

# CANDIDATE PACK

## Head Technician

School of Life Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTMINSTER 



# OUR UNIVERSITY

Under the inspirational leadership of Professor Peter Bonfield OBE, the University of Westminster is a place where discoveries are made, barriers are broken, diversity is celebrated and where everyone is welcome. Serving more than 21,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, apprentice and executive students, our mission is to transform the lives of young people from all backgrounds. We seek to make the world a more inclusive, sustainable, better and healthier place through our educational, research and knowledge exchange endeavours.

Since our founding in 1838 we have stood out as innovators, committed to tackling social inequalities. In 2021, our University ranked 2nd in England out of more than 100 higher education institutions for social mobility. The ranking - produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Sutton Trust - compares the number of students from low-income backgrounds at universities, and the extent to which their studies helped them to move up the income ladder. Westminster has the second highest performance among universities in England.

As we focus forward to 2029, we will continue to do so in a way that is true to our progressive, compassionate and responsible values. Our education offer will be more personalised and authentic, giving students from all backgrounds an opportunity of transformative learning, helping them succeed in their studies and professional lives. Our curriculum will be employability-linked, leading to stronger outcomes and helping prepare our graduates for the world of work and for life. Our research and knowledge exchange will enable us to maximise our positive impact on societies in the UK and around the world in an environment where everyone is inspired to succeed. Our priorities of wellbeing, inclusion and sustainable development will help us as we navigate through the challenges and opportunities towards 2029.





# OUR PRIORITIES

The University's 2022-2029 strategy, *Being Westminster*, sets us apart and builds on our unique history and achievements. In our University, we value social justice, moral conscience, inclusivity and equality, acting positively together to make change for good.

The University of Westminster has three priorities.

## WELLBEING

Working and studying together at Westminster as a community of students and colleagues is a big part of our lives – doing so in an environment that places our wellbeing front and centre helps us to be safe and feel safe. We care for the safety, health and wellbeing of those around us as well as ourselves.

## INCLUSION

All Westminster, colleagues and students are in a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and is a place where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated. As a responsible institution, we strive to ensure and to champion equality. As a progressive institution, we take pride in our diversity. As a compassionate institution, we commit to an inclusive culture that allows students and colleagues to reach their full potential.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We take inspiration from the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in how we drive our actions and activities and governance across our University. As a community, we bring together our collective energies to play our part in addressing the climate crisis and inequalities to enable a more sustainable and socially just world. We are one of the top 20 universities in the world in SDG 5 for providing equal access and supporting the academic progression of women. We are one of the top 25 universities in the world in SDG 10 tackling economic, health based and international inequalities. We are in the top 50 universities in SDG 12 for promoting resource and energy efficiency, having a sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services for all.





# OUR OBJECTIVES 2022-2029

Against a backdrop of a changing and challenging higher education environment, the University has recently completed a major review of its objectives and strategy, and has published its commitments for the period 2022-29.

## EDUCATION

We will offer personalised and authentic education, underpinned by an inclusive curriculum, to enable all our students, from all backgrounds, to engage in transformative learning and to succeed in their studies and professional lives. We will address global, political, and social challenges through a relevant demand-led and forward-looking portfolio. We will do this by offering authentic teaching, learning and assessment modes which immerse students in the wider-world through live projects, work-based learning and global opportunities. We will invest in our people to enable all teaching colleagues to plan and deliver exceptional learning experiences and professional colleagues to offer exceptional support. Students will be empowered by working in partnership with colleagues and fellow students to shape the Westminster experience. We will develop an integrated physical and digital environment that supports excellent practical, active and collaborative learning for all our students.

## RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Research and knowledge exchange are fundamental to our commitment to making a positive difference to the world and transforming lives. We are committed to research in four priority areas: Diversity and Inclusion; Health Innovation and Wellbeing; Sustainable Cities and the Urban Environment; Arts, Communication and Culture. Our excellence in research and knowledge exchange will infuse our education endeavour, inspiring and equipping our students as agents of change locally as well as globally. We will continue to grow our community of PhD researchers, ensuring that the Westminster postgraduate research experience remains sector leading and the foundation for great careers. In knowledge exchange we will focus on engagement with government, business and with the public and local community. We will achieve more when we identify shared interests and build partnerships with our communities and collaborate for the public good with a clear civic purpose.

## EMPLOYABILITY

We will ensure that all our students benefit from employability-led learning and purposeful engagement with employers, business and industry, to give students from every background the best possible preparation for the world of work and enable the best possible employability outcomes. We will do this through the further extension and embedding of programmes such as work-based and placement learning; the Westminster Employability Award; Westminster Working Cultures; mentoring; and student enterprise. Employability-related learning will be a core and critical part of the courses and curriculum we offer, right across the University. It will be front and centre of life at the University for students and colleagues.



A key priority will be the development of a dedicated Centre for Employability and Enterprise at 29 Marylebone Road, intended to transform our student experience and our engagement with business, industry and employers. The Centre will provide a game-changing experience through which undergraduate and postgraduate students from across Westminster will come together and practise enterprise; develop an entrepreneurial mindset and skills; access training, work, projects, business advice and mentoring; and connect directly with employers. The future-focused environment of the Centre will scale up our employability provision, helping our students to be 'fit for the future' in the most challenging of post-pandemic labour markets and economic environments. It will strengthen links between our UK-based and international employer partners and our motivated, bright, work-ready students, affording employers access to a diverse mix of people right for the needs of the contemporary workforce.

## GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

We will raise the international reputation and reach of the University, ensuring that 30% of our undergraduate community and 70% of our taught postgraduates come to us from overseas. Overseas partnerships will remain central to our global engagements. We will prioritise the outward mobility of our students to partner institutions, contributing to students' development of employability skills and competences. We will extend and deepen our Trans-National Education relationships. These partnerships, particularly that with Westminster International University in Tashkent, will move beyond franchised or validated arrangements to embrace employability, alumni-related research, CPD and knowledge exchange connections.





# OUR STRUCTURE

## ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

Our structure is built to deliver an enhanced learning environment, stronger and broader industrial, international and professional connections and pioneering and impactful research. The University comprises three Colleges:

### Westminster Business School

- School of Organisations, Economy and Society
- School of Finance and Accounting
- School of Applied Management
- School of Management and Marketing

### Design, Creative and Digital Industries

- School of Architecture and Cities
- Westminster School of Arts
- School of Computer Science and Engineering
- Westminster School of Media and Communications

### Liberal Arts and Sciences

- School of Social Sciences
- Westminster Law School
- School of Humanities
- School of Life Sciences

The University Executive Board comprises:

- Vice Chancellor and President
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Employability and Global Engagement)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education and Students)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange)
- Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary
- Three Heads of College

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Our Professional Services teams support the effective and professional delivery of our teaching, research and knowledge exchange and the management of student residences and sports facilities.

- Academic Registry
- Business Engagement
- Estates
- Finance and Commercial Activities
- Global Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communications
- Information Systems and Support
- People, Culture and Wellbeing
- Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Student and Academic Services



# JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title: Head Technician**

**Reports to: Assistant Head of School**

**Department: School of Life Sciences**

**Grade: NG8**

## ROLE PURPOSE

To lead the School of Life Sciences' laboratory support technical team in the academic delivery of School activities (e.g. teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities), through the provision of a high quality and customer-focused technical service to colleagues, students and external users. To support the Assistant Heads and the Head of School in providing strategic direction and planning for laboratory operations and resources to ensure enhancement of student experience, teaching, research and knowledge exchange.

To establish best practice in the supervision of the technical colleagues and facilities including oversight of health and safety matters, forward planning and optimum utilisation of materials, equipment and technical resources. The post holder will discharge these responsibilities in addition to maintaining their own 'hands on' core specialist technical knowledge.

## PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To be responsible for the day to day operational management, development and delivery of a range of customer-focused high quality technical, laboratory professional support services within the School laboratories technical team, to provide support for the core activities of the School (teaching, research, knowledge exchange, commercial) and its users. Contribute to Westminster's positioning as a University of first choice by providing an efficient and outstanding customer experience.
2. To work closely with the School senior management and other senior colleagues within the School in contributing and leading in strategic planning and development of the designated service areas, in order to provide responsive and fit-for-purpose support for the requirements of the School. To contribute as an equal member of the School Management Team.
3. To lead and manage a multi-disciplinary team of technical colleagues within the School, through the Team Leaders, ensuring that; all relevant people management policies are effectively implemented in accordance with University values. Ensure all technical colleagues engage with the University's PDR process, deliver their personal objectives and complete all agreed personal development activities. Support technical colleagues to develop and work towards recognition of industry standard skills, encouraging professional registration and recognition of the School technical workforce.





4. Provide strategic, forward-looking leadership and set appropriate service and performance standards, engaging and motivating colleagues to achieve maximum performance and flexibility within clear lines of accountability and responsibility.
5. Develop effective relations with other academic and Professional Services areas advocating the business needs of the school and facilitating the successful completion of projects or other works as a central liaison with the wider University services (including estates, timetabling, IT and AV services).
6. To represent the School, University and technical team internally and externally as required. To undertake committee work as required, and, on occasion, in a cross University capacity. In particular the Head Technician will be a member of the School Management Group and College Operations Group, Sustainability Working Group, Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committees and the HTA Steering Group.
7. To work to strict budgetary targets and to maintain financial records and planning documents ensuring operational costs are controlled and resources are used efficiently, effectively and economically. Support capital expenditure, review and management of new technology, including relevant strategic School investments.
8. To ensure operational compliance of laboratory spaces and equipment with Health and Safety requirements, sustainability and GxP service standards (where required). These will include health and safety (cross University), GMO and Human Tissue Act (HTA) compliance through advice, assignment of specific duties and audits. Ensure that maintenance and minor repairs to equipment are undertaken by appropriately trained members of the technical team, or by commissioning external engineers. Provide advice on all matters relating to laboratory operations to the School Executive and when necessary to College and University Senior Management.
9. To manage, negotiate and develop technical facilities for knowledge exchange services with external clients in order to generate income; to oversee the income generation activities relevant to laboratory and where required develop collaborative arrangements with other providers.
10. To lead on project management of laboratory, and school estate and capital projects as required on behalf of the School and to lead on development of ideas for such projects to enhance the laboratory environment.
11. To undertake relevant continuous professional development activities and maintain up to date knowledge and skills in the designated technical specialism.
12. To coordinate and contribute to writing technical guidance/manuals or other internal knowledge exchange formats relevant to the designated technical service area and its equipment and provisions.





13. To undertake any other duties within their competence and appropriate to the grade, as required by the line manager or their nominee.

## CONTEXT

The School of Life Sciences laboratory support team comprises 17 technicians that provide high quality and value adding technical services and support aligned to the School's academic portfolio. The life sciences technical laboratory infrastructure includes a range of wet and dry laboratories, along with dedicated high-grade specialist research equipment and spaces.

There are over 350 practical sessions in the life sciences modules between two semesters, which are delivered via five dedicated large teaching laboratories, in addition to student project labs for undergraduate and post graduate research work. Other key areas of technical services and support within the School include, (1) the management and delivery of extensive equipment and space maintenance, servicing, procurement and student interaction, (2) direct support to academic research projects and knowledge exchange or enterprise activities, and (3) conducting consultancy and specialist hire income generation activities (4) health and safety and regulatory compliance.

The range of Life Sciences Laboratories bring their own suite of health and safety considerations and requirements including monitoring of COSHH legislation; Licensing (and periodic inspection) by the Human Tissue Authority, HSE and an ongoing focus (including regular internal inspections, audits and annual student and colleague development) on health and safety.

Collaboration with the Clinic manager in order to enable knowledge exchange services derived from across the School.

The post-holder is expected to work closely with colleagues within and outside of the School to maintain the highest quality of technical support and provide the best possible experience to School users (primarily students and academic and research colleagues) in the delivery of the School's core activities. In particular, the post holder will need to liaise closely with the School Finance Partner, Head and Assistant Heads of School, and the Manager of the Clinic. The post holder will have oversight of the School laboratory support technical team, through direct and indirect line management, and will work closely with the procurement team, School and University safety advisors and the University's Estates Planning & Services department. The post holder will be expected to 'model' a customer-centred approach and have a commitment to personal and professional development, demonstrating this commitment through undertaking regular continuous professional development activities.

## DIMENSIONS

- The post-holder is indirectly responsible for a team of currently 16 colleagues with three of those colleagues being direct reports.
- The post holder is responsible for the minor equipment, small and large maintenance, and technical colleague development budgets (circa £100K pa).



- Services provided impact across the School on some circa 2300 FTE students and circa 100 FTE academic colleagues.
- The post holder is expected to influence spending on capital equipment and estate within the School and take a forward looking, strategic view to planning.
- The post-holder will undertake a lead role for the School in the delivery of identified estates and capital development projects involving laboratory infrastructure requiring the post-holder to undertake business planning to ensure delivery on schedule.
- The post-holder has oversight of the equipment/physical resources in the designated technical service areas, and their safe and regulatory compliant usage - both directly, and indirectly through the laboratory support technical team - in compliance with Health and Safety and HTA requirements.
- There may be restrictions on taking annual leave during busy periods and during term time.





# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## QUALIFICATIONS

### Essential

- Undergraduate degree in an appropriate Life Sciences discipline

### Desirable

- Post-Graduate Degree or Professional Qualification
- Member or Fellow of a relevant professional Body

## TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

### Essential

- Strong track record of successful people/line management, and leadership of a life sciences laboratory services function in a large/complex organization.
- Successful record of delivering innovative and continuous improvement and contribution to transformational change management.
- Track record of operational resource management, multiple teams and budgetary control.
- Current knowledge of health and safety matters relating to laboratories, clinical governance (including HTA and HSE), auditing, and associated inspections.
- Experience of project management and the development of infrastructure for specialist technology and space
- Translating and operationalising strategic plans over a range of activities
- Contribution and leadership in strategy development

### Desirable

- NEBOSH - National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety
- Record of working in with human participants and or human tissues and awareness of clinical governance and Human Tissue Authority issues

## APTITUDES, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

### Essential

- Working to professional standards and leading by example



- An articulate team player who can relate to, motivate and build rapport with people at all levels of the organisation with strong communication skills
- Track record of successfully working in laboratory settings demonstrating sound laboratory skills
- Strong strategic planning and analytical and evaluating abilities, good judgment and a strong operational focus
- Good IT skills, including knowledge of word processing, spread sheets and databases
- Ability to implement and manage effective procedures and systems, which meet the needs of regulatory bodies, such as the Human Tissue Authority, HSE and the Environment Agency
- A forward thinking and creative manager and leader with high ethical standards and an appropriate professional approach
- An effective educator who is willing to share information and serve as a mentor, influencing, developing, and changing the motivation and behaviour of their colleagues
- Committed to continuing personal and professional development
- Fully committed to creating a stimulating learning and working environment which is supportive and fair, based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable





# HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this vacancy, please visit our [vacancies page](#) where you will be able to download our application form template. You will then be requested to complete a quick registration before being able to upload completed application form and any supporting documentation.

## Applications should include:

- A concise statement in support (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification and motivation for applying.
- You may also include an up to date curriculum vitae;
- names and contact details of two referees (although referees will only be approached at offer stage).

**The deadline for receipt of applications is midnight on 08 July 2024**

**Interviews will take place on week commencing 22 July 2024**

An appointment will be made subject to proof of eligibility to work in the UK and satisfactory references being obtained.

At the University of Westminster, diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity are at the core of how we engage with students, colleagues, applicants, visitors and all our stakeholders.

We are fully committed to enabling a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

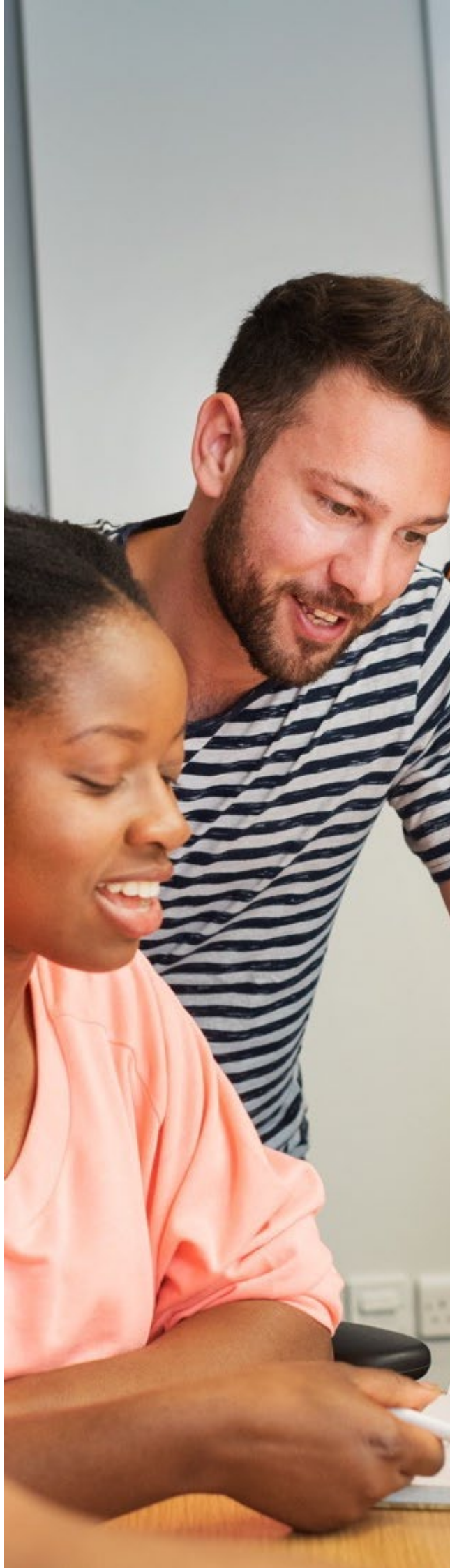
*The University has adopted Smart Working principles to support and further our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aims of being an inclusive, collaborative and flexible employer. Further details of Smart Working can be discussed at interview stage.*



# OUR BENEFITS

The University offers a range of wellbeing and work-life balance benefits to recognise and reward the essential contribution our colleagues make to success and growth. Our benefits are inclusive for colleagues of all backgrounds including LGBTQ+ colleagues, disabled colleagues, pregnant colleagues, parents and carers, as well as colleagues of all genders, age, ethnicities, nationalities, religion and beliefs, and marriage and civil partnership status.

- 35 days annual leave per year, plus bank/national holidays and University of Westminster closure days (pro-rata for part-time staff).
- A generous occupational pension scheme.
- Annual incremental progression and/or cost of living reviews.
- Generous maternity, paternity and adoption leave.
- Flexible working and smart working.
- Learning and development opportunities.
- Free membership rates for a wide range of sporting facilities, including gyms at Regent Street and Harrow campuses, as well as the Chiswick Sports Ground.
- Employee assistance programme.
- The opportunity to participate in other attractive employee benefit schemes such as Cycle to Work, Eye Care Vouchers, Season Ticket Loans, and Give As You Earn.







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