Imperial College to establish medical school in Singapore
Joint teaching venture sees the London university forge presence in funding-rich Asia

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Imperial College London is to set up a new medical school in Singapore in the latest move by an elite British university to establish a presence in Asia.

Jointly run by Imperial and Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, the medical school will teach over 750 students when it is fully established, the majority of whom will be local residents.

Professor Martyn Partridge, who holds Imperial's chair in respiratory medicine and is to be senior vice dean of the new school, said Imperial had developed an "innovative" course employing electronic learning and simulations of patient care, which the university hoped to develop further in Singapore.

The medical school will be publicly funded. Imperial, which was invited to set up the partnership by Singapore's government, will benefit financially from sharing expertise and the college hopes the partnership will lead to long-term benefits. The college aims to tap into "generous research funding" available in the Asian city-state, Prof Partridge said.

"I don't think anybody knows the exact bottom line, but I can categorically say that Imperial is not going to do this in any way at a loss."

International students are a significant source of revenue for British universities, and increasing numbers want to study here. Overseas applications rose from just over 55,000 last year to over 71,000 this February. At present the proportion of overseas medical
students at UK schools is capped at 7.5%. A foreign medical student who starts at Imperial this autumn can expect to pay £26,250 a year.

Other top British universities which have expanded abroad include Nottingham, which has a campus in Malaysia, while Liverpool has set up a partnership with a Chinese university in Suzhou, near Shanghai.

The new medical school will admit its first 50 students in 2013. A British student who trained at the Singapore school would have no automatic right to practise in the NHS, as it is outside the EU. However, the college hopes to set up student exchanges between the UK and Singapore.

Sir Keith O’Nions, rector of Imperial College London, said: "We are extremely proud to be working with Singapore, a country we have long admired for its support and application of world-class science, engineering and medicine."

"We have many members of the Imperial family already in Singapore — the country is home to nearly 2,000 of our alumni."

Paul Madden, British High Commissioner for Singapore, said the partnership was a further example of the "deep linkages" between Britain and Singapore in science, culture and trade.

Imperial's school of medicine, formed in 1997, is one of the largest in the UK. Over 2,000 undergraduates and 500 postgraduates studied there in the last academic year.