

Project to Develop a Business Case for a UK Wide Framework for the Professional Development of Technical/ Specialist Staff in HE

Introduction to HEATED (Higher Education and Technicians Educational Development)

This project is for all technical/specialist staff supporting core research and teaching activity.

Background

The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education is supporting an exciting new project to consolidate some of the developments and initiatives for HE technicians/specialists started and developed by HESDA over recent years.

This 'one off' project will assemble a number of existing initiatives and aims to bring about the formation of a professional body for the HE technical/specialist staff community. This organisation will be financially self sustainable, providing practical help and direction in further developing a highly skilled and flexible work force. This work will support the UK academic community by helping to raise standards and deliver excellence in research, learning and teaching.

This briefing is designed to provide the background and information about the project so that we can reach and involve as many interested parties as possible.

UK Survey

At the project core will be a UK wide survey seeking information on training needs and other associated development issues. It is an on-line survey, and it is hoped that as many technical staff and managers as possible will complete it to provide us with essential data if we are to move the project forward. IT will be available for completion throughout the whole of January 2006 and further information will follow. The results will be widely disseminated, and it is anticipated that a specialist skills programme will result that reflects the survey and meets the real development needs of technical colleagues in addressing today's needs and tomorrows.

Project information and networking

The project will be underpinned by the creation of a UK web information and networking site, specifically for HE technical/specialist staff. It will inform colleagues of our progress with all project outcomes, and will provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and the identification of areas of good practice and expertise.

UK mailbase and discipline specific technical skills

As part of the project The Leadership Foundation for HE are investing in a UK mailbase for UK technical/specialist staff. This is critical to the eventual success of the project. It will be essential that as many technicians/specialists as possible volunteer to provide their contact details and discipline specific specialist interests, so that we can inform the community of progress and start to establish a skills bank that can be shared as part of a 'self help' process. We need to know what skills people have, what they can do and what help they might be prepared (if appropriate) to offer in terms of developing others.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development) for technical staff

The CPD award for technical/specialist staff working in HE is awarded by the IST (Institute of Science Technology). The IST are a not for profit membership organisation, representing technicians/specialists from a variety of backgrounds in the UK. They are an awarding body for a range of qualifications for technicians/specialists working in education

This award is specifically designed for those staff working in specialised environments, such as teaching and research laboratories or workshops, as well as those based in seminar, office based and IT environments.

Technical/specialist staff make a huge contribution to institutional outputs by supporting teaching, research or both, where academic excellence is seen as paramount in the UK Higher Education system. This award seeks to help develop and recognise the more 'traditional' aspects of the technical role as well as those related to new and emerging technologies. Wider participation and involvement with this and other programmes will help move us towards a recognised UK standard, as well as helping to identify career and professional development routes for all staff.

Pulling it all together!

HEATED aims to consolidate, promote and expand participation in professional development activities for HE technical staff, by working with both the technical and staff development communities in addressing the needs of all key stakeholders. To achieve this we will consult and inform all UK HE organisations and institutions who have a specific interest in the delivery of academic quality, excellence and value for money.

What will be the benefits?

By tackling the key issues mentioned above HEATED will look to develop an organisation and infrastructure that can help to further professionalise UK HE technical services to the benefit of the broader HE community. These benefits include:

- Increased efficiency, effectiveness and quality enhancement of services delivery.
- Enhanced support for teaching, learning and research.
- Retention and expansion of technical skills in the HE sector.
- The establishment of self supporting and financing technical body.
- The introduction of a UK data gathering and data management system.
- Promotion of a UK CPD framework to help deliver the above.

Deliverables

Some of the intended project outcomes are listed here below:

1. The development of a UK survey tool for technical/specialist staff addressing the needs of the community.
2. A web based networking and information exchange site for the UK HE technical and staff development communities.
3. A UK Training Needs Analysis (TNA) within the duration of the project.
4. Recommendations for specialist technical skills programmes.
5. The use of TNA data to inform a UK database for technical/specialist staff.
6. Recommendations for a proposed structure/organisation/association for HE technical/specialist staff which will be financially self sustaining.
7. UK wide promotion and development of a UK CPD programme for technical/specialist staff in HE.
8. Closer, improved and new links with key HE stakeholder organisations.

Further information

Please contact:

Matt Levi, Project Manager, LFHE

E: m.r.levi@exeter.ac.uk **T:** 01392 264507

Bob Hardwick

Principal Consultant, LFHE

E: bob.hardwick@lfhe.ac.uk **T:** 0781 119 5184

Wendy Mason,

Programme Administrator, LFHE

E: wendy.mason@lfhe.ac.uk **T:** 0114 270 0188