

Job Description

Assistant Technician (Biology)

Salary:	Grade 4
Contract:	Ongoing, full time
Location:	Biosciences, Division of Natural Sciences
Responsible to:	Technical Manager
Responsible for:	Technical Services Support
Job family:	Technical

Job purpose

Working as part of a technical support team providing a comprehensive, immediate and specialised support service for staff and students within the Division, the Assistant Technician supports the delivery of timely and effective specialised teaching and research support to students, academic and research staff and visitors to the Division. Working under supervision the Assistant Technician will use knowledge and experience to solve problems independently ensuring the effective day to day operation of facilities and resources. Prioritising and planning work, whilst communicating in a courteous and professional way, providing excellence customer service. The Assistant Technician will have an understanding of health and safety protocols and procedures with their work area, implementing the necessary control measure to ensure a safe working environment.

Key accountabilities

The following are the main accountabilities for the job. Other duties, commensurate with the grading of the job, may also be assigned from time to time.

1. Carry out routine day to day tasks to established guidelines, to achieve team objectives. Under periodic supervision provide technical support to divisional customers, contributing to longer term objectives.
2. Under supervision, perform work in accordance with the aims and objectives of a given scenario, raising any issues with senior staff.
3. Communicate with staff, students and visitors in a courteous manner. Escalate problems or difficulties to a supervisor. Respond to internal and external contacts for routine queries.
4. Operate basic equipment, carrying out straightforward maintenance. Provide assistance to senior staff supporting more complex equipment.
5. Apply knowledge to solve routine problems and less routine problems using initiative

6. Work effectively with others, providing straightforward, basic technical advice in relation to the work area, equipment and the techniques used, to staff and students, as required
7. Contribute to the housekeeping of the work area, including the routine maintenance, repair and operation of equipment. Transport goods and equipment
8. Understand, promote and apply relevant COSHH/risk assessments and departmental health and safety protocols ensuring procedures are followed at all times.
9. Maintain accurate records of work undertaken, inputting data, fault logging and maintenance of databases using appropriate IT systems and software.
10. Assist with general administrative tasks associated with the operation of the work area
11. Assist with purchasing, including ordering and distributing goods. Undertake a range of tasks to ensure the adequate loan and return of resources
12. Monitor and replenish basic stocks of consumables following routine stock control procedures. Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, maintaining relevant timetable and booking processes.
13. Provide local inductions, training and demonstrations of techniques and equipment skills and best practice in the work area
14. To contribute and support change in work area to continually deliver an excellent student and staff experience.
15. Assist in the day-to-day operation of the Divisions practical teaching and research spaces including, computer suites, laboratories and production environments.
16. Work with other divisional colleagues to assist with the day-to-day oversight of Estates-related queries and projects to ensure the timely completion of work requests.
17. To actively demonstrate a commitment to professional development by continuing to advance knowledge, understanding and competencies

Key challenges and decisions

The following provides an overview of the most challenging or complex parts of the role and the degree of autonomy that exists.

1. Apply technical knowledge and understanding to be able to respond to a wide range of diverse enquires and recognise when it is appropriate to refer to other members of the technical team or other on-campus service departments for specialist advice and assistance.
2. Able to work on own initiative with support from other members of the technical team, planning own workload within prescribed boundaries. Deciding what is, or should be, a priority, and seeking guidance or signposting queries where necessary.
3. Managing multiple requests for information and technical assistance or dealing with several customers politely and professionally and work across the team.
4. Communicating in a timely and effective manner to ensure the professional delivery of technical support to a broad range of staff, students and visitors to the Division, with varying levels of competency.

Facts & figures

Kent Technical Services provide specialist support to all areas of the University including teaching, research, innovation and civic activities. There are 6 academic divisions within the University of Kent supported by embedded technical teams who provide specialist subject support, facility operation and resource management.

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Staff at all levels within the academic division and professional services areas; students

External: Specialist equipment and software suppliers; consultants; contractors; visitors and visiting academic researchers; alumni

Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

This job involves undertaking duties which include the following health, safety and wellbeing considerations:

- Working with machinery
- Manual handling – lifting and moving specialist laboratory equipment, IT equipment.
- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Working in a hot environment with electrostatic charges
- Entry into laboratories that may be using ionising radiation, genetically modified organisms.
- Working with heat, pressure and steam while using autoclaves • Working with very cold items e.g. dry ice or -80oC freezer storage
- Working with chemicals (including requirement to wear disposable gloves)
- Working with compressed gasses
- Potential exposure to dusts/powders with the need to wear face masks
- Biological Agents/Scientific Hazards (experiments/lasers etc, and waste/sewage)
- Exposure to animals, carcasses or bodily fluids
- Sharps e.g., razor blades and needles

Further Technical Specialisms

Technical Services roles have common accountabilities across role types. The following provides an overview of any additional technical specialisms which are specific or unique to this role:

- **Practical experience working in a scientific laboratory environment.**
 1. Preparation and clearing of scientific experiments following written schedules adhering to tight deadlines working in a fast-paced environment.
 2. Maintaining consumable stock levels with in technical services and the teaching laboratories.
 3. Disposal of chemical and biological waste
 4. Supporting teaching and research activities
- **Working knowledge and experience of scientific concepts and methods**

1. Microbiological techniques such as aseptic preparation and inoculation of agar plates and liquid cultures.
2. Preparation of materials, chemical reagents and microbiological cultures (some hazardous) required for students to carry out practical experiments according to established routines and safety guidelines, including use of equations using molarities, percentages, ratios and dilutions.
- **Working with scientific equipment.**
 1. Working with autoclaves with high temperatures and high-pressure steam.
 2. Centrifugation
 3. Spectrophotometry
 4. Gel electrophoresis.
 5. Light microscopy
 6. Liquid pipetting

Person specification

The person specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Applications will be measured against the criteria published below.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in an application, or cover letter (where applicable), which back-up any assertions made in relation to each criterion.

Essential Criteria:

- GCSEs (A-C), including passes in maths and English or NVQ level 2. Alternatively learning gained through relevant work experience (A)
- Experience of working in a similar support role (A, I)
- Good verbal and written communication skills, including ability to produce clear and concise written materials (A, I)
- Good interpersonal skills with the ability to liaise confidently with students and staff at all levels (I)
- Good IT general experience and skills (A, I)
- Ability to deal flexibly with a wide range of technically demanding situations (A, I)
- Ability to work under own initiative but also collaboratively within teams (A, I)
- Attention to detail and ability to work accurately (A, I)
- Knowledge of basic safety regulations and procedures. For example, risk assessment, COSHH (A, I)
- Organised with the ability to prioritise a wide range of workload with competing priorities (A, I)
- Demonstrate suitable experience in the further technical specialisms detailed in this role. (A, I, T)
- Firm commitment to achieving the University's vision and values, with a passion for a transformative student experience and multidisciplinary, impactful research (I)
- Commitment to deliver and promote equality, diversity, and inclusivity in the day-to day work of the role (I)

Desirable Criteria:

- Proven ability to adopt an active approach to problem solving whilst assessing outcomes of own work and constantly reviewing processes to improve them. (I)
- Experience of working within, and knowledge of, the Higher Education (or related) sector (A)
- Professional registration or willingness to work towards for example, RSciTech, EngTech, ICTTech (A, I)

Assessment stage: A - Application; I - Interview; T - Test/presentation at interview stage