



# Technically speaking

A newsletter for technical  
colleagues at the  
University of Nottingham

Autumn 2020 edition

# Welcome

Welcome to the University of Nottingham's **Technically speaking** newsletter.

We will be sharing news and updates from across Technical Services regularly throughout the year.

In this edition:

- 2** Hear from Professor Sam Kingman, UEB Sponsor for the University's Technician Commitment.
- 3** Have your say on our Technician Commitment and the next stage of our Vision for Technical Talent strategy.
- 4** Hear about how the University is ensuring the consistent inclusion of technical colleagues on research publications through the updated Research Integrity and Ethics policy.
- 5** Learn about national developments related to the technical community, including a national report on the impact of COVID-19 on the technical community in higher education and research and our new TALENT programme, funded by Research England and the opportunities it brings to technicians at the University of Nottingham.
- 6** Discover new professional development opportunities for technical colleagues.
- 7** Hear some success stories from technical colleagues across the University.

Please get in touch with any ideas or contributions you have for future editions of this newsletter by contacting **Carly Dellar** ([carly.dellar@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:carly.dellar@nottingham.ac.uk))



## A word from Professor Sam Kingman, UEB's Technician Commitment Sponsor

**This year has been an unprecedented and challenging time for our University community. COVID-19 has impacted us in ways we could never have imagined.**

The technical community has been at the forefront of our University's response to COVID-19, with many technical colleagues closely involved in the rapid shut down of facilities and campuses.

Technicians have also made a significant contribution to the civic response to the pandemic, for example collating, manufacturing and distributing PPE, manufacturing hand sanitiser and enabling and supporting COVID-19 research and the national testing effort. As our campuses and facilities reopen, technical colleagues are ensuring a safe return to work, designing and implementing new processes and policies to ensure a safe, and socially distanced working environment for all.

I want to take this opportunity to thank colleagues for their sterling efforts over recent months. Never before has it been so obvious that technical colleagues are so vital to our institution and so many others.

We are proud signatories of the Technician Commitment and look forward to continuing our work to advance visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technical skills, roles and careers here at Nottingham and beyond.

## University of Nottingham's Technician Commitment

# Have your say!



The University of Nottingham is a founding signatory of the **Technician Commitment** – a sector wide initiative, backed by a range of stakeholders, to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for the technical community in higher education and research. Our Technician Commitment translates into practice through **Our Vision for Technical Talent** strategy which was launched in December 2018 by the Vice-Chancellor.

Some examples of our key achievements to date include:

- Three institutional update events (at launch, 'Six Months In' and 'One Year In').
- The extension of the Technical services job family to level 6 (managerial and specialist) with level 7 in preparation.
- A new UoN Technical Skills and Conference Fund launched in February 2019.
- We were successful in securing £0.5 million EPSRC funding to explore Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), a significant strand of which focuses on EDI in the technical community. In 2019 we launched the first national report on EDI in the technical community.

- We've created new professional development and networking opportunities for technical colleagues, including technical tours, seminars, placement schemes and taught courses.
- We've developed the UoN Technical Sustainability Working Group which is impacting on environmental sustainability across our laboratories and workshops.

## Join the focus group

We'd like to know your thoughts on progress over the past couple of years and your ideas for how we can continue to advance visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability of technical skills, roles and careers here at the University. Please join us at one of our two focus groups to inform the next stage of our strategy.

**Focus group one:** 27 November – sign up:  
<https://uontsfocusgroup1.eventbrite.co.uk>

**Focus group two:** 2 December – sign up:  
<https://uontsfocusgroup2.eventbrite.co.uk>

Technician **Commitment**

# Inclusion of technical colleagues on research outputs

A key theme of the Technician Commitment is **recognition**. The University recognises the vital contributions that technical colleagues make to research and innovation and are committed to ensuring that these contributions are appropriately recognised and attributed through inclusion on research outputs including publications and patents.

The University of Nottingham's recently updated **Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics** provides a comprehensive framework for good research conduct and the governance of all research carried out across the University, including the University's international campuses. The Code underpins the University's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, rigour and excellence in all aspects of our research and for all research to be conducted according to the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks and standards.

The Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics states:

'Team science' is becoming increasingly common across all fields of research where research teams spanning different specialties and geographical centres and locations. The University recognises the diversity of the roles contributing to research. Therefore, in addition to meeting the requirements of the points above, an author must ensure that the work of students, research teams **including technical colleagues (see 5.5.)** is recognised in all publications derived from research to which they have made a contribution. Researchers should list the work of all contributors, with their permission, who do not meet the criteria for authorship in the acknowledgements section.

**5.5. Technical roles that contribute to research may include, but not limited to, data scientists, data engineers, archivists, informaticians, statisticians, software developers, audio-visual technologists, technical professional staff and individuals staffing core facilities, across all disciplines.**

For further information please see:  
[nottingham.ac.uk/go/fair-attribution](https://nottingham.ac.uk/go/fair-attribution)



## National developments

# **COVID-19: The Impact on Technicians in UK Higher Education and Research**

**A new report from the Technician Commitment and partners highlights the impact of COVID-19 on the technical community in higher education and research.**

A collaborative team consisting of the Technician Commitment, Science Council, Institute of Physics, Royal Society of Biology, Royal Society of Chemistry, Wellcome and the Research England funded Midlands Innovation TALENT programme undertook a national survey in order to understand the impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on the technical workforce in higher education and research. Over 1,300 responses were collected from technicians across 99 universities and research institutes from all four nations of the UK.



The resulting report, **COVID19: The Impact on Technicians in UK Higher Education and Research** offers unprecedented insight into the impact of the pandemic on working practices for technicians and shines a light on technical contributions at an extraordinary time.

The report offers a number of recommendations in order to ensure visibility, recognition and inclusion of the key roles of the technical community in the safe return to campuses to ensure all involved are fully supported.



**TALENT** is a £5 million project which leads and influences change to advance status and opportunity for technical skills, roles and careers in UK Higher Education. It is based here at the University of Nottingham and led by the Midlands Innovation (MI) consortium of eight universities in collaboration with key stakeholder and industry partners. It is the largest ever investment into technicians in higher education, whose specialist skills can often go unrecognised despite the crucial role they play in the success of universities and the growth of the UK economy. For more information on the programme and the different ways it is supporting technicians across the region see [www.mitalent.ac.uk](http://www.mitalent.ac.uk).

## Professional development opportunities

## UoN Technical Skills and Conference Fund

The University has pledged to support technical colleagues in their development through the creation of a dedicated **Technical Skills and Conference Fund**. This fund has been developed to ensure technical colleagues can apply for dedicated funding to facilitate their attendance at appropriate courses and conferences to ensure they can continue to develop their technical skills and expertise. There are four application deadlines, as follows: 31 January, 31 March, 31 May, 30 September. To apply, please complete the **Technical Skills and Conference Fund application** form or [get in touch](#) for more information.



## TALENT training and funding opportunities

Three **new funds have been launched** to support the training and development of technicians working at the University of Nottingham and other Midlands Innovation universities.

The **three funds** available are:

- **TALENT Technician Led Training Fund**
- **TALENT Technical Placement Fund**
- **TALENT Technical Conference and Skills Fund**

The Technician Led Training Fund provides technicians with funds in order to develop their

skills by undertaking appropriate training in partnership with colleagues across the Midlands Innovation partnership.

The Technical Placement Fund facilitates and funds placement opportunities for technical colleagues across Midlands Innovation institutions and TALENT industry and sector partners. It enables technical staff to spend up to five days at another organisation to learn new skills and techniques and further develop their expertise.

The third fund, the Technical Conference and Skills Fund enables technical colleagues to access funding to attend conferences to aid their professional development and build their professional network.

# Science Council Professional Registration workshops announced for autumn

This is a recurring event and you can [find the schedule and registration links](#) online.

Following the successful free Virtual Professional Registration Workshops held in the summer, the Science Council have extended the offer of a free workshop schedule to guide you through the process of professional registration throughout **autumn 2020**.

Whether you have identified the register you think you wish to apply for and want some further support, or if you're not sure which award is right for you, join them to take a deeper dive into the specific competencies and application tips. Their expert workshop facilitators are ready to take your questions and queries, offering the support you need to successfully apply for professional registration.

[Read an overview of the workshops.](#)

**Interested and want to take part? Register today.**

If you have any questions regarding the workshops – please get in touch with the Science Council at [enquiries@sciencecouncil.org](mailto:enquiries@sciencecouncil.org)

## Celebrating technical successes

### Degree success

Congratulations to Jonathan Pearson from the School of Physics and Astronomy who has recently been awarded a 2:1 B.Eng. Hons. in Electrical Engineering at Sheffield Hallam University. Jonathan undertook his degree with University support through the degree apprenticeship scheme.

### Vice-Chancellor medal

The exceptional achievements and service of staff and students have been recognised with this year's annual award of the Vice-Chancellor's Medal. Congratulations to Ruth Cornock and Michelle Kelly from the Synthetic Biology Research Centre for their contributions to outreach and to Lee Hibbett from the School of Pharmacy for his work to advance environmental sustainability across laboratories at the University.

### Trainee technician success

Congratulations to James Hayes, Ross Clarke and George Sewell from the Faculty of Engineering who have successfully completed their 4 year Trainee Technician programmes.

## Lean processes for technicians

### Are you interested in learning more about Lean for technicians?

The University's Getting in Shape and Lean Practitioner's Network are eager to try and help you find solutions to work based problems and issues in those areas where there is a problem or potential for improvement.

Getting in shape is all about removing pain points, improving processes and reducing waste.

### Already have an issue you would like to discuss further?

We will work with you to tackle specific issues you have already identified.

#### How it works:

- We work with you on those areas where there is a problem or potential for improvement
- We can do that either over time (weeks/months) or as an example Rapid Improvement event (Kaizen = Take apart and make better) (for example, three days)
- We provide training as required as we progress through

### Or are you keen to learn more about Lean first?

We can start with generic Lean training and then support you to identify and tackle issues.

#### How it works:

- We would work with you through workshops to introduce the key concepts of Lean thinking – and how to identify the problems to be working on
- You think of problems to solve with this new way of thinking
- Together we would then work out how to go forward with those issues
- We would support you to lead and implement the change

### Want to know more?

Contact [Paul Cooling \(paul.cooling@nottingham.ac.uk\)](mailto:paul.cooling@nottingham.ac.uk) for more information or if you just want a chat regarding how this might work in your area.



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