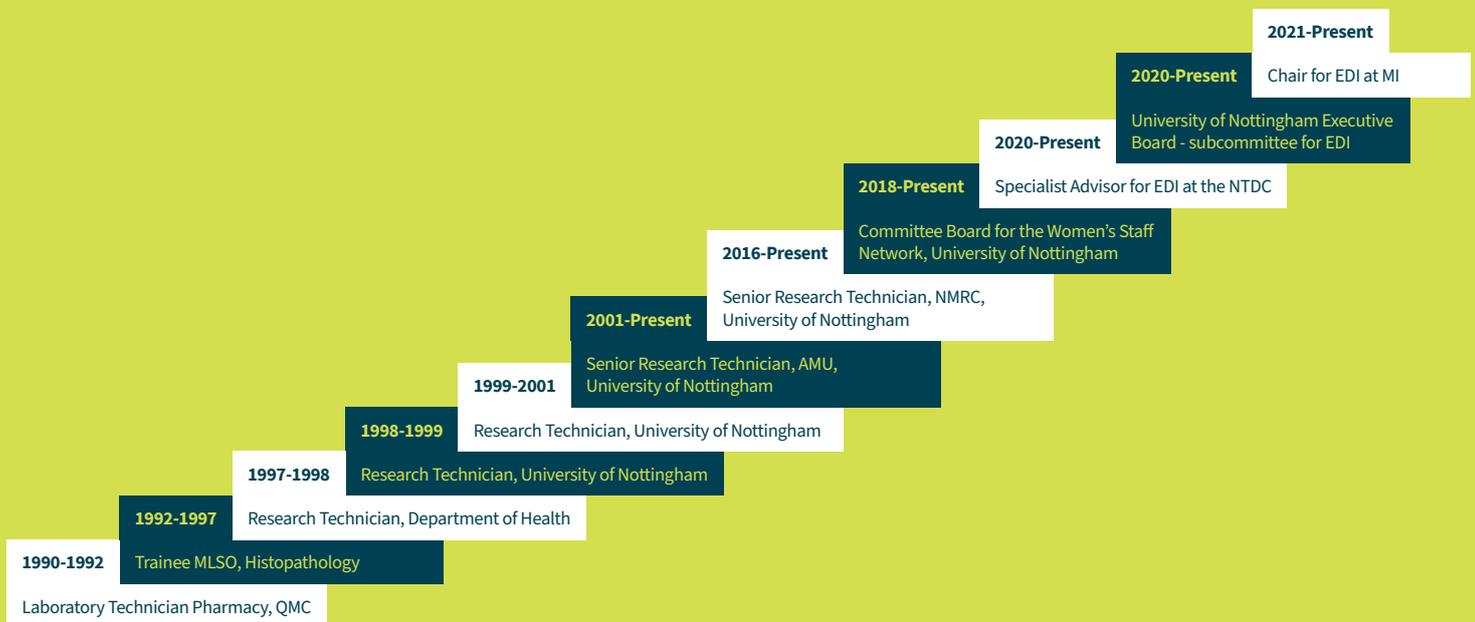


TECHNICAL CAREERS

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WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A TECHNICIAN?

I did not set out with the intention of carving out a career in the technical field. The job opportunities, security and satisfaction are reasons why I stayed.

HOW HAS YOUR CAREER PROGRESSED (WHERE ARE YOU NOW)?

I trained in the NHS as a trainee technician and gained valuable technical skills in Histological techniques. I then transitioned to working for Department of Health, working on a neurological study for a year.

I soon realised that I was not enjoying the repetitive nature of the job, so decided to learn a different area of science, Molecular Biology at the University of Nottingham. This position was a fixed term contract, which provided no job security, so after a year, I seized the opportunity of securing a permanent job in the Medical School in the School of Biomedical Sciences (now known as School of Life Sciences).

Over the last 20 years, I have worked in research groups and gained extensive knowledge in new techniques, before going back to my first love ... Electron Microscopy and Histology. I am now an expert in these fields and have worked my way up to Senior Research Technician.

WHAT WERE THE MOST USEFUL ACTIVITIES THAT HELPED YOU PROGRESS IN YOUR CAREER?

I have worked in the Medical School for over 20 years, and it would be easy to sit comfortably and just carry out my duties. This however is not my story, as I love to embrace new opportunities in areas of interest to me. The emergence of the Technician Commitment has been instrumental in improving my career development and growth.

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS AND WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED THE MOST?

I am conscious that my positive mentality and carpe diem attitude has led to great opportunities. Below is a list of some of them.

- Awarded the Vice Chancellor's Medal for community engagement and an ambassador in science.
- Completed the Associate Teacher's Program.
- Achieved the Registered Scientist certification for successfully evidencing competences in my areas of expertise.
- Wrote an article on Equality and Diversity in the workplace for the Institute of Science and Technology.
- Featured in the launch Magazine - Vision for The University, highlighting the value and impact technicians have in research.
- I was a panellist at New Scientist Live which was held at ExCel, London. The aim was to highlight the Technicians Make it Happen campaign and five technicians from across the country, including myself, were interviewed by Professor Sir John Holman, Senior Advisor in education at the Wellcome Trust and the Gatsby Foundation, founding director of the National Science Learning Centre, Chair of the Teacher Development Trust and president of the Royal Society of Chemistry.
- On the back of the success at the New Scientist Live event, I was then asked to represent the 1.5million technicians across the UK, by delivering a speech at the Tower of London. This was for the official launch of the Technician Commitment. Lord Sainsbury of Turville, Settlor for the Gatsby Foundation, Tim Bradshaw, CEO of The Russell Group Universities and myself, gave emotive speeches around the value and impact the Technician Commitment themes - (visibility, recognition, sustainability and career development) are adding to the careers of the technical pool and the momentum it is gaining at Universities and in industries around the UK.
- I was invited to support the Technician Commitment - Gatsby Foundation, at the Big Bang Fair at the NEC in Birmingham. The aim was to inspire children to consider a career in the technical field and also to highlight the number of technical roles that exist and to gain an appreciation of the skills which we demonstrate on a daily basis.
- Invited to be a speaker at the Birmingham Science Museum for an annual event called Black STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). I highlighted the Science arm and was asked to share my career path and what inspired me to work in the STEM industry. The audience were individuals and schools from the local communities and the speakers were from respective fields across the UK.
- All these achievements have helped build on my confidence and belief in my abilities. The highlight of my career to date is representing the 1.5million technicians across the UK, by delivering a speech at the Tower of London.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FUTURE CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND IF SO WHAT ARE THEY?

I sit on various groups and committees within the University and further afield. These include:

- The Women's Staff Network
- Racial Harassment and Bullying Working Group
- Specialist Advisor for Equality Diversity and Inclusion at the National Technician Development Centre
- Sit on the University of Nottingham Executive Board - subcommittee for EDI.
- Chair for EDI at Midlands Innovation

My career aspiration is to build strong links with under-represented communities and Universities, providing awareness and opportunities for them.

WHAT CAREER ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

I would encourage my younger self to find my passion and see what career prospects are available in my chosen field/ area of interest. I would tell myself to find opportunities/ ways to network and build strong links with individuals who work in that area and make a concerted effort to make a career plan to achieve my outcome. Be brave, focused and chase success.