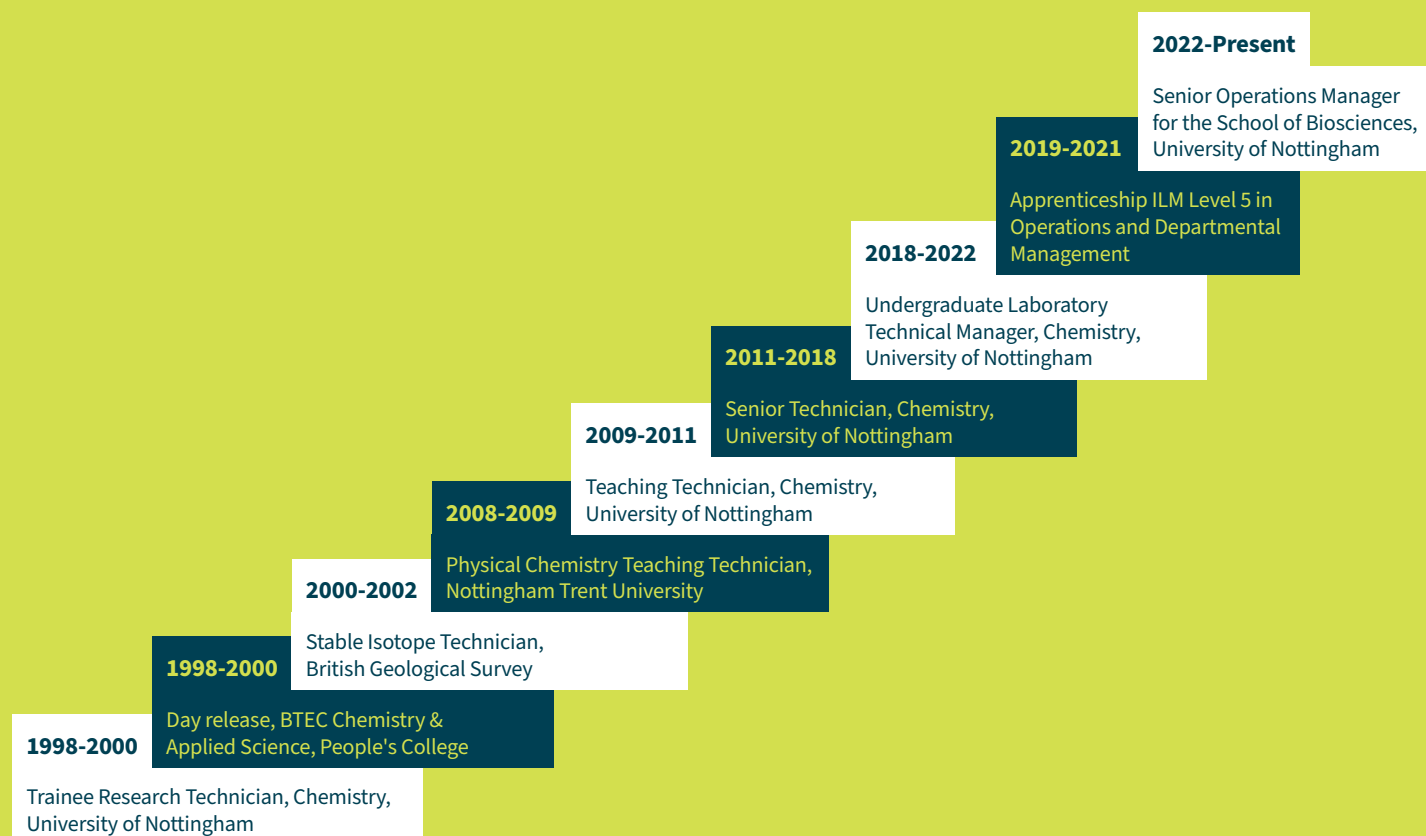


TECHNICAL CAREERS

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WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A TECHNICIAN?

I left school before finishing my A-Levels without any clear idea of what I wanted to do, so took an administrative job processing orders. I wasn't really enjoying this role, it wasn't challenging, so when I saw an advert for a trainee technician in the School of Chemistry, I applied as I had enjoyed science based subjects at school and this seemed like a great starting point to a career in science with training included.

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

As part of the trainee technician scheme, I shadowed other technicians in the three different areas of the Chemistry department and started a BTEC at a local FE college. Just prior to completing my traineeship I applied for an Assistant Support Scientist position for the British Geological Survey, which allowed me to complete my BTEC and gave me a great opportunity to develop on the job skills in both the Radiogenic and Stable Isotope departments. After 9 years in this role I wanted a change of environment and applied for a physical chemistry teaching technician role at Nottingham Trent University (NTU). After a year, I saw a similar opportunity at the University of Nottingham and a chance to expand the role I was doing. The skills I had gained at NTU meant I was able to successfully apply for a teaching technician role at the University of Nottingham (UoN). Over the last 12 years at UoN my role has grown significantly as student recruitment has increased. I was fortunate to be involved in a refurbishment project to change the laboratory I was responsible for into a multi-disciplinary super lab. The impact this had on the scale of my role resulted in me progressing to Senior Teaching Technical Manager.

During my time in this role, I took the decision that in the future I wanted to move away from working directly in labs and progress towards a career in Operations Management as I had gained a lot of skills that would cross over into this area. In 2019 alongside whilst working, I studied a L5 Apprenticeship funded by the Government Apprenticeship Levy in Operations and Departmental Management which I successfully completed in 2021.

I have since moved into a new role in 2022 as Senior Operations Manager for the School of Biosciences at UoN.

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

Shadowing other colleagues, being open to trying new ideas, challenging myself when new opportunities arose – even if it meant moving to a new company. Management courses and taking advantage of other in-house training opportunities were also helpful activities. Most recently I completed an apprenticeship in Operational & Departmental Management which equipped me with the relevant qualification for the career progression I wanted to pursue.

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

Gaining more responsibility and being responsible for implementing new ideas and seeing the outcomes. Leading my team through significant change successfully was very satisfying and allowed me to upskill and regrade them. I also had a fantastic experience of going out to our China campus for two weeks to collaborate with their technicians. It was possibly a unique opportunity for a technician to get involved with our overseas campuses so I felt very privileged to be a part of this.

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

To take every opportunity to try new ideas, develop my role and develop those people around me. Now my apprenticeship in Operational & Departmental Management is completed and I've secured a role in this area. I intend to apply all I have learned to develop my role to be able to progress further in this field.

WHAT CAREER ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Even if something looks impossible or difficult, get out of your comfort zone and never say 'no' without really thinking whether something is achievable. Take risks and opportunities, try something new.