

# Who gets credit?

## Fair attribution and publishing for technicians at the University of Cambridge

Lucy Woolhouse (she/her)

Genetics Librarian

[lew48@cam.ac.uk](mailto:lew48@cam.ac.uk)

Frankie Marsh (she/her)

Plant Sciences Librarian

[fm449@cam.ac.uk](mailto:fm449@cam.ac.uk)

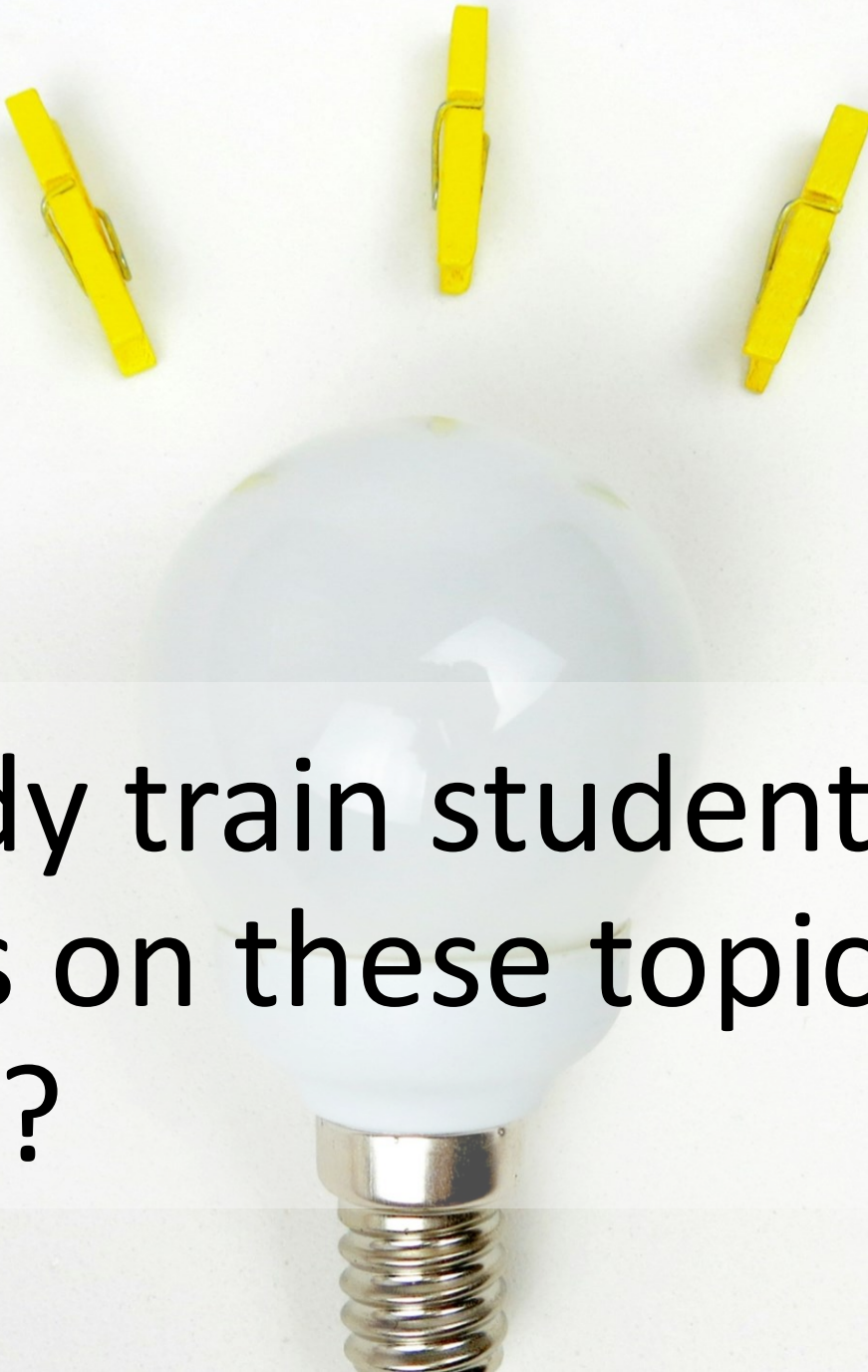
# What we will cover

- Background and context
- Designing the workshop
- Who attended
- Reflecting on the results
- What we're planning next
- Future challenges



# How we started

- Idea originated from a department meeting about career progression and staff retention
- Technicians are a long under-served community when it comes to training and acknowledgement
- Technician Commitment requires visibility and recognition
- Increasing endorsement of technicians' contributions to research
  - REF Initial Decisions Paper and People, Culture and Environment consultations
  - Funders encouraging grant applications from and including technicians



If we already train students and researchers on these topics, why not technicians?



# Designing the workshop

- Developing our research support training for a new audience
- 90 minutes in person
- Content includes:
  - Introduction to scholarly communications in UK HE and the publication process
  - Signing up to ORCID
  - Discussion tasks for sharing experiences of authorship and attribution
  - CRediT taxonomy
  - Tips for having conversations about fair attribution



# Who we reached



4 sessions delivered



43 attendees



4/6 Schools reached (plus  
other non-School staff)

# Research Laboratory Technician

Microscopy Technician

Research Assistant

Genetics and Phenotyping Laboratory Technician

Lab Manager

Operations Coordinator

Apprentice

Safety Officer

Biological Microscopy Coordinator

Senior Research Laboratory Technician

Project Manager

Flow Cytometry Technician

Trading Technician

Microscopy Specialist

Research Associate

Digitisation Technician

Senior Research Technician

Biomolecular Technician

Senior Research Lab Coordinator

# Reflecting on the results

"[I have had] no acknowledgement or recognition for the generation of data that has been presented at international conferences and in high impact papers"

"[When I asked why I was] missed from the author list [the reply was] 'oops we forgot, sorry'"

"As a facility manager, [I have co-authored] more publications than as a postdoc"

"[My experience is] positive; the professor is supportive and encourages co-authorship"



# Reflecting on the results

“Involvement in publications greatly depends on the people we are working with – some are more receptive and keen to involve technical staff in the conversation about the research”

There is a need for University-wide fair attribution guidelines.

A woman with dark skin and long black braids is shown from the chest up. She is wearing a bright red short-sleeved top. Her facial expression is one of uncertainty or questioning, with a slightly furrowed brow and a small, open-mouthed smile. Her hands are held out to her sides, palms up, in a shrugging gesture. The background is a plain, light gray wall. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the text "So what next?".

So what next?



Roll out the session  
more widely across  
the University






Continue  
collaborations  
and work towards  
Fair Attribution  
Guidelines for  
Cambridge







**VIEW  
POINT  
AHEAD**

# Future challenges

- How do we collect data on acknowledgements?
- Danger of STEMM focus
- Systems can create barriers
- Is it really the technicians who need the training...?



A photograph of wooden blocks spelling out 'THANK YOU' on a wooden shelf. The blocks are light-colored wood with dark, bold, sans-serif letters. They are arranged in two groups: 'THANK' and 'YOU'. The background is a soft-focus green and yellow, suggesting foliage. The shelf is a thick, natural wood plank.

THANK YOU

Feel free to contact us with any questions or to continue the discussion!

# References

*About us* (no date) *Technician Commitment*. Available at:  
<https://www.techniciancommitment.org.uk/>

CRedit Taxonomy. Available at: <https://credit.niso.org/>

McLaren, C. and Dent, A. (2021) 'Quantifying the contributions technicians make to research', *Research Evaluation*, 30(1), pp. 51–56. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvaa035>.

*Research Excellence Framework 2028: Initial decisions and issues for further consultation* (2023). (REF 2028/23/01). Available at: <https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/9148/1/research-excellence-framework-2028-initial-decisions-report.pdf>

UKRI (no date) *Technicians and technology and skills specialists, UK Research and Innovation*. Available at: <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/bbsrc/investing-in-research-teams/technicians-and-technology-and-skills-specialists/>

Vere, K. (2020) *More than 'just a technician': why we need to recognise everyone in the research team*, *Wellcome*. Available at: <https://wellcome.org/news/more-just-technician-why-we-need-recognise-everyone-research-team>

Woolhouse, L., & Marsh, F. (2024). *Fair attribution and publishing for technicians*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.106673>