



Quick Guide

To Technical support staff at the University

Why we are different..

Staff members who work in technical support roles at the University have a whole range of different concerns that do not affect those working solely in an office environment.

Some of those concerns revolve around Health and Safety issues, whilst others are related to training requirements - which can be very specific to these roles. For example: Staff in an office do not have to worry about the dangers of working with compressed gases, but we do. If we work with students in a laboratory we have to consider many different risks and hazards which do not exist in a typical classroom.

What options are there?

Given your specialised field, what can you do to help yourself in your current role and also with respect to your professional development?

To begin with, there are many workshops and courses which are open to ALL University staff members. You can view and book these by logging on to [HR Organiser](#):

- On the main page, select Book a new learning activity
- On the next page, select Search courses
- Leaving the course name blank will show all courses within the date range you enter.

External Networking

One way to develop specialist technical knowledge is to build relationships with counterparts at other institutions. The University is part of several networks that can enable you to find someone working in a similar role at another University. Once connected, you will be able to share techniques and best practice methods, through virtual meetings, in person visits and shadowing opportunities. The University is part of:

- The Technician Commitment South East technician network
- [Eastern Arc](#), which is a collaboration between Essex, Kent and UEA

Through the Technician Commitment funding can be applied for to cover travel costs for networking and development opportunities. Contact your line manager or the Technician Commitment Action Plan Lead for more information.

HEaTED

HEaTED is based at the National STEM Learning Centre. It is an organisation providing, amongst other things, professional development and networking events, specifically for the technical workforce in higher education. The University of Essex is a member. Make sure you benefit from this membership. Check out their [website](#).

CADENZA

Cadenza is not just for lecturers, it is also for those who support learning. If your role involves working together with students, including research students, then you are supporting learning.

You can gain recognition, via an accredited qualification, for the specialised support you provide for students. Cadenza events can be tailored to your requirements. For example, something on your wish list might be a workshop on 'Mentoring in laboratories'. If there is enough interest on a specific topic, the Cadenza team will run such an event.

Find out more about [Cadenza](#) or contact the [Cadenza team](#).

Spreading the word

Identifying staff members who hold a similar technical support role may present something of a challenge, especially if they are in a different department. How can you reach out to these staff members? You can sign up to the Essex email subscription list [Techsupstaff] which is targeted specifically at technical support staff.

This will allow you to:

- Ask for help and advice
- Offer help and advice
- Discuss training opportunities
- Organise training events
- Share ideas
- Keep informed
- Learn

Training for technical support staff

- Technical training from 'Basic laboratory skills' and the 'Servicing of routine optical microscopes' through to 'Laboratory skills for animal technicians' – all these and many more are offered regularly via HEaTED.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) workshops are also offered by HEaTED, but first check what is on offer closer to home in Essex: From time management ideas in 'Getting things done' to professional and personal development on Chrysalis, or getting new IT skills – all these are offered via [HR Organiser](#).

Contact develop@essex.ac.uk for support. For more Quick Guides go to the [webpage](#).