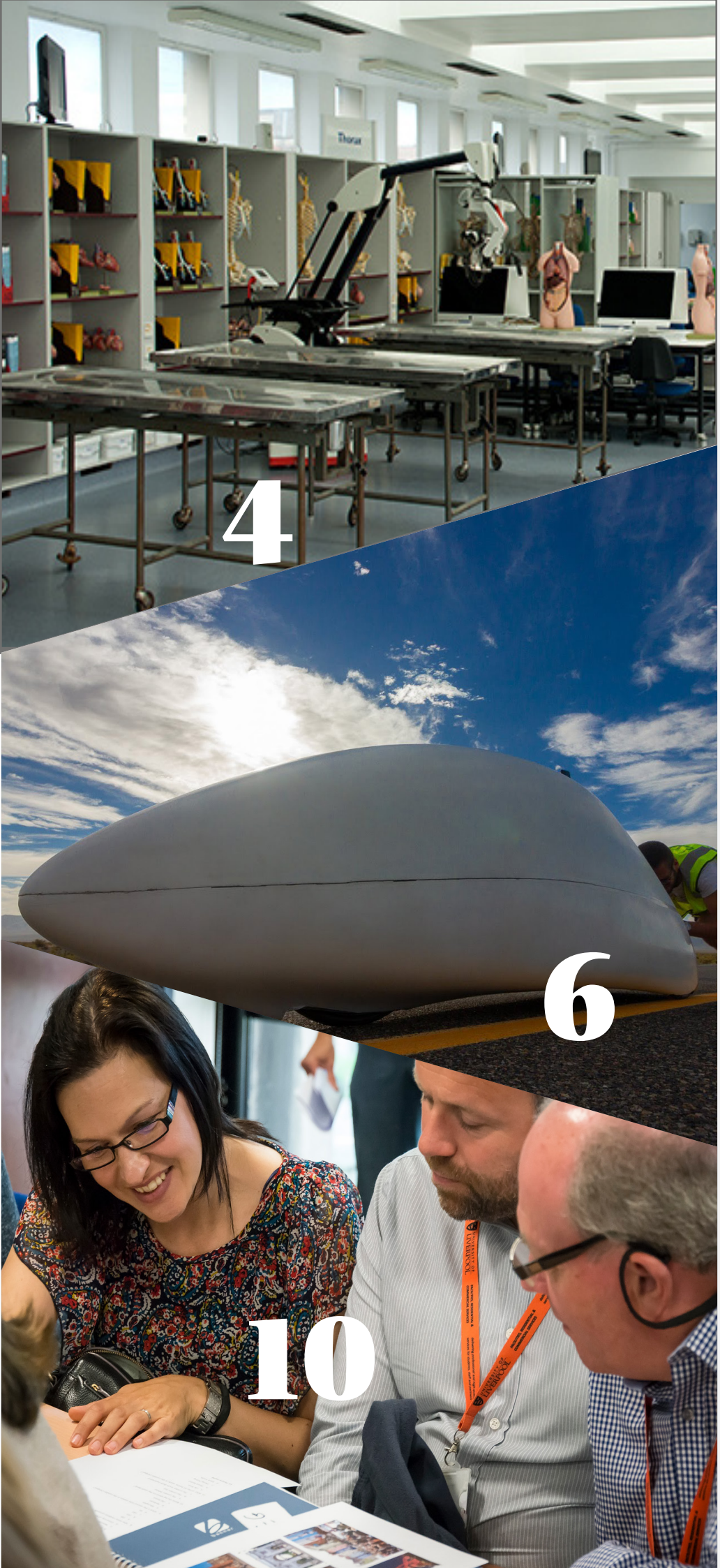


TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

ISSUE 1 JANUARY 2019





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FOREWORD

Welcome to the first edition of Technically Speaking



Dr James Howard
Director of The Academy

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this issue of Technically Speaking. A newsletter by the technical workforce for the technical workforce. As we plough headlong into 2019 this newsletter gives an opportunity to reflect on some huge achievements made by our technicians as well as giving an update on some of the activities that are underway in relation to the Technician Commitment.

As you read the articles collated in this opening edition you will identify, as I did, how important to the university the work that technicians undertake is. However, during my time here I'm regularly reminded that technicians rarely like to talk about their achievements let alone shout about them. This over many years has created an under recognised (sometimes overlooked) community within our institution. This is one of many issues known to the sector and under the Technician Commitment its

one we are looking to change. In fact this very newsletter is a part of that change.

The Technician Commitment was signed by our Vice Chancellor late 2017 and since then plans had been formulating to meet its aims. These are:

Visibility: Ensure that all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution.

Recognition: Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration.

Career Development: Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways.

Sustainability: Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised.

We started our activities by forming the Technical Leaders Forum and running quarterly events designed to give a voice to the leaders and managers of technicians and to enable them to pass the messages of our progress to the technicians in their teams. This led to the submission of our self-assessment and 24 month action plan to the science council at the end of 2018. We recently had some really pleasing feedback from

the lead and chair of the Technician Commitment Steering Board on our submission who stated "There are some excellent initiatives proposed under the institution's 24-month plan. The action plan is detailed, covering a huge range of activities relevant to the themes of the Technician Commitment. The 24-month plan gives a clear direction of what the University intends to do over the next couple of years; it is well constructed and identifies the objectives, the action and the measurement processes. It is great to see that the University of Liverpool aligns the technicians to its strategic planning. This clearly shows a great understanding of and pledge to the Technician Commitment."

Many of the items on the action plan are now being consulted with our Senior Management Team and the progress of these i will include in future editions.

I hope that you find this issue of Technically Speaking useful and I'm excited to be starting a new chapter in the story of the technical workforce at The University of Liverpool with you all. The Academy is here to support this endeavour by facilitating the actions identified in the plan. If you would like to contact us about anything mentioned in the newsletter, or if you simply want to get involved with this work, please email us at: theacademy@liverpool.ac.uk



TECHNICIANS BIO

Lynne Staunton-Jones

TECHNICAL MANAGER - HARC

In 2014, HARC took part in a documentary on Body Donation. The programme was so successful that all universities (with a body donation programme) throughout the country saw an increase the number of applications for Body Donation.

Describe your work area and your role.

I am the Technical Manager of the Human Anatomy Resource Centre (HARC) and have worked here for roughly 26 years. There are 11 different degree programmes that take place in HARC and a footfall of over 1,000 students over a two week period. I am responsible for the acceptance of bequeathed material through the body donor programme and allocate the tissue to the appropriate undergraduate and postgraduate (CPD) courses that take place in HARC. I have one Grade 5, two Grade 4 and two Grade 2 Technicians.

What does a typical day look like for you?

There is no such thing as a “typical” day. As I am the manager and we have a small team, I tend to muck in as much as possible. At present my workload is updating all the legal requirements for an upcoming Human Tissue Authority (HTA) visit. Under the inspections that were pre 2006, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Anatomy (Dr Jeremy Metters) awarded HARC 100% on his previous three visits. In 2013 we had our first HTA audit which we passed successfully.

What’s your favourite bit of kit?

We have a hand held bone saw, that’s a handy little tool to have but anything Makita.

What’s your favourite task?

I love all the jobs I undertake in HARC but I love watching new staff learning a new techniques and them being excited about it. One of our Grade 2 technician removed a brain whilst a class full of cardiac surgeons were in the room. They came over to watch and said to her that they couldn’t do that. The brain was taken out perfectly.

What’s the best project you have worked on?

All our CPD events from orthopaedic and plastic surgeons reconstructing a broken tibia to our head and neck surgeons

reconstructing nasal passages and laser treatment for throat cancer.

Describe your career path. How did you get to where you are now?

I initially started at the university voluntarily as I applied for a job in the old animal house. I didn’t get the job but they said they would keep me in mind if another job came up. You can’t exactly get any experience with that unless you go rat catching of an evening so I asked could I do voluntary work. I was there for about 9 months when a job became available in the mortuary and they said I should go down there, get some experience then apply for the job. I got the job and I was encouraged to go and get some science qualifications. I have worked my way up to Technical Manager

What part of your job do you most enjoy or get the most reward from?

Everything. This is the best team ever to work for and with. It’s like coming into work with your friends. We all work together as a team and that includes the academic staff. Ultimately though, if something goes wrong it my neck on the block.

What’s the best thing about being a technician?

Everything really. The wealth of knowledge that you can get by the people who you sit next to is unbelievable. All have a different way of approaching tasks and usually if I need to know how to do something then I know who to go to. I and my team, are members of the Institute of Anatomical Sciences (IAS) so meeting up with others that do our specific job is great. If I have any problems then I can just put a message on a forum and “someone” will get straight back with an answer. I can also go to the academics for help as they are very approachable so I would encourage any technician to use the resources around them.

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.....
“I love watching new staff learning a new technique and them being excited about it.”

ARION4 Breaks Four World Records

The ARION project was started in 2013 as one of the School of Engineering's Capstone projects, two year MEng group projects that see students tackle real world engineering problems. The brief for the ARION project was to design and build a bicycle that would compete at the 'World Human Powered Speed Challenge', a competition that sees riders compete to set various land speed records using nothing but human power.

ARION1 set the British men's land speed record for fastest leg powered vehicle by reaching 75mph. ARION2 broke the previous years record by reaching 76.59mph also breaking the women's record by reaching 71.05mph. ARION3 again beat the previous years male and female records but unfortunately, due to headwinds over the legal limit, the records did not stand. The ARION4 team decided to change from leg powered vehicles to hand powered with great success. They broke both the male and female world arm powered land speed records

by setting speeds of 51.58mph and 46.54mph, respectively. Both riders also broke the acceleration world records which involves a 600m run up, followed by a 200m through the speed traps. The female record was set at 30.30 mph and the male record was set at 33.81 mph.

Due to the complex, technical nature of the projects it is critical to have the engineering experience and expertise of the school's technical staff. The staff work with the students to help them develop and refine their designs and eventually manufacture components to the students specifications. The technical staff also travel with the students to various test days around the country and to Battle Mountain, NV, USA for the final competition.

By being involved with the development and implementation of these types of hands on student projects, technical staff have become integral to the way undergraduate programmes are taught, helping students to develop skills in areas they would otherwise not have chance to develop.

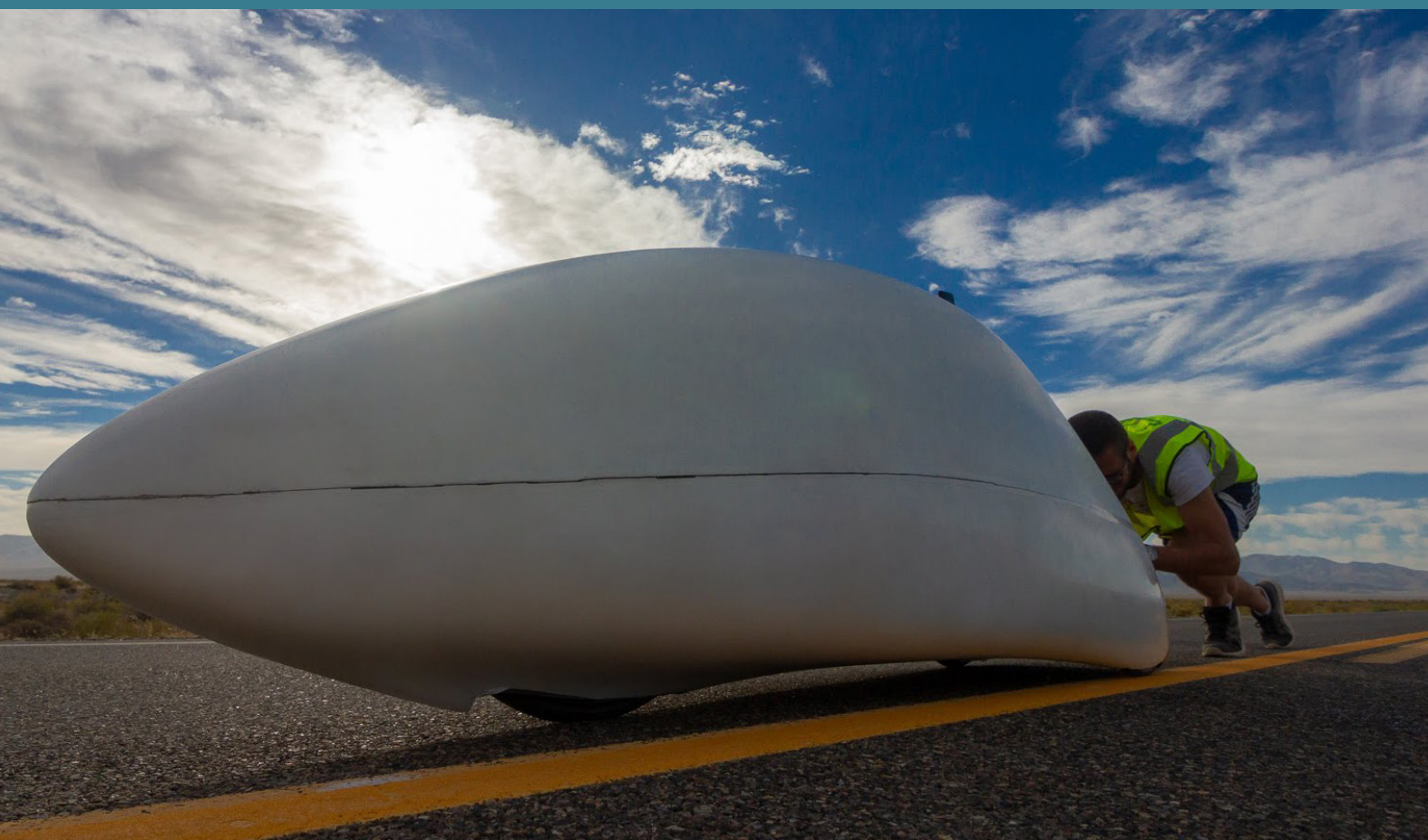
John Curran – Technical Supervisor, School of Engineering

"During the design and manufacturing process technicians helped the students develop their ideas, explaining manufacturing processes and assisting with the development of the many parts of the Arion4. This is beneficial to the development of the technicians, who gained important one to one experience with students. It has helped in communication skills and in developing confidence in relating to the student body as a whole."

Glen Friel – Technical Support, School of Engineering

"After working closely with the students and academics on the Arion projects over the years I was honoured to be asked to go to Battle Mountain Nevada, to be part of the team during the competition in the USA. It was wonderful to see all the other Human Powered Machines that the other teams had built, technically, it was very interesting and many new ideas were formulated between myself and the other team members."

"We have broken British Records year on year, and with Arion4 this year we got 4 World Records which is quite an achievement."



"At this level of any challenge the difference between breaking world Records is all down to marginal gains and with the design of the human powered vehicles choice of materials, build quality, and of course safety become very important. We have broken British Records year on year, and with Arion4 this year we got 4 World Records which is quite an achievement."

"On a personal basis it was very rewarding for me, both in the manufacture of the machine that we built and also the interaction and camaraderie between myself and the team members, it was a joy to be part of. Good luck to the Arion5 team 2019."

Stephen Perry - Year Four MEng Student and Team Leader of the

ARION4 project

"The Team would not have achieved these records without the input of the technical staff at the University of Liverpool. At each stage of the design and manufacturing process, we were liaising with the workshop staff and drawing upon their experience and knowledge to create the best components possible. Their skills brought our designs to life, and the ARION4 would not exist in its current, cutting edge form without them."

Leandre Mestre - Year Four MEng Student and Technical Lead on the project.

"I worked closely with the technicians on each of my designs," added "I would create a concept in CAD and then sit down with one of them in order to improve the design, and discuss the manufacturing process

that would be used. This led me to learn and understand the different process in much greater depth than simply sitting in a lecture, and I consider those discussions of vital importance to the projects at the University.

"The range of expertise available to us through the technicians was phenomenal. It not only helped while we were manufacturing the ARION4, but also the continued support during the race week in Battle Mountain. The ability to talk solutions to the problems that appeared with the technical staff was invaluable to us, and allowed the ARION4 to constantly improve as the race went on."

The 2018 Staff Awards

Technical Winners

Winner of the Evans Memorial Professional Services Award



Institute of Translational Medicine - ITM Technical Team

This year the ITM Technical team have worked hard on upskilling their technical expertise and managerial abilities to provide continuing support and increased performance to both academics and students. This commitment has led to the University achieving an Employer Champion Award from the Science Council. The team's work added to the further development of their teaching abilities which has allowed them to advance the institute's Teaching Excellence Framework commitment as well as enriching the connection between students and the institute. They have enthusiastically contributed

to the institute Athena Swan commitment both in implementing and supporting all initiatives and given valuable contributions to committee, helping the institute to achieve a Silver award and pushing to submit an application for Gold. In addition, the ITM Technical team has been instrumental in determining the lab design of new builds which has contributed to better collaboration for the institute both internally and externally. Over the past year they have shown drive, progression and collaboration with a commitment towards the goals of both the institute and the University as a whole.

Commended

FRCS
Maintenance
Review Team

Steve
Summers
CSD

Paul Gilbert
IIB

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/media/intranet/Staff,Awards,Brochure,Final.pdf>



Liam McDonough

APPRENTICE TO TECHNICIAN

Institute of Translational Medicine

How did you come to work at the University?

I joined the University, thanks to the pre-apprentice scheme back in 2014. I was very lucky to gain work experience as a laboratory technician in the Institute of Infection and Global Health. At the same time, I went to college and completed my NVQ level 2 customer service.

In 2015, I was even more fortunate to be offered an apprenticeship with the same Institute and obtained my NVQ level 2 in Laboratory and associated technical activities.

What is your role now?

In 2017, I gained employment with the University as a grade 2 core laboratory support technician in the Institute of Translational Medicine. The Institute is an extremely big institute with five departments. I am assigned to the Department of Molecular and Clinical Pharmacology, and occasional help out across the sites due to demand. Because of the size of the Institute, I have gained plenty of new technical skills such as mycoplasma testing, tissue culture skills and more.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I would say the instilled environment of ongoing learning and the team around me. I am encouraged to self-develop and I am currently carrying out the NVQ level 3 Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities qualification. I am very happy to work for the University and the Institute as they treat me as part of the family.

What is your greatest achievement?

In the Staff Awards 2015, I was the winner of the Apprentice of the year.

What about the future?

I hope the University will continue to encourage and support the technicians to continuously learn and develop. As mentioned, the University treats me as part of the family. I hope I can grow and go up the career ladder.

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching

The Academy offers two options as a first introduction to learning and teaching in higher education, which may serve as the prerequisite for taking up teaching duties at the University. For those who will be primarily supporting undergraduate practical classes as demonstrators, we offer two half day workshops – an Introduction to Demonstrating, and a follow-up Advanced Demonstrator session.

Open to anyone new to teaching, we also offer a full day Introduction to Supporting Student Learning workshop. This one-day introduction to teaching will provide a great starting point for anyone new to teaching, in particular those who will be leading tutorials or seminar groups, giving occasional lectures

or assisting with marking of assessments.

Finally, for those who wish to continue their development in university teaching and gain some formal recognition of this development, we offer the Foundations of Learning & Teaching in Higher Education programme. More information about this programme can be found on the FLTHE page.

For further information about any of these programmes, please contact Dr. Eli Saetnan:
saetnan@liverpool.ac.uk



Leadership

The Management Essentials Programme is aimed at all levels of practising managers who are responsible for managing and developing individuals, building teams and scoping and planning the workload of the team. It is designed to support all managers with the fundamental management skills, knowledge, tools and techniques needed to get the most out of the individuals and teams they manage.

Online resources compliment the six face-to-face workshops (see details below). As well as introducing relevant topics, models and theories the workshops provide an opportunity to discuss topical issues facing managers in the workplace. They will also provide an understanding of some of the key skills in managing yourself as a manager and understanding the expectations others have of you in the role.

The programme aims to:

- Clarify the role and expectations of managers.
- Develop management skills and behaviours, based on an individual personal development plan during and beyond the programme.
- Develop a network with a group of managers in similar roles facing similar challenges, who can work together and support each other.

Find out more at:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/hr/people-development/developmentopportunities/leadersmanagers/>



HEaTED

We have corporate membership of Higher Education and Technicians Education and Development (HEaTED), which allows any technician access to the website and, through that, to their training provision.

HEaTED:

- Identifies, sources and develops specialist training courses for technical staff from all disciplines.
- Provides members with discounted rates on specialist and soft skills professional development and training opportunities.
- Manages regional networks to enable colleagues from neighbouring institutions to meet and discuss hot topics, share best practice, promote development opportunities and more.
- Provides an online community where members can expand on discussion from regional network meetings, raise hot topics and share discussion and best practice with colleagues from other institutions.
- Uses the regional network meetings and online communities to serve as a 'representative voice' for the UK technical community in Higher Education and related fields.

Visit the website at <http://www.heated.ac.uk/>

Mentoring

Mentoring can encourage you to challenge your assumptions, broaden your horizons, raise your aspirations and increase your achievements through individualised support. You can become a mentor yourself or use the service as a mentee. The relationship between a mentor and a mentee may last up to a year, or maybe longer; during the meetings, the focus is on the whole person, particularly in relation to career progression and enhancement. To access the Mentor Portal click here:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/hr/people-development/mentoring/>

Safety

Technicians often work in dangerous environments and therefore it is essential that the whole technical community keeps up to date with their health and safety CPD. To access the development offer from the safety team please click here:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/safety/training/>

External Development

The Royal Society of Chemistry has an approved training course database. All the courses have been peer-reviewed against a set of criteria, to ensure that they can support the professional development of those who attend. The database includes courses in the classroom, in the lab, or online, and there's something for every stage of your professional development. Search by subject area, location, duration, event type, and skill level to find the course that's right for you.

Click here for more information: <http://www.rsc.org/cpd/training>

ONLINE LEARNING

The Academy Learning Zone has over 150 exciting and engaging e-learning modules from 'How to use Microsoft Word' to 'Creative Problem Solving'. To see a list of available modules, [click here](#).

The Professional Development Toolkit provides practical information and access to advice, strategies, tools and methods that can be put into use each day.

The University has a library of elearning modules that are not obligatory but may be relevant to your role. Topics like 'Understanding Modern Slavery' 'Prevent' and 'Ethics Training' can be found by accessing this [Vital site](#).

Tuck into bite-sized elearning modules designed by bestselling author Liggy Webb, who is considered a leading authority on resilience and behavioural agility. She works with many organisations, supporting people to establish positive habits and behaviours.

[Discover introductory courses on Resilience, Personal Agility, Changing Behaviours and more](#)

Support and development is also provided by other University departments. Further information can be found by clicking on the following links:

- [Computing Services](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Centre for Innovation in Education](#)

The launch of the Technicians Network

We are proud to launch the Technicians Network at the University of Liverpool

How to Get Involved

Events

Come along to our regular events to meet other technicians and see what our colleagues are doing across the university. To book onto the launch event please follow this link: <http://bit.ly/2TqWZn>

Have Your Say

We want to make sure the network is relevant to everyone so if you have an idea for an event, want to promote your work by having a feature in the newsletter or have any other comments on the direction of the network get in touch with your local rep or contact the steering group at technet.contact@liverpool.ac.uk or follow and message [@LivTechNetwork](https://twitter.com/LivTechNetwork) via Twitter.

Local Representative

If there isn't already a local rep in your area you can volunteer to become one. The network is run by technicians, for technicians and having local reps feedback input from technicians in their area to the steering group will be vital to keeping the network relevant.

Local reps support the network by making sure all technicians in their area are on the network mailing list, promoting the newsletter and upcoming events but most importantly provide another opportunity for technicians to voice their ideas.

Technicians Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Institute of Integrative Biology is launching a sector-wide survey, with the Science Council and the Institute of Physics, to survey technicians about their experiences of supporting students with matters relating to mental health and wellbeing.

This aim of the survey is to assist in increasing the recognition of the role that all staff play in supporting student mental health and wellbeing and better equipping them to provide appropriate support. This survey is part of a strand of a project currently running in IIB to improve postgraduate mental health and wellbeing:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/integrative-biology/postgraduate-study/happy-and-healthy-phd/>

We are really keen to hear about your experiences and encourage you to take part in this short survey.

The survey can be accessed here:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SCtechmhsupport/>



Or by scanning the QR code



The survey is open until the end of February.

Please do take the time to complete this survey. It is really important that we help to recognise and highlight the pastoral role that technicians play which has a direct and substantial impact on the students we support.



Technician Commitment

IOP Institute of Physics



University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

The future of the newsletter



Do you have a story to tell?

If you have a contribution or idea for future newsletters then please email theacademy@liverpool.ac.uk with your text and as many pictures as possible.