

# THE SCOOP

THE OFFICIAL VERTICAL NEWSLETTER

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## Message from the CEO

by Debra Leeves, CEO

As we start to come out of lockdown in the UK, we are focussed on getting back to normal and planning to re-open the head office in September to welcome back our employees. Although like many companies there will be a 'new normal', we will adopt hybrid working arrangements, building on the benefits of remote working while not losing the energy and impact of meeting face to face in the office. We will continue to fully embrace video conferencing with our valued VERTICAL customers around the world, which has enabled us to get varied and instant feedback on our new products, while listening to your ideas for future developments.

You have told us what you need, and our Software Engineers and Commercial Team have accelerated product development, which has enabled us to widen the portfolio of products and features to offer you for training and education. Before the end of the year, we plan to offer new products and updated software including VERTICAL 5, VERTICAL Physics 2, VERTICAL on Demand and Proton VERTICAL along with Compact VERTICAL, Seminar and Immersive VERTICAL systems.

Our Product Specialists are starting to plan their first 'face to face' meetings with customers again and are tentatively organising training dates for all the new customers who had VERTICAL systems installed during the past year and would welcome some refresher 'face to face' training on site. We have received an enormous amount of positive feedback on our service and support during the past year and we are very grateful that you have taken the time to write to us.

Finally, we have started planning our attendance at ASTRO, Chicago, October 2021 to showcase all our new products and hope to meet many of you there.

## US USER MEETING



ASTRO 2021

### CALLING SPEAKERS

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK  
AT OUR USER MEETING PLEASE  
EMAIL YOUR INTEREST AND  
YOUR PRESENTATION  
PROPOSAL TO  
[LINDSAY@VERTUAL.CO.UK](mailto:LINDSAY@VERTUAL.CO.UK)

**OCT. 25**

**HYATT REGENCY HOTEL**



## VERT 5 Update

by Jan Antons, Business Development Manager

Our software support program is based on loyalty and ensuring customers who remain in support are rewarded.

Continuing our plans for a yearly software release, Vertual is on track to release VERT 5 in the coming months. VERT 5 is feature rich. Highlights include DVH recalculation for set up errors, image matching improvements, additional electron applicators, new treatment accessories and windows desktop shortcuts to open treatment plans directly in VERT. Our development team is also hard at work on plan comparison functionality.

The new VERT features rely on having the applicable DICOM data to best use the software. Our product specialist team has worked hard to collaborate with vendors and customers to bring you further treatment plans to complement the VERT 5 software.

As the VERT software functionality develops, so does the requirement for software testing. Last year, Vertual launched a reference site program, and our reference sites will be a vital part of our expanded pre-release testing program for VERT 5.

Our team will be in contact soon with release dates for VERT 5 and news of a webinar to introduce you to the features.

If you have any questions or are currently out of a support contract and looking to upgrade, please contact your local VERT representative or email: [sales@vertual.co.uk](mailto:sales@vertual.co.uk).

## VARIAN HALCYON

Purchasable upgrade coming soon



**PRE-ORDER NOW**

September release

# Clinical Assessment becomes VERT-ually real at AECC University College

by Dr Andrew Williams (Senior Lecturer, Radiotherapy & VERT Lead) & Shelley Blane (Radiotherapy Course Lead): School of Radiology, AECC University College, Parkwood Campus, Bournemouth.

The recently validated BSc (Hons) Radiography (Radiotherapy & Oncology) program at AECC University College, Bournemouth, UK, welcomed its inaugural intake of 8 first-year students in September 2020. Due to COVID 19 restrictions restricting campus access, our VERT suite was not completed until mid-January 2021, but within 4 weeks of its installation we had used it for the summative assessment of a palliative radiotherapy technique employing a parallel pair field arrangement.

Development of the assessment was driven partly by the need to reduce scheduling pressures for our clinical partners. On top of the patient workflow scheduling pressures prevalent at the time, they also needed to schedule clinical assessments in a palliative and a pelvis technique during our students' second 5-week clinical placement (running from mid - February to end of March). In preparation for placement, students had 4 hours of workbook guided practical time using VERT each week to focus on palliative radiotherapy for metastatic disease, so the incorporation of a summative assessment was felt to be a natural conclusion to these sessions.

For added authenticity and realism, fictional patients with a diagnosis of primary lung cancer, metastatic disease in the brain or metastatic bone disease in the right or left hip were devised. Patients required palliative intent external beam radiotherapy to be delivered via a parallel pair field arrangement and had a brief case history, demographic details (name, full address, and date of birth), a dose prescription with associated field sizes and inter-field (separation) measurements and positioning information. Virtual plans, representative of the diagnosis group and treatment site were selected from the VERT database, with each having anterior midline and lateral skin marks. This allowed us to incorporate references from the initial positioning coordinates to the actual treatment field centres into the patient set up and positioning instructions to test students understanding and application of translational couch shifts. Each student was randomly allocated a different patient by the course team.

Using the dose and field information provided, students were required to manually calculate the daily dose and MU's and compiled a treatment sheet for their patient to be used on the day of the assessment. In addition, they checked at least one other students' calculation. While the accuracy of the calculation and treatment sheet information did not form part of the summative assessment, it was used as a formative exercise to link elements of the Radiotherapy Physics and Equipment module with



Photos by Dave Mitchell, E-Development Technician, AECC University College, Parkwood Campus, Bournemouth

treatment delivery and to provide the basis for a parameter check and "beam-on" safety discussion which was assessed.

Each student pre-booked a 30 minute time slot for their assessment, which took place in the penultimate week before placement 2. Each assessment was overseen by both members of the course team, one as lead assessor and the other initially acting as the patient for meet & greet pre-treatment ID and health and well-being checks and then as the observer and moderator for the lead assessor. Plans were preloaded by one of the assessors prior to the student entering the room, with the couch set to a low position away from the gantry. Students were required to position the patient according to the details on their treatment sheet. When students indicated an acceptable set-up, they were required to outline final parameter checks and the safety procedure for leaving the room.

In the absence of a real keypad or control panel emulator, an MS PowerPoint mock-up of Lin- Acc control and CCTV monitors was used as the basis for each student to articulate their awareness of patient and radiation safety processes.

Achievement across all phases of the procedure was recorded on a 25 item technical checklist using a "pass / fail" classification for safety critical items and a "yes / no" classification for other items. No Likert-type rating scales were applied since the clinical portfolio requires an overall pass (40%) or fail classification.

# VERT on Demand - Coming soon

by Jan Antons, Business Development Manager

Based on a strong market need, and feedback from our customers, VERT is moving 'into the cloud'.

VERT on Demand is a cloud-based platform for existing VERT users to remotely access VERT software anywhere and on any device. Extending the remote teaching potential of VERT, it will be offered as a subscription-based service, with packages for different class sizes and budgets.

VERT on Demand is a seamless platform to engage students and can also be used during lectures for simultaneous access to the virtual linac. Educators can integrate course content even further using the new built-in interactive question features to support their students.

The platform facilitates students self-directed learning at home or away and gives educators the option to structure content and guide those students that need a little more support. The modular structure and progress markers enable educators to track students' progress and identify any remediation areas. Additionally, exam revision and assessment sessions developed using VERT can be loaded onto the platform for students to revise when and where they choose.

Each package comes with VERT specific teaching content alongside the ability to generate your own teaching content for your students. The comprehensive suite of VERT workbooks and case studies are content-rich and ready to go. The workbooks include questions, checks for understanding and points for reflection.

If you missed the webinars on March 31<sup>st</sup>, describing how you can use VERT on Demand please email [sales@vertual.co.uk](mailto:sales@vertual.co.uk) for access to the recording.

Further webinars will be organised over the coming months.

A valid software support contract is required for access to purchase the VERT on Demand platform, so if are out of support or would like to discuss indicative pricing for VERT on Demand please contact your VERT representative.



## Research Opportunity

Available to VERT Users worldwide

# COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITY

**Matthew Marquess, TJU Program Director is looking to collaborate on a research project to assess actual student comprehension of how to take corrective measures during morning QA procedures after a student has completed the required competency**

**To Express your interest in working on this project please contact [Matthew.Marquess@jefferson.edu](mailto:Matthew.Marquess@jefferson.edu)**



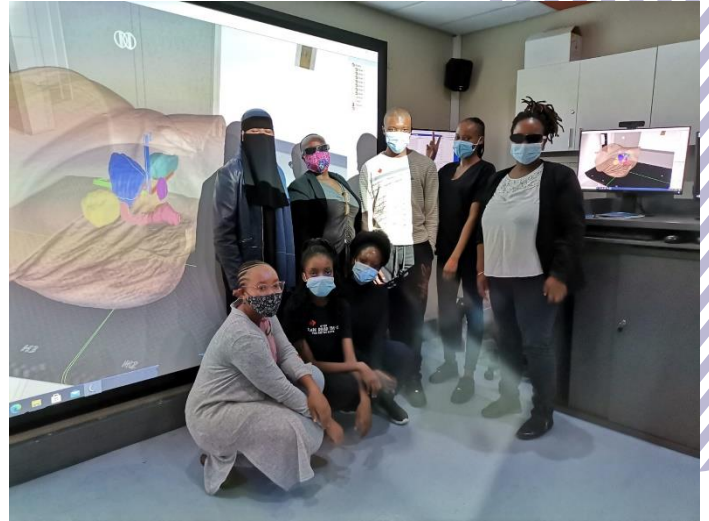
# University of Johannesburg experience VERT

By Ms PN Ramashia, Radiotherapy Lecturer

As the world was facing the dark cloud with the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent countermeasures, such as school closures, the shift to working from home, and social distancing, there was a silver lining for the radiotherapy team at the University of Johannesburg. The positive aspect amidst the havoc was received exciting news that the university has secured funds to buy the long awaited VERT. Needless to say that this news were received with much excitement and eager to get the process started. However, this meant that everybody involved had to work extra hard to ensure seamless and successful process from installation to training. I must say the dedication and patients shown by the team at Vertual was amazingly calming and made the process look very easy even during very difficult working conditions and delays caused by lockdown conditions. From providing guidelines to final approval of the space for installation.

The installation stalled due to delays in preparing the space but the team at Vertual and the contracted installation team showed the considerable amount of understanding and compromised. When installation finally began, the process was seamless and professional. The equipment was handed over in a way that left us confident that we will be ready to go as soon as we finished with training.

After installation virtual training sessions commenced, I must admit the information that was imparted far exceeded my expectations. Claire's teaching strategies, calmness and patience really helped a long way, even after the training ended she still availed herself for support when needed. The training equipped us with the knowledge required for us to in cooperate VERT in all our different modules. The experience with the VERT so far has been extremely beneficial in explaining the Radiotherapy dosimetry concepts.



Furthermore, taking from the virtual training that was done remotely we have also adopted that strategy because the University of Johannesburg is still conducting Classes remotely. As a lecturer to the entry level students who because of COVID 19 did not get enough clinical radiotherapy observation before coming to class words fail me in trying to express my appreciation and aspirations for the system enough and I believe my colleagues and the students themselves share the same sentiments. We are all looking forward to using the VERT to its full potential.

## VERT Online Forum

