# Best Practice Guidance

# Guidance on Science Technicians

**Context**

The demands of the science curricula in the UK can best be be achieved when a suitable number of appropriately trained technical support staff are available.

**The position of ASE**

- Well trained science technicians are integral to the quality of teaching and learning through their technical advice and support to teachers and students.

- This influences the effective delivery of practical programmes and investigative science teaching and learning.

- Technicians are full and valued members of the science department and participate in all departmental activities including relevant meetings.

- Appropriate training and career development opportunities are key to maintaining the quality of support required.

**Best practice should seek to include**

- The correct number of trained and qualified technicians to support the needs of science teaching and learning recommended by the service factor explained below: Technician hours per week = recommended service factor x hours of science taught per week.
  Where establishments employ all or some technicians on term time only (TTO) contracts, the current service factor can be calculated by converting the weekly hours worked to the equivalent for an all-year contract, and not the actual hours worked in the term time.

> **Example:**
> 2 science technicians
> Technician 1: full-time 37 hours per week for 52 weeks.
> Technician 2: (TTO) 20 hours per week for 40 weeks, includes holiday entitlement. TTO
> Technician hours per year are 20 × 40 = 800 hours.
> 800/52= 15.4 hours per week.
> Technician hours per week for this example is 37 + 15.4 = 52.4 hours.
> If the total number of science hours taught per week in the establishment were 88, then the service factor would be 52.4 / 88, which would be 0.6.
>
> A service factor of 0.6, will only allow a certain standard of service from the technician team see Table 1 in this document, as recommended by the ASE:
> http://science.cleapss.org.uk/Resource/G228-Technicians-and-their-jobs.pdf

- Clearly defined job specifications for all technical staff supporting science.

- A team structure that contains at least one senior technician to ensure more effective performance.

- An entitlement to suitable initial training and induction programmes for technicians and non-technical support staff.

- A properly validated training programme with recognised end qualification for technicians supporting science teaching.

- Entitlement to CPD to enable technical staff to update their knowledge, skills and professional standards. For example attendance at:
  - ASE Conferences and Tech Meets
  - ASE Courses
  - Local science technician networks

- A career structure that recognises and rewards the training undertaken by technical staff, their experience and management skills. For example, accreditation by the awarding of Registered Science Technician (RSciTech).

- Consideration of opportunities for technicians to provide in-class support enhancing technician operational support

- Appropriate working areas for technical staff and resources to carry out their tasks safely and effectively.

- Due regard for lone working with safeguards in place.

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**Useful Links** (Some links may require membership)

The Association for Science Education - Main Guidance:

- ASE produces a number of publications for technicians including *The Prep Room Organiser.*
- *The Prep Room* is published in every issue of *Education in Science.*
- Provides CPD for technicians at all stages of their career.

STEM Learning

- Provide CPD for technicians
- See also the Enthuse celebration awards

CLEAPSS (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- School Science Technician Services: a Guide for Senior Managers
- Induction and Training of Science Technicians
- Improving technicians' conditions

SSERC (Scotland)
- Technicians home page and Technicians CPD