

CEO Introduction

Alastair MacGregor, CEO, SSERC



Professional development is any activity, formal or informal, that helps you develop skills and knowledge to help you professionally and personally throughout the course of your career. It has always been my belief, and that of SSERC, that good quality professional learning and development for school technicians is vitally important. This professional learning and development can be accessed and delivered in many ways, including:

- training courses and workshops
- studying for a qualification
- online courses/webinars/podcasts
- observation (as either observer or person being observed)
- shadowing a colleague
- visiting other schools/colleges
- attending exhibitions and conferences
- self-reflection, personal reading or research.



At SSERC, we have partnered with STAC to support professional development activities for the school technician community in Scotland. Looking ahead, we will be further supporting school technicians' professional learning:

- Continued twilight technician SSERC Meets (online live sessions). You can view our previous Technician SSERC Meets at [Tech_meets - YouTube](#). We are always looking for suggestions for themes or topics.
- Technician conference to be held at SSERC in Spring 2023; details to follow.
- Use of Techné to support informal professional development and encourage professional discussion and debate (see page 7 for more information).
- Continued publication of The School STEM Technician facilitating the acquisition of new knowledge and an opportunity to contribute an article. We are always looking for a school or college technician to write a suitable article for one of the forthcoming issues.

- The addition of new professional learning courses to assist the acquisition of new skills and knowledge and, importantly, support mandatory aspects of health and safety.
- Opening up opportunities for SSERC Accredited Centres to offer a broader range of SSERC professional learning activities

SSERC and STAC applied for funding via the Education Scotland Enhancing Professional Learning in STEM Grants Programme to support the development of a Technician Leadership Professional Learning Course. This was rejected by Education Scotland, and we wait with interest to ascertain the official reasons why. However, I believe it may be based on a perception that the proposed course may have limited uptake given the lack of career progression opportunities within the technician profession in Scotland. I think we can all spot the irony here! If this is the case, then it simply reinforces the need to further promote the critical role that school technicians play in supporting the school curriculum and, as evidenced by the articles in the



Technicians' Corner of this issue, the role technicians play in the wider aspects of school life. As a consequence, SSERC is entering into dialogue with other partner organisations to facilitate the development of a Technician Leadership professional learning course; where others cannot or will not, we will. Details to follow.

SSERC is aware of the important role that school and college technicians have in relation to health and safety and, as such, offers a range of professional learning courses that support mandatory health and safety requirements. Our Safe Use of Fixed Workshop Machinery is one such course that is very popular and, indeed, continually oversubscribed, despite also being offered by a number of our SSERC Accredited Centres¹. To complement this course, we are currently developing a new professional learning course with the provisional title 'Safe Operation Training for Bandsaw, Pillar drill and Bandfacer', and which will focus on:

1. Health and safety awareness
2. Bandsaw
3. Pillar drill

4. Bandfacer
5. Extraction

It is anticipated that this 2-day course will be SCQF Credit and Levelled. More details, including timescales, are to follow.

Moving forward, SSERC and STAC will continue to look at opportunities for partnership working with other bodies and organisations that share our vision *to raise the professional status of school technicians and promote the role they play in the education community in Scotland*.² The school technician profession in Scotland (and beyond) continues to face challenges and obstacles, but within the challenges and obstacles lies the potential and it is from that potential that progress can truly be made.

Alastair MacGregor
Chief Executive Officer, SSERC

[1] <https://www.sserc.org.uk/about/sserc-accredited-centre-programme/>
[2] <https://www.sserc.org.uk/mission-vision-values/>