



University
of Exeter

Technical Strategy & Operations



Technician Awards 2024



About the Awards

Welcome to the third year of our Technical Awards! These awards are open to all staff within Technical Strategy & Operations, and colleagues can be nominated by anyone across the institution throughout the year.

The categories are as follows:

Technician **Commitment**

Visibility

A pillar of the Technician Commitment, this award will go to a colleague who has embodied this goal by making a contribution which is visible both within and beyond the institution

Recognition

A pillar of the Technician Commitment, this award will go to a colleague who has embodied this goal by gaining recognition for their work through either registration, authorship, or external award schemes, for example.

Career Development

A pillar of the Technician Commitment, this award will go to a colleague who has embodied this goal by making the most out of opportunities to move forward in their career path.

Sustainability

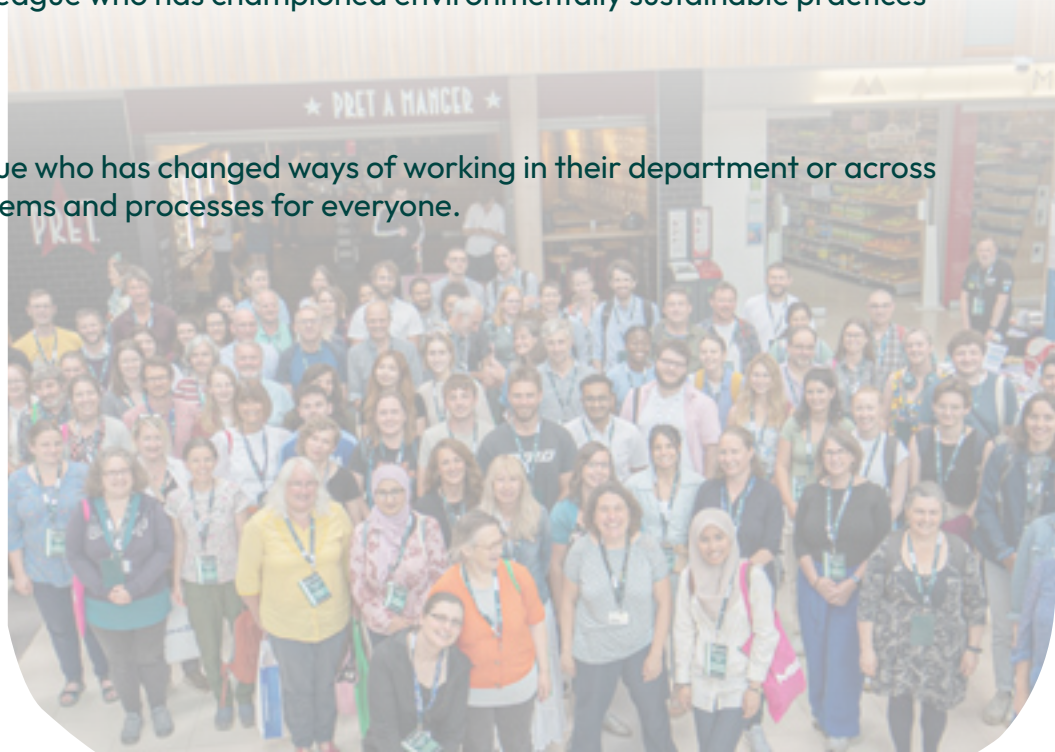
A pillar of the Technician Commitment, this award will go to colleagues who have embodied this goal by ensuring the future sustainability of technical skills across the institution.

Environmental Sustainability

This award will go to a colleague who has championed environmentally sustainable practices within the workplace

Innovation

This award is for a colleague who has changed ways of working in their department or across the service to improve systems and processes for everyone.



Visibility

Congratulations to our nominees

Sarah Kirby, Assistant Technician (Penryn Teaching)

Nominated by Julia Phillips

Sarah has been pivotal in organising Outreach events for both Exeter Scholars and local Guides groups. She has devised a 'Murder on the Falmouth Express' electrophoresis session which engages the students in a light hearted but informative way into the basic methods of molecular science. Sarah also applied and was awarded Grant money to run these events. Sarah also designed and produced the Teaching Lab exhibit for the Strategy launch event on the Penryn Campus.

Agnieszka Kaczmar, Technician & Zoe Mack, Research Technician (Psychology)

Nominated by Josie Sweetland

They are both conscientious, highly-organised, hard-working and creative members of staff in general. They take initiatives that go above and beyond requests from research staff and have made huge efforts to highlight the work done in CRAB and Psychology: to other research and technical staff via informal discussions, to the institution via formal presentations, and to the public, e.g., getting signs made near the bee hives.

Freddie Wyatt, Technician (CSRC)

Nominated by Charlotte Cook

In the last year, Freddie has taken a lead role in providing several tours of the Clinical Skills Resource Centre at Heavitree for senior parties. After each tour, we had feedback commending Freddie on his knowledge, engaging speaking, and what a brilliant job he does of representing the contribution of the team of technicians he is embedded within, make to training medical professionals. The understanding this lends to senior parties in the University has led to better engagement with TS&O in decision-making and high level championing of changes that we have asked to make. I wanted to acknowledge how impactful it is to have individuals like Freddie, who is gifted when it comes to winning the most influential of hearts and minds, and to make sure Freddie knows how valued his gift and willingness to use it is to the service.

Lucy McTamney, Technical Operations Manager (CREWW)

Nominated by Alice Foulkes

For consistently championing and advocating for her Tech Services team based in CREWW, whilst navigating the difficulty of supporting the launch and development of a new research centre, purchasing of all its equipment, oversight of every research project, the complexity of a challenging partnership with SWW and industry, and overcoming many barriers to create a full, and well-trained team of professionals ranging from Grade C-F under her care. She is definitely an unsung hero that deserves recognition for her fantastic work and always putting her people first.

Matthew Palmer, Assistant Technician (LSI)

Nominated by Gemma Sutton

Matthew has shown himself to be a dedicated worker in the LSI. Since starting his role last year, he has familiarised himself with all members of the level 2 labs in the LSI. He is very motivated and regularly checks in with the research staff to check if anything is required of him. He is always friendly and happy to help at anytime. He has also been

Visibility

an active member of the LSI sustainability committee who's work has led to the LSI receiving the LEAF Gold award this year

Rachael Saunders, Assistant Technician (Archaeology)

Nominated by Laura Evis

Rachael has taken a leading role in knowledge exchange events throughout this year. Her technical expertise relating to the equipment housed in the SHArD Lab has resulted in her being the go-to technician to receive training and support when using the kit. She has led the technical demonstrations for a number of internal and external events this year, including those that have involved partners such as South West Forensics, Devon and Cornwall Police CSIs, Devon and Cornwall Police Mapping Team, Devon and Cornwall Police Drone Team, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Royal Albert Memorial Museum, the Engineering Department, and Digital Humanities team (to name only the large-scale collaborations). She has gone above and beyond her role's requirements and is an exceptionally talented technician who deserves due recognition.

Raif Yucel, Head of Exeter Centre for Cytomics

Nominated by Annie Knight

Raif has always been a great advocate of technical visibility, getting involved in lots of groups and events, as well as networking across disciplines and championing his centre and his team. From my perspective he is probably one of the most recognisable faces in TSO (beyond the management team).

The cytomics centre is also active on social media, so this visibility goes beyond the university.

Highly Commended

Karen Leslie, Technical Manager (Hatherly)

Nominated by Agnieszka Kaczmar

Karen is one of the laboratory managers in Hatherly. This is one of the oldest buildings on Streatham and hosts research groups from three different departments and two different faculties: Geography (ESE), Biosciences (HLS), and CBS (HLS), as well as some of the BSU facilities. Karen line manages a small team of full-time technicians who joined Exeter from other institutions in autumn 2023, and who look after the whole building on daily bases. Karen is a manager with an exceptional ability of looking at the challenges within Hatherly in a holistic way. She goes beyond troubleshooting of a single issue and strives to future-proof the laboratory spaces, e.g. improving the current gas cages, improving storage, or the current procurement workflow. Karen is very friendly, helpful, and respectful for all staff and students. However, she is also not afraid to escalate issues, raise concerns, and say "no" when necessary. Managing laboratories that span across two different faculties and three departments is a challenge. Karen makes sure that the needs of the Hatherly labs, like funding for equipment, maintenance, or consumables, are seen and heard by the relevant departmental leadership groups. Karen regularly reaches out to the BSU team, for example regarding maintenance of equipment located across the labs under Karen's and the BSU's remit. In the eighteen months in the role, Karen has also reached out to the relevant teams responsible for the teaching spaces in Hatherly to raise issues which may affect students, like out-of-hours card access.

Visibility

Despite being so busy, Karen also finds time to share her vast knowledge with other colleagues and to mentor postgraduate students. An example of that was helping the technical team in the Psychology Department with a Leica microscope for pollen analysis in the summer 2023, and offering a tour of the Amory lab where pollen analysis takes place.

For the International Women's Day 2024, Karen has been nominated as one of the inspirational women within the Biosciences department. This is yet another proof of how exceptional Karen is as a colleague and as a lab manager.

Winner

Steph Vinnels, Technical Manager (Archaeology)

Nominated by Naomi Sykes, Susan Greaney, Marisa Lazzari, and Karin Venema.

Steph has taken a leading role in the organisation and running of our Departmental fieldschool, which takes place for a month at the National Trust property Killerton House. It is a highly visible site and she is required not only to teach field excavation skills but do so whilst on public view. Naturally visitors to Killerton are keen to know more and she uses the opportunity to showcase our Department and University in her conversations.

Steph works tirelessly (and often thanklessly) to run the technical side of the archaeology department, including teaching on fieldschool and in first year classes. She juggles demands from many members of staff, running our labs, sorting equipment, training others (both staff and students) and generally being helpful and knowledgeable. Over the past couple of years, with the setting up of the new Shard 3D digital imaging lab, Steph and her colleague Rachel have adapted and been trained on a range of new equipment and taken on additional responsibilities in this area.

Steph has led in the making of the Archaeology Technical Office a very visible unit through her support of students and colleagues across a range of teaching and research activities of our portfolio, as well as through the innovative development of extracurricular skills sessions and talks with external professionals for our students. She has also been an advocate of the Technician role, championing EDI issues related to the role and more broadly via her participation in our Athena SWAN working group.

Steph is a kind and supportive lab manager, always there when we need her and also coming up with new ideas to support academic staff and students even better. She creates visibility in the corridors, with emails, an overview of 'What has the tech team been up to in the last 9 months', a stand at the Exe-Tech Strategy Launch, etc. She has made us aware of all the amazing stuff they do and can support, and that we could not possibly manage without her and the team!



Recognition

Congratulations to our nominees

Freddie Wyatt, Technician (CSRC)

Nominated by Matt Wade

Freddie is always very organised and proactive regarding planning and highlighting potential issues from a technical viewpoint. An asset to the University!

Rebecca Nicolas, Assistant Technician (Geography)

Nominated by Sophie Lees

Rebecca is a C grade technician who goes above and beyond her responsibilities on a day to day basis. I have just started and Rebecca has been one of the most helpful technicians in my career and is always willing to help everyone in the different pay grades and train people up to high competence.

Steph Vinnels, Technical Manager (Archaeology)

Nominated by Iwona Kozieradzka-Ogunmakin

Steph is an invaluable member of our Archaeology team. She goes above and beyond her duties as a departmental technician to support in-class teaching and delivery of practical aspects of teaching. Her dedication is evident in the way she supports students in their skills development, particularly in the field setting. She may work quietly behind the scenes, but it is her work and organisational skills that keep everything going seamlessly.

Winner

Rachael Saunders, Assistant Technician (Archaeology)

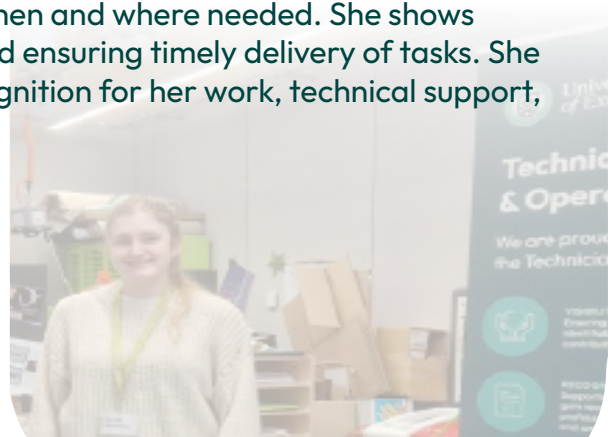
Nominated by Steph Vinnels, Stephen Rippon, Iwona Kozieradzka-Ogunmakin, and Hajnalka Herold

Exceptional work in a pressured environment. A whole new lab has created a lot more work but there are still only two of us. She has excellent demonstration techniques which has been crucial for a variety of open days, demonstration days (e.g. crime scene day where police/forensics/barristers etc came to look at our equipment and what we can offer). Without Rachael that lab would come to a stand still!

Always cheerful and helpful

Through her work, Rachael has demonstrated great organisational skills and dedication. She goes above and beyond her duties as a technician to ensure smooth delivery of teaching and practical sessions. She ensures her support is available when and where needed. She shows great initiative in organising departmental collections and ensuring timely delivery of tasks. She is an invaluable member of our team and deserves recognition for her work, technical support, and expertise (which is a bonus!).

Excellent support and availability



Career Development

Congratulations to our nominees

Rachael Saunders, Assistant Technician (Archaeology)

Nominated by Alex Pryor

Rachael has worked extremely hard since she joined the university to upskill herself across a wide range of different activities and requirements she encounters as a daily part of her job. The job of archaeology technician is highly varied. The range of equipment we have in labs is huge, and has expanded considerably in recent times including some very expensive and technically complex items. Maintaining these is one thing; teaching staff and students in how to safely use them is another; interacting with staff and students and maintaining good communication is another separate skill. Beyond the labs, Rachael also assisted on a 3.5 week long residential fieldschool in Poland last summer. This was a significant and substantial undertaking within her first year of employment in the department, where she performed brilliantly. Rachael used this opportunity to further develop and hone her leadership skills when interacting with students; taking on responsibilities by assisting myself as group leader with decision-making; and generally stepping up as a leader to do whatever was required to make the fieldschool run smoothly. Rachael has actively and continuously sought to expand her personal and practical skills throughout all of these experiences and has rapidly made herself an indispensable part of the archaeology discipline team. I do not use the word 'indispensable' lightly.

Winner

Corin Liddle, Experimental Officer (Bioimaging Centre)

Nominated by Christian Hacker

I am pleased to nominate Corin Liddle for the prestigious Technician Award for Career Development. Corin began his journey with us as a research technician for light microscopy in the Bioimaging Centre and quickly distinguished himself through his dedication and passion for his work. Over time, Corin assumed additional responsibilities, including teaching a dedicated Bioimaging Masters module, a role he shaped with great enthusiasm. His commitment and contribution were instrumental in the successful Hera regrading procedure, leading to his promotion to Senior Research Technician.

Corin's ambition and engagement have been evident in his efforts to enhance the Bioimaging Centre's light microscopy capabilities. He has played a pivotal role in evolving the teaching aspect of the facility and has taken on the management and expansion of the image analysis platforms. Recently, Corin achieved another milestone in his career by being promoted to Experimental Officer for Light Microscopy. His journey serves as a shining example of a dedicated professional who has carved an ambitious and rewarding career path within the realm of research technical professions.

Corin's dedication, ambition, and commitment to his profession make him an ideal candidate for this award. His continuous growth and development not only benefit our organisation but also inspire his colleagues. I wholeheartedly endorse Corin Liddle for the Technician Award for Career Development.



Sustainability

Congratulations to our nominees

Matt Lear, Technical Manager (PHSS)

Nominated by Emma McArdle

Matt has volunteered his time frequently over the last year to support outreach events including hosting the first ever Technical Strategy & Operations career fair stall and joining others at Exeter Cathedral School to speak at their Futures week at short notice. This is excellent advocacy of technical careers, and I know that the students spoken to were very interested in hearing about Matt's career progression journey through TSO.

Winner

Jordanna Broom, Technician (Mechanical Engineering)

Nominated by Annie Knight

Jordanna has engaged with the People Development team to promote and advocate for apprenticeships, including attending events and being on panel discussions. She has done this alongside progressing on her own level 6 apprenticeship, having previously completed a level 4.

Her support has been greatly appreciated by the PD team and her own development shows a commitment to developing and sustaining her own skills within engineering.



Environmental Sustainability

Congratulations to our nominees

LSI Technical Team:

Steve Goff, Technical Operations Manager

Andy Early, Technical Manager

Jess Morris, Technician

Abi Howell, Assistant Technician

Madie Vincent, Assistant Technician

Matthew Palmer, Assistant Technician

Nominated by Karina Scholpp

I would like to nominate the entire LSI Tech Team for the Annual Technician Award 2024. They have done an amazing job of implementing all the necessary steps for LSI to get the LEAF Gold. Bringing together the academic and professional services staff to reach this fantastic goal and linking in with the University's Strategy 2030. They have also changed ways of working in the LSI and improved systems and processes for everyone working in the labs. This hard work led to the LSI being the first building on the Streatham Campus to receive the LEAF Gold Award.

Highly Commended:

Somia Zerroukat, Technician (Exeter Teaching)

Nominated by Daniela Farina

Somia consistently showcases remarkable initiative. Her approach not only fosters a collaborative work environment but also ensures that ideas flow freely across different teams. It's undeniable that individuals like Somia play a pivotal role in the success of the LEAF program. I'm sincerely grateful for her invaluable contributions and eagerly anticipate her continued success.



Environmental Sustainability

Winner:

Sarah Kirby, Assistant Technician (Penryn Teaching)

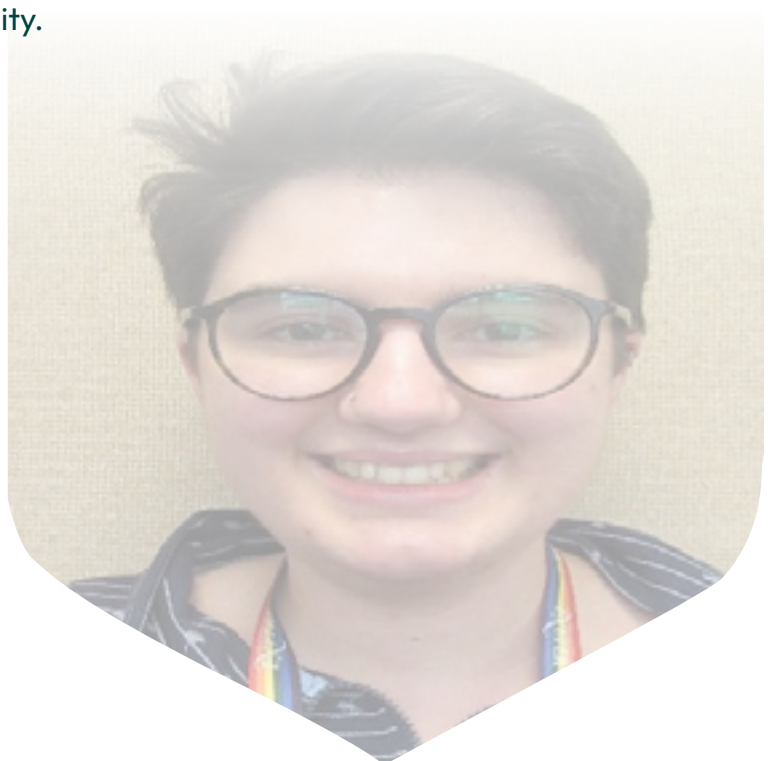
Nominated by Elsa Evans

Sarah is an exemplary champion of environmentally sustainable practices. She has a particular skill for taking old or damaged equipment and either completely repairing or salvaging parts for future repair jobs. Her creativity also allows her to see the potential in otherwise discarded items, reusing parts and repurposing them to ensure that the minimum is wasted. A neat example is when she repurposed an old squeeze pipette and fashioned it into a light sensor cover for a moth trap that otherwise would not have been safe to deploy.

Sarah is also invested in ensuring what does go to waste is dealt with properly. Recently we found a lot of disused and neglected lab equipment during one of our storage area clear-outs, and Sarah took charge of making arrangements with the UniGreen Scheme to ensure that even our unusable waste can be reused rather than throwing it in the skip.

As is common with spending budget money, too often is the cheapest item purchased without much thought for supply chains and manufacturing and quality. When looking for new purchases, Sarah researches and prioritises ethical and sustainable options where the budget allows.

Finally, Sarah took initiative to secure funding for running an outreach event in the teaching lab to encourage young girls into STEM subjects. Inspiring young minds with an interest in the sciences and environment is such a great way to ensure that future generations will play their part in ensuring environmental sustainability.



Innovation

Congratulations to our nominees

Amy Campbell, Technical Manager (Penryn Fish Facility)

Nominated by Chris Bass in CEC who is the subject lead for the Evolution Group

I would like to nominate Amy Campbell under the Innovation criteria. Amy has been instrumental in maintaining and improving the resources and infrastructure available to researchers on the campus. For example, she identified critical issues with our existing glasshouse infrastructure and worked with a complex collection of stakeholders to ensure that this important resource remains functional. Her dedication to this cause and ability to lobby and coordinate a variety of staff with different levels of responsibility for the resource was exemplary. Without Amy's efforts the key objectives in more than £5M of external research funding would have been placed at severe threat. I believe that recognition of Amy's ingenuity and endeavour in continuing to ensure key resources on campus remain functional and resilient deserves recognition.

Garrick Taylor, Technical Operations Manager (Hatherly & WSL)

Nominated by Agnieszka Kaczmar

Garrick is the Technical Operations Manager who oversees the laboratories in Hatherly and Washington Singer. These listed buildings are amongst the oldest at Streatham and with their age come many challenges: from narrow doorways to old electrical wiring. The laboratories are diverse and home to researchers from four different departments (Psychology, Biosciences, Clinical & Biomedical Sciences, and Geography) which span two different faculties (HLS and ESE). Hatherly hosts some of the BSU facilities; Washington Singer used to host the bee hives on its roof and part of the ARC fish facilities.

Garrick's two local technical teams now work as one across both sites, which enables greater support, flexibility, and contingency. Garrick introduced fortnightly meetings with his staff to promote information exchange and updates from the different departmental leadership groups, enabling the team to be proactive rather than reactive. He supports all the team members to build strong relationships within the academic and TSO communities.

Garrick looks at Washington Singer and Hatherly in a holistic way; he has introduced significant changes in both buildings within the first 18 months in his role. His goal is to improve the working environment for technical staff, students, and the academic community since research needs change over time. Examples of tasks that Garrick covers include sourcing, troubleshooting, or moving equipment, space decommissioning, planning, and design. When relevant, he uses all these opportunities to deliver hands-on training to his team.

As a Health and Safety professional Garrick advises on compliance for different regulations, like fire safety, GMO, HTA, use and storage of scheduled poisons, CoSHH and Risk Assessments. Garrick liaised with the Mail room staff and introduced new safety controls for Hatherly reception for chemical deliveries. He introduced additional control measures for the use of hazardous compounds in Hatherly labs. Garrick was also instrumental in the development of the new apiary site located in Higher Hoopern Lane. This new facility has improved the beekeeper's Health and Safety in the workplace, as well as the conditions for the honey bees who have plenty of forage and are protected by a rich canopy of trees. It is a new facility with a lot of development potential when it comes to the apiary products used for research (e.g. bees, pollen, propolis, honey) and the teaching opportunities (e.g. engagement with work experience students, university undergraduate/postgraduate students), as well as engagement with the wider public.

Innovation

The above is just a short summary of Garrick's role and the improvements he introduced since starting in the post.

Thank you, Garrick. Your Team.

Karen Leslie, Technical Manager (Hatherly)

Nominated by Patrick Colledge

I would love to nominate Dr Karen Leslie. I feel immensely lucky to have Karen as my line manager in Hatherly Laboratories. Karen has worked in different faculties. She doesn't just help Biosciences, but, also manages the CBS and Geography Labs in Hatherly. Somehow, she will still find time to lend a hand in other departments, whether it's teaching a student how to do pollen analysis in Psychology, or, checking Radiometry calculations for researchers in the Geography department.

Karen has been instrumental in helping Hatherly be managed as a whole building, rather than by department. Her innovative ideas and project leadership has allowed the Hatherly Laboratories Tech Team to start rolling out a Hatherly Stores within our three departments that span two faculties. Additionally, by organising and hosting Hatherly Lab User network meetings, she provides the opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration, thus, increasing the chance of even more innovation!

Karen has gained the admiration from other Technical Staff and, also, from the researchers we house in Hatherly. Any problem, she has a solution and, often, a witty joke to accompany it!

Steph Vinnels, Technical Manager (Archaeology)

Nominated by Laura Evis

Steph has been instrumental in the development and running of the new SHArD 3D lab facility. She has adapted our department and lab infrastructures and SOPs in order to ensure it is running efficiently so that external/internal researchers to make use of it. Recent commercialisation and knowledge exchange activities with forensic providers and heritage organisations could not have been undertaken without Steph's oversight and equipment expertise. This has the potential to bring in substantial revenue and esteem to the institution and therefore Steph should be recognised for her contribution to this achievement.

Yazmin Pullen, Assistant Technician (Penryn Teaching)

Nominated by Molly Kressler

Yaz is dedicated to making the learning environment as accessible and enriching as possible. Yaz counts no one out and works tirelessly to improve the experience of students of all abilities.

Innovation

Highly Commended

Lenka Koptasikova, Senior Research Technician (Bioimaging Centre)

Nominated by Christian Hacker

I am delighted to nominate Lenka Koptasikova for the Technician Award for Innovation. As a Senior Research Technician for Electron Microscopy, Lenka has consistently demonstrated a remarkable ability to innovate and improve our imaging techniques. Lenka's dedication to her work is evident in her continuous efforts to find better and more efficient ways to process and image a diverse array of biological samples.

Lenka's proactive approach to professional development, including attending dedicated workshops and establishing connections with companies and imaging specialists, has equipped her with a unique skill set that she generously shares with the users of the Bioimaging Centre. Recently, Lenka achieved a significant breakthrough by establishing and optimising Array Tomography for three-dimensional volume imaging of biological samples using the facility's scanning electron microscope. Her innovative approach to reviewing existing protocols and optimising procedures has greatly benefited our research efforts in Biosciences and the Living Systems Institute.

Lenka's commitment to innovation and her ability to implement new techniques make her an invaluable asset to our team. I wholeheartedly endorse Lenka Koptasikova for the Technician Award for Innovation.

Winners

Penryn Teaching Technical Team

Ellie Sargent, Technical Manager

Julia Phillips, Technician

Elsa Evans, Assistant Technician

Yasmin Brain, Assistant Technician

Sophie Weston, Assistant Technician

Yazmin Pullen, Assistant Technician

Sarah Kirby, Assistant Technician

Jasmine Thomas-Campbell, Assistant Technician

Nominated by Lisa Morgan on behalf of all of CEC



The teaching lab team in Penryn are extremely deserving of recognition for their work in inclusivity. They are innovative with their ideas to make our teaching lab inclusive, including having quiet spaces and different access points for students who struggle with crowds and noise. They are also the first to think of inclusivity for day and residential field trips, ensuring all students can be included in activities. The teaching lab team always have an eye on inclusivity which helps to support academics leading activities. We're extremely proud of (and grateful for) all the work that they've done.