



University of
Portsmouth

The winners of this year's award impressed judges with an initiative that has clear benefits for both parties. Through the University of Portsmouth's Forensic Innovation Centre, the institution has joined forces with Hampshire Police to create the first operational police forensic research facility in the country to be based on a university campus. It combines forensic science and digital crime-fighting investigators with a state-of-the-art learning facility for researchers, students and serving police staff to work side by side to solve crimes.

The partnership allows Portsmouth's researchers to be at the forefront of any practical or professional changes and developments in the sector. For Hampshire Police, it offers an increased capacity to research, develop and test new forensic science methods, technology and techniques.

Police staff support students through honorary lectureship positions and police-student mentoring programmes, and students are provided with opportunities for internships or year-long sandwich courses. They gain experience of working on cutting-edge forensics while police staff gain access to teaching support and university resources, which can contribute to their professional development. What is more, Hampshire Police now has instant access to a pool of fully vetted and trained potential future employees.

"This is identifiably a new initiative which delivers clear benefits to both sides," the judges said. "The way the police are embedded in the course delivery" and the way students gain "highly relevant practical experience", seem to be "the right kind of employer engagement".