# Session outline (as per programme)

The HEFCE catalyst project is currently being funded to develop practical tools for HEI's and the technical community to use to support strategic development of the technical workforce and to create career pathways for technician. This will be a practical session, designed to:

- raise awareness about the different tools under development and to simulate discussion about the role of SD and OD professionals in engaging with and support this work

By the end of the session participants will have:

- an overview of the project activity and its relevance to Future Fit for Technicians
- had the opportunity to discuss/provide feedback on how these tools may support them in their role and also how they, as SD and OD professionals can actively engage with technicians development at a local level.

This feedback will help inform future development and implantation of the tools.

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# A Strategic Approach to Technical Support: Redefining Career Structures and Roles

## The TDM Project:
## Context, Progress & Practical Implications

**Terry Croft, MBE, FIScT**
Director of the HEFCE Catalyst TDM Project and Chair of the Institute of Science and Technology

**Chris Turgoose**
Co-Project Manager for the HEFCE Catalyst TDM Project

# Overview of Session

For the next 25 minutes I want to cover the following:

- Revisit the challenges for technical support over the next decade

- What the HEFCE funded Technician Development and Modernisation (TDM) Catalyst project is developing to help address these challenges

- The practical implications for implementation – who can help to take this forwards

Followed by a short practical activity

# Wider Challenges

- Significant skill shortage of trained technicians across all sectors

- Significant need to widen perception of The Technician as a profession and an excellent career choice

- Increasing need for all sectors to engage with:

  – effective career entry provision

  – cross sector career change

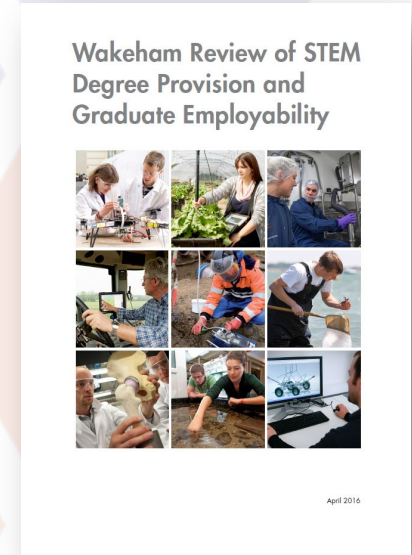- Clear need for career pathways and related development to support this

# HE Challenges

## Major changes to the UK HE sector have resulted in budgetary pressure on institutions

- "The government will reduce the teaching grant by £120 million in cash terms by 2019-20" Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015

- "HEFCE's teaching grant was £4.9 billion in 2010-11 and will be £1.6 billion in 2015-16 according to HEFCE grant letters."
  http://wonkhe.com/blogs/understanding-the-unthinkable-post-2015-cuts/

- "BIS will see its total budget, resource and capital, decline from £16.6 billion this year to £13.2 billion in 2019-20."
  https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/spending-review-osborne-delivers-17-cut-bis-budge

- "The plans imply cuts to unprotected budgets of 20% at least. If applied as a standard percentage to BIS' budget, this would mean cuts of £2.6 billion. For higher education alone, it would mean a £1.6 billion reduction in revenue spending."
  http://wonkhe.com/blogs/the-budget-what-it-means-for-the-longer-term/

- Brexit - £8.8 Billion potential impact; EU student fees; impact on involvement in EU projects

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# Changing HE Environment

## Need to meet the "Efficiency and VFM" agenda (UUK/BIES/DfEE)

# Understanding the Technical Community
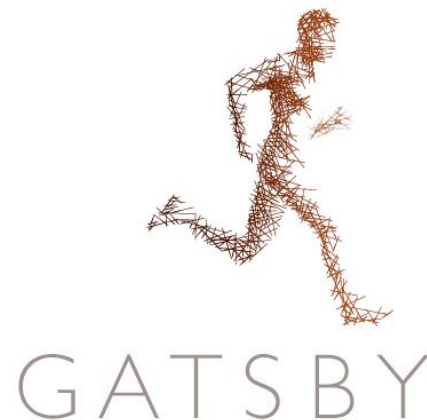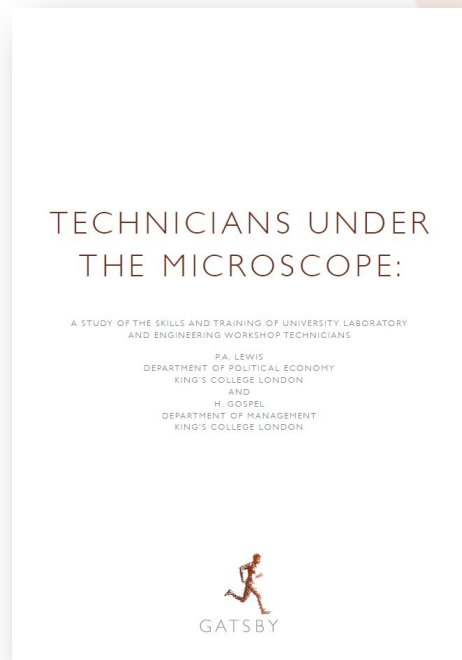
# Speed of Change of Technology



**1992** ————————————————→ **2007**

-But professor, I don't understand how this lab produces so much high quality research when it's full of **bottle washers!**

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# Areas of Concern for both the Technician & the Institution

Skills gaps

Clarity issues at local level to inform strategic planning

Skills shortages

Training & Development

Need for: Formal career pathways

Professionalisation

Succession Planning

Business Continuity

Future proofing

Talent Attraction / Retention

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# Technical Community Concerns

- Problems attracting and retaining staff

- Limited strategic management; effective future proofing; succession planning & staff development

- Lack of recognition / not valued

- Lack of opportunity for progress with no clear progression pathways

- Limited service review to ensure business continuity

# Need for Professionalisation

Proof of Competency

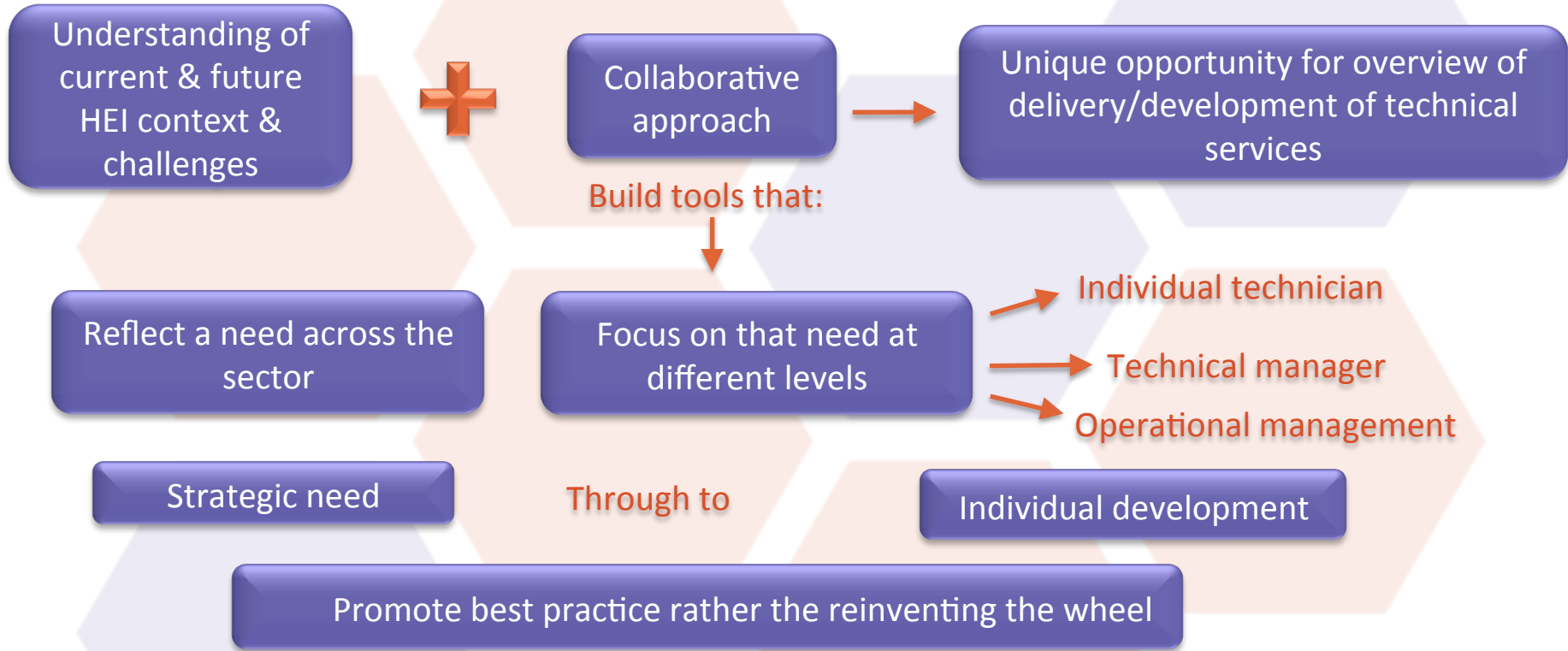National and International Competition

Global Research

# What is the HEFCE funded TDM Catalyst Project developing to help address this

# The TDM Catalyst Toolkit

We are developing a series of tools designed to:

- Support strategy and planning

- Provide a consistent career pathway for the HE technical profession

- Support development of career pathways from entry routes through to senior technical & managerial posts

- Signpost & provide guidance on opportunities for targeted development, networking, the professional agenda

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# Our Approach

Understanding of current & future HEI context & challenges

Collaborative approach →

Unique opportunity for overview of delivery/development of technical services

Build tools that:

Reflect a need across the sector

Focus on that need at different levels

→ Individual technician

→ Technical manager

→ Operational management

Strategic need

Through to

Individual development

Promote best practice rather the reinventing the wheel

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# Project Activity

There are five work streams supporting tool development, each supported by a wide range of HEI partners

The tools themselves are 'work in progress' & all are currently in a 'test' phase

Final version will be completed by end July 2017

The following slides give brief detail of the tools

- Their purpose / what challenges they are designed to address

- A description of the tool itself

- How the tools can help

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# Clarifying Career Pathways

## Current challenges

**Complex structures**

**Inconsistent job titles & grades within HEIs**

Lack of consistency between HEIs

**No clear career pathways**

Lack of development signposting to support career pathways

## Catalyst tools

**Technical Taxonomy:**

A **common classification of technical roles**, developed by aligning the numerous, complex technical roles into a single classification

**Competency Framework:**

Which provides a **set of key competencies for each role,** which will map to nationally recognised standards

**Generic Job Descriptions:**

Which will **align to the above taxonomy and competency framework**

## How do they help?

**Aligning to classification helps remove complexity and inconsistency**

**Defines capability expectations**

**Clarifies next step (sideways or upwards) supporting career planning**

Provides examples of role content at all levels

Enables comparison of roles between HEIs to support career movement

Highlights entry routes to prospective technicians

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# Understanding Technicians

## Current challenges

**Decision makers not always clear about what technicians do**

**Skills gaps caused by recruitment & retention issues & poor succession planning**

**Effective profile of workforce needed to inform planning / management of above**

Better management of skills gaps through career progression / development

No real culture of supporting effective career progression

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## Catalyst tools

**Understanding your technical workforce**

A simple **process** to prompt a more **strategic approach to the capture and management of information to support technician workforce planning and career progression.** What do you need to know and how can this be captured?

**Technician roles, responsibilities and skills capture survey**

A **survey**, designed to help answer some key questions needed for **workforce & staff development planning** at all levels, and provide a **personal profile** to support personal CPD

## How will they help?

**Enables more strategic approach to identify & address gaps**

**Allows more effective support for staff in areas where skill requirements are changing**

**Demographics supports analysis/ profile building for age, grade, etc**

**Clarifies need for effective strategies for succession planning, bringing in new talent etc.**

Supports the development of a more agile workforce

Individual profiles can support a proactive approach to career progressions

More targeted approach to staff development

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# Bringing on (New) Talent

## Current challenges

**Problems recruiting skilled staff**

**Inconsistency in quality / standards of current programmes**

Lack of programme coherence within and between institutions

Historically, approach to development has been mixed, often reactive, impacting on quality

## Catalyst Tools

**The Technician Entry Programme Development Framework**

This is **a how-to guide** designed to provide clear sector specific guidance to support the strategic development and delivery of effective training entry programmes within HE.

It provides a step by step guide to the processes/stages needed to develop and deliver an effective programme, plus timelines, templates and links to key external guidance.

## What does this help?

**Access to best practice resources which can avoid reinventing the wheel**

**Highlights importance of a more proactive strategic approach**

**Helps to bring great consistency / quality to the development of apprenticeships**

Aimed at supporting implementation of effective workforce planning

Meets a clear stated need

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# **Capturing Professional Development**

# Open Source CPD Tool

## (Workstream Four)

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# Capturing Professional Development

## Current challenges

**Need for an effective tool to support e-learning and capture CPD**

**Wide variety of systems available of varying quality**

**Most systems have cost implications eg licences**

Systems often reinvent wheel rather than develop based on best practice

## Catalyst tool

**ASPIRE: E-Learning support and CPD capture tool**

The team has commissioned the development of this tool using WordPress - a widely used open source platform.

By using WordPress, the core tool can be easily shared with HEIs who can then add additional functionality depending on local need

## How can this help?

**Design based on stated tool requirements**

**Provides a free to use tool**

**WordPress experts can develop to meet local needs**

Beta version (being) tested to ensure ease of use with user friendly guidance

Allows download and assessment as part of e-learning

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# Career Development Opportunities / Sharing Good Practice

## Current challenges

**Limited opportunities for internal networking / sharing good practice**

**Even less opportunity for cross institution networking / sharing good practice**

**Need for greater common understanding between technicians & development professionals**

Lack of access to quality development opportunities e.g. mentoring

## Catalyst Tools

**TechNet networking / good practice sharing model**

TechNet - developed at Sheffield, supports local and cross institutional networking. Activity internally and across HEIs is supported by TechNet online forum

**Guide to (Technician) Mentoring**
Based on good practice from partner HEIs

**Signposting development opportunities**
Signposting opportunities linked to career progression

**Case studies**
Highlighting approaches to personal career development

## How does it help?

Opportunities for sharing good practice – within and across HEIs

Development of mentoring & other schemes supported by sector good practice

Understanding of different career paths (rarely linear)

Tested method for setting up and managing local network

Access to clear information signposting a range of development opportunities

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| Institution Development Needs | TDM Tools | Individual Technician Development Needs |
|---|---|---|
| **Clear understanding of:** | | **Clear understanding of:** |
| **Workforce**: Demographics, skills, roles & responsibilities | Skills Roles and Responsibility Capture Tool | Current skills, roles and responsibilities |
| | | Organisations future needs / strategic plans |
| **Skills gaps** - current skills requirement v future (strategic) skill requirement | | Personal / professional development needs |
| | Technical Roles and Competencies Framework | |
| **Access to:** | | **Access to:** |
| Guidance on shared technical taxonomy & related competencies | | Guidance : requirements for current / next grade |
| | Technician Entry Programme Development Framework | Guidance to support career pathway & professional development |
| Talent management & career development tools & guidance (apprentice to senior technical manager) | Open Source CPD Tool | Signposted development opportunities |
| | Technician Networking and Mentoring Guidance | Infrastructure support e.g. TechNet, fair access, CPD tool |

# Project Overview

# The practical implications for implementation – who can help to take this forwards?

# What Does the Future Hold?

- Further cuts and pressure on budgets

- More competitive global environment (both teaching and research)

- Future relationship with the EU?  Questions about how this will work

- Requirement for a highly skilled, well trained, agile and professionally registered flexible workforce

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# Implementation

- Currently drawing together all our work with partner HEIs

- Need to get the message about the project to a wider audience

- Need engagement of technicians at all levels & senior staff with responsibility for technical services

# Questions

Before we move onto the practical activity

Any questions.

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# Practical Activity

- **How well do you know your technical workforce?** (Prompts - number of technicians; do you have the right skills for the new HE environment; new blood schemes - apprenticeships)

- **To what extent are you involved in specific activity to support technician professional development?**

- **Were you aware of this project and the resource that will be available to support your institution?**

# Further Information

HEFCE Catalyst Project "Development and Embedding of Career Pathways for Technicians across the Higher Education Sector".
Further information is available at www.sheffield.ac.uk/tdm

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