitment and curriculum planning and delivery."

Mr James O'Kane, Queen's University's Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, and Project Lead said: "Queen's University very much welcomes the opportunity to establish a partnership with Dubai Healthcare City to develop and launch the new University of Medicine and Health Sciences. This partnership will be based on the provision of expert advice and guidance on a comprehensive range of academic, professional and governance matters relating to the development of the new University. It will also have a particular focus in providing advice to develop a world-class education and research programme in the College of Medicine.

Professor Graham McGeown, Queen's University's Deputy Head of the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences and Academic Lead said: "The agreed model supports a long-term partnership across education and research in the health sciences. As international partner, Queen's will advise on and facilitate the development of capability and building of capacity, and act as an advocate for the MD programme."