

# RTP update, Regrading and Job Descriptions

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# RTP update

Discussion: what is RTP?



Biotechnology and  
Biological Sciences  
Research Council

## Technicians and technology and skills specialists

Technology / skills specialists maintain and develop new and improved approaches to implement technologies and methodologies to better address research questions.

Technology / skills specialists have specialist knowledge and expertise and they often work as part of co-ordinated teams spanning different disciplines and geographical centres, which work together to tackle contemporary research questions.

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

# RTP update – What is an RTP?

## Technicians and technology and skills specialists

Research technicians and technology and skills specialists (RTPs) need support in academia to maximise their research effectiveness and individual potential. They have expert knowledge and technical competence in their field.

Across all disciplines this may include, but is not limited to:

- data scientists
- data engineers
- archivists
- informaticians
- statisticians
- software developers
- audio-visual technologists
- technical professional staff
- individuals staffing core facilities



UK Research  
and Innovation

## **Expectations of Technology / skills specialists**

To proactively manage their career development by:

COUNCILS UK

- Identifying and pursuing opportunities for career development for example, through training and continuous professional development.
- Taking an active role in the wider research community for example, by supporting Research Council peer review, training others, and engaging with emerging policy discussions with research funders, Research Organisations and central government.
- Maximising the impact of their work through appropriate knowledge exchange, collaborations and engagement activities.

# RTP update – What is an RTP?



## Technicians

Carefully consider and recognise the role of technical staff when submitting your grant application. AHRC's working definition of a Research Technical Professional (RTP) i.e. a Technician, is anyone who brings indispensable specialist technical skills, at an advanced level, to a research project, i.e. professional skills that are necessary for the development, delivery and completion of the project. Depending on the project, Research/Academic Library professionals, Information systems specialists, Sound engineers, Digital technicians, Conservators, Information systems and software engineers, Archivists, Animators, Illustrators, Graphic designers, Conservators, Curators, and others may qualify for inclusion. AHRC encourages a holistic approach to the research ecosystem.

# RTP update – Why all this fuss with names?



technician

/tɛk'niʃ(ə)n/

*noun*

a person employed to look after technical equipment or do practical work in a laboratory.  
"a laboratory technician"

- an expert in the practical application of a science.
- a person skilled in the technique of an art or craft.  
"Liszt was one of the greatest piano technicians of all time"

OED

Oxford English Dictionary  
*The definitive record of the English language*

**1.** A person knowledgeable or skilled in the technicalities of a particular field; *esp.* an expert in the formal or practical aspect of an art, sometimes with implications of a corresponding lack of creativity.

**2.** A person qualified in the practical aspects of one of the sciences or mechanical arts; (in later use) *esp.* a person whose job is to carry out practical work in a laboratory or to give assistance with technical equipment.

# RTP update – What is an RTP?



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

Research technicians and technology and skills specialists (herein collectively referred to as **Research Technical Professionals**, or RTP) have expert knowledge and technical competence in their field.

Within the RTP staff group are a range of distinct role groupings, such as Research Software Engineers and Bioinformaticians. One of these is those working specifically around technologies and/or running facilities for multiple users, defined here as **Technology and Facility Specialists** (TFS) for ease. This group includes job titles such as, but not limited to; **Facility Manager, Experimental Officer** and **Instrument Specialist**.



# Technician **Commitment**

The Technician Commitment is a university and research institution initiative, led by a steering board of sector bodies, with support from the Science Council and the Technicians Make It Happen campaign.

The Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines. Universities and research institutes are invited to become signatories of the Technician Commitment and pledge action against the key challenges affecting their technical staff.

## The Commitment includes 4 key areas:

### 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 and external awards schemes

### 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



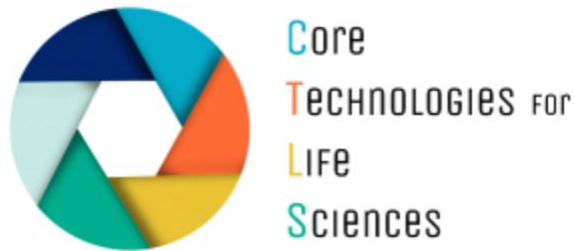
# National Technician Development Centre

Providing a sustainable future for technical staff and services.

The National Technician Development Centre provides organisations with everything they need to support the delivery of high quality and sustainable technical services across all sectors.

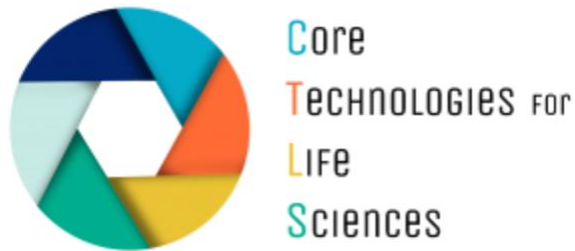
This includes:

- Specialist information and advice on talent recruitment and retention
- Activities to increase professional registration and CPD
- Help in developing technical networks
- Bespoke workshops and presentations



**CORE TECHNOLOGIES FOR LIFE SCIENCES is a networking non-profit association that brings together scientists, technical and administrative staff working across the world in core facilities, research infrastructures and other shared resource laboratories.**

**We provide a platform for you to network, discuss emerging technologies and exchange information on best practices. We support the career development of our members throughout their careers. If you are not already a member, come and join us!**



- To be part of a pan-European, multidisciplinary, democratic and inclusive community of professionals focused on life science core facilities, research infrastructures and shared resource laboratories.
- To boost my career by participating in a thriving network of like-minded individuals
- To help my lab reach and maintain a cutting-edge level
- To discuss with my peers emerging methods and technologies
- To share best practice guidelines and take part in establishing community-wide standard operating procedures
- To help me translate my ideas into reality by sharing them in a favourable environment for their realization
- To gain privileged access and reduced fees for congresses, workshops and training events focused on topics relevant to my interests and needs.

A group formed off the back of the EPSRC RTP Working Group to organise a meeting for ideal January 2023 for the technical community.

Working title of the group is “Technology and Facility Specialists Network”

Discussion:

How could this group benefit us?

- Training

- Career development guidance

- Help accessing funding

## Funding opportunity

# EPSRC open fellowship

You must have either:

- a PhD
- at least four years' experience in a relevant field by the start of your fellowship.

You must be hosted and supported by an eligible UK research organisation during your fellowship.

Your fellowship can be up to five years long. This is prorated for part-time fellows, at a minimum of 50% full-time equivalent.

Your project can use one or a combination of:

- discovery science
- innovation
- instrumentation and technique development
- software engineering.

### Funding opportunity

# EPSRC open fellowship

There are no eligibility rules about how many years of postdoctoral experience you need or whether you are currently in a permanent academic position.

We encourage applications from candidates who have taken a non-standard career path after their first degree.

We also welcome applications from candidates who want to move back into research after a career break or any other type of break from active research.



## Funding opportunity

# EPSRC open fellowship

You could consider applying for an open fellowship if you:

- have already been in receipt of significant funding or have been leading in an area of technical development
- have a planned programme of work up to five years in duration which will deliver high quality research with a focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation or technique development, or software engineering
- can demonstrate that you have acquired the skills and expertise to successfully deliver your research proposal, and that you are committed to being an advocate for EPSRC and to implementing good practice in creating a modern and inclusive research environment
- have identified training and development needs to enable you to expand or enhance your role and career.

## Funding opportunity

# EPSRC open fellowship

You usually need a certain level of experience or job status to be eligible for particular roles in UKRI-funded projects.

For example, to be a principal investigator you might need to:

- hold a PhD or equivalent qualification
- be a permanent employee or treated as one throughout the proposed research project – see organisational eligibility for more information
- devote a set amount of your working hours to delivering the research project.

## Discussion: RTPs don't apply. Why?

# Job Descriptions and Regrading

Play Your Cards Right  
(responsibilities)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1MDqJJoGZg>

# Job Descriptions - Responsibilities

£21k – £23k

- Assist in the support of core and essential functions across Faculty.
- Follow defined procedures and instructions as directed by your line manager, supervisor or experienced members of staff.
- Maintain some autonomy for planning and prioritizing your own workload in consultation with your line manager, supervisor or experienced members of staff.
- Solve problems, carry out inspections and perform basic repairs and planned and proactive preventative maintenance.

# Job Descriptions - Responsibilities

£42k – £52k

- Ensure efficient delivery of high quality NMR results to users in a timely manner.
- Maintain the School NMR instrumentation and associated IT infrastructure to the highest standard.
- Conduct NMR-related research in a field that strengthens and complements research within the School.
- Assist in the generation of external research income, developing capability in NMR and in your own field, including applying for externally-funded Fellowships when appropriate and leading/contributing to the preparation of research proposals

£21k – £23k

- Take delegated responsibility for the general inspection, routine maintenance, servicing, repair and modification of building fabric, building infrastructure and services.
- Work with internal stakeholders (e.g. Departments and Estates) and arrange engineer/contractor visits to resolve any issues related to building infrastructure, services and repairs to essential equipment in order to minimise any disruption to teaching and research..
- Assist with the induction and training of staff, students and visitors so that they can work safely in controlled/hazardous environments. Demonstrate how to safely perform basic processes and procedures.

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£33k – £41k

- Contribute detailed professional scientific/engineering expertise through highly developed specialist knowledge and skills in a specific field.
- Provide high quality and reliable advice, guidance and training to a range of staff, students, visitors and external customers on your specific area of expertise.
- Proactively and freely contribute creative and innovative solutions.
- Ensure that all experimental requests are delivered in a timely fashion and in line with service performance indicators.

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£28k – £32k

- Development of, then monitoring and evaluating, standard operating procedures
- Writing & reviewing risk assessments for experiments.
- Ensures that safety standards are maintained and safe working practices are used to manage the many types of hazard that exist in the School.
- Train, demonstrate and guide undergraduate students in the use of the instruments, including 4th year project students.
- Provide specialised training to postgraduate students, PhD students, taught Masters students and postdoctoral research assistants on the use of the equipment.

# Job Descriptions and Regrading

Play Your Cards Right  
(skills and knowledge)



# Job Descriptions - Skills and Knowledge

£42k – £52k

- Good communication skills, both oral and written.
- The ability to work accurately and to keep comprehensive records.
- NMR spectral assignment and structure verification.
- Leadership and management skills to support and develop team working within the research environment.
- Excellent administrative and time management skills.
- Knowledge of good laboratory practice for sample preparation.

# Job Descriptions - Skills and Knowledge

£42k – £52k

- Knowledge of a wide range of NMR techniques and data interpretation skills.
- Computing skills related to NMR data acquisition and data processing.
- Comprehensive knowledge of current solution-state NMR techniques and experimental methods.

£21k – £23k

- Ability to plan, organise and undertake a complex workload with multiple and competing priorities, without detailed supervision.
- Competent computer skills (e.g. Word Processing, Internet searching and spreadsheets)
- Ability to work in a team and independently.
- Ability to communicate effectively and politely with staff and students.
- Ability to clearly present information verbally, electronically and on paper.

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## £24k – £27k

- Experience of working in a technical, or technical related role.
- Flexible and responsive to customer needs.
- A passion for customer service excellence.
- A flexible and agile approach to working in a multi-disciplined environment.
- Experience of working in a team environment within a large organisation, supporting colleagues and freely sharing knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the wider team.

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## £21k – £23k

- Ability to follow and deliver clear instructions.
- Ability to work to a high standard with good reproducibility of results.
- Willingness to undertake any necessary training and deliver in-house training to others.
- Willingness to attend and contribute to research group and staff meetings.
- Normal working hours with the exception of occasional attendance of equipment during long public holidays.

Discussion:

Can technical staff be promoted?

What is the regrading process?

# Thank you

## Funding



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

## More Information

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<https://nmr.chemistry.manchester.ac.uk>

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