Allscripts has launched a partnership with Dalhousie University, in Halifax, in which graduate students in the Health Informatics program will develop expertise in the company’s Sunrise clinical information system and will even create new applications for it.

Allscripts is sharing the Sunrise solution as an Experiential Learning Program with the school, which will enable MSc students in Health Informatics to become familiar with the system. Dalhousie’s Masters of Health Informatics program is a joint venture between the Faculty of Computer Science and the Faculty of Medicine.

The web-based learning system from Allscripts consists of modules, each of which takes five to 20 minutes to complete. It includes tests for each component, and a management dashboard showing stats – such as how many students have completed various modules and how they scored.

“They’re incorporating Sunrise into the curriculum,” said Jennifer MacGregor, managing director, Canada, for Allscripts, which is based in Chicago. “It’s helping them learn about advanced EHRs, clinical workflows and clinical decision support to improve patient safety.”

Later this year, Allscripts and Dalhousie plan to hold a developers’ workshop to teach students how to develop “apps” in the Allscripts environment. This will be followed by a “hackathon” style meet-up in which students will partner with clinicians and local entrepreneurs, to create new applications using Allscripts Sunrise.

“Teams will develop solutions of real value,” said MacGregor.

Allscripts Canada is also offering paid summer internships to two graduate students from the Health Informatics program. The students will work at Allscripts’ Vancouver headquarters for 13 weeks, from May to August.

Allscripts already has a significant footprint in Atlantic Canada; most notably, it is the provider of the hospital information system at Horizon Health in New Brunswick. The region is home to the Saint John Regional Hospital, the largest acute-care centre in the province.

Meanwhile, Nova Scotia is considering the consolidation of the electronic patient records used in hospitals across the province. A consolidation would result in the establishment of a single system as part of its ‘One Patient, One Record’ program instead of the three different systems that are currently used.

Allscripts will be bidding on the contract. “Our goal is to supply solutions and the partnership Nova Scotia needs to provide the best healthcare possible for its residents,” said MacGregor.

She noted that the partnership with Dalhousie shows the company plans to invest in the region. “It’s further demonstration of our continued commitment to Atlantic Canada,” she said.

In 2015, Nova Scotia merged nine district health authorities into one health authority and the IWK Health Centre in Halifax. It is expected to issue an RFP for the One Patient, One Record system this year.

For its part, Allscripts enables their clients to transform care and improve outcomes by providing advanced leading-edge solutions that offer interoperability, innovation and scalability, with key management features like analytics and population health across the continuum of care. Their solutions are used in major hospitals and regions across Canada, including the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the Hospital for Sick Children and St. Joseph’s Health Centre, both in Toronto, and Fraser Health Authority in British Columbia, to name a few.