



# TechNet Newsletter– Apr 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of the TechNet newsletter aimed at providing relevant information to all Warwick University technicians. If you have anything you would like to add, please email: [technicians@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:technicians@warwick.ac.uk).

## Research Culture-Technicians Perspective

At the heart of the University's research mission is a commitment to develop a supportive research environment. To continue our drive towards excellence in this area, a Research Culture Committee has been established. To capture feedback, it is key that we ensure a broad range of technician's voices are represented. Dr Sarah Bennett (Research Technology Facility Manager) is our Technical representative on this committee. We also have volunteers from the wider technical community to feed the successes and challenges associated with the research culture at Warwick to Sarah, so that she can feed these back to Research Culture Committee. Those volunteering speak widely with their peers to gather information around the technical viewpoint and we are particularly keen to ensure the voices of core technicians are heard, with these roles being so vital to ensuring research is possible.

## Getting to Know...

**Name:** Sarah Bennett

**Dept:** School of Life Sciences

**Role:** WISB Facility Manager



### 1. What does your role involve....

I manage the WISB Research Technology Facility, which consists of a wide range of instrumentation initially designed to support research in Synthetic Biology. The WISB RTF didn't even exist when I arrived at Warwick in 2015 and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to create a facility from scratch. My role is so varied, from tendering for instruments and optimising the layout of the labs, to fixing instruments and training users.

### 2. What is the most rewarding part of your job....

The job is varied, and no two days are the same. I get to work with a wide range of people, from users to engineers, and a wide range of instrumentation. It's really rewarding to hear from users that the facility and support I provide has a positive impact.

### 3. When did you join Warwick and how ....

My career started off in research, with an Oceanography PhD and post-doctoral research in the USA. I loved to travel and spent many weeks at sea carrying out my research. With my wanderlust satisfied, my career graduated towards research support, with a stepping stone move to the NERC Stable Isotope Facility at the British Geological Survey. I then moved to Warwick in 2015, attracted by the opportunity to develop a facility from scratch.

### 4. What if any advice would you give others....

Don't be afraid to try different things and broaden your horizons. Just because you're going down a particular path, it doesn't mean you can't change direction. The career path I was following in my 20s is very different to where I am now and I have no regrets. The path suited me at the time and was a lot of fun, but I never felt truly settled and struggled with imposter syndrome. I remember working with a Mass Spec Facility Manager and thinking, that looks like a good role, so I shouldn't be too surprised to find myself where I am today.

### 5. What are your hobbies....

Cycling! I have a cargo bike to cart my 2 kids around on and my husband and I spent our honeymoon bike touring New Zealand. More recently (due to covid restrictions) I've started to learn the acoustic guitar and dabbled in a bit of dressmaking.

### 6. Tell us an interesting fact about yourself....

I've dived down to deep-sea hydrothermal vents (2500m) in the deep-sea submersible Alvin!

# Technicians Commitment– Update Live Event

There will be an online update on the Technician Commitment on 25 May 2021 from 1300-1400. The session will include:

- A welcome from Professor David Leadley
- an update on the Midlands Innovation TALENT Project from Kelly Vere MBE
- an update on the roll out of the Technical Job Family and Career Pathway at Warwick
- an update on Warwick’s Technician Commitment action plan

We will aim to cover everything that we think is important to you in the presentations but there will also be an opportunity to ask questions. We realise that people are busy and not everyone wants to take part in online meetings and therefore the main bulk of the presentation will be recorded so that you can catch up at a later date. We are always happy to receive questions and feedback on the work we are undertaking by email or at the regular Wednesday afternoon weekly online catch up.

To join the Technicians live event: please register on the Technet Website for a calendar link to be sent to you.

[Technicians Commitment Update 2021 \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/research/technicians)

## Social Media

***Don’t forget for all information related to Technicians please visit the website:***

***<https://warwick.ac.uk/research/technicians>***

***Email us : [technicians@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:technicians@warwick.ac.uk)***

**Also please follow us on our twitter:  @technetwarwick**

## Talent– New Skills Sessions

The TALENT project team has 2 more NEW courses available for Technicians :

- Getting your Message Across Well

(Sharing what you do, explore different tools/ideas i.e., presentation skills, communicating your message effectively.)

- Explaining what I do to Different Audiences (students, researchers, industry partners etc)

(Written and oral messages, presenting with impact, alternative presentation mediums, opportunity to get peer feedback.)

Further details including course overview and dates/times can be found **[here](#)**.

## HETS 2021

Midland Innovation will be running a HETS lite online event on 23rd June 2021 to address key topics and issues impacting the technical community along with sessions that facilitate the sharing of best practice across the sector. The summit will be a free online webinar dedicated to topics that the higher education and research technicians want to explore and discuss.

For more information and to register, please visit:

[UK Higher Education Technician Summit \(midlandsinnovation.org.uk\)](https://midlandsinnovation.org.uk)

A new date is also announced for HETS 2021 - the UK’s fourth biennial event for higher education and research Technicians - which will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at the East Midlands Conference Centre, on the University of Nottingham’s main campus.

*Our Technician Commitment  
Your future, our focus*