

Ardoideachas –  
Teicneolaíocht agus Oiliúint,  
An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta,  
Sráid Maoilbhríde,  
Baile Átha Cliáth 1.



Higher Education –  
Technology & Training  
Department of Education & Science  
Marlborough Street,  
Dublin 1

**Circular Letter No. 0013/2006**

To: The Director of each Institute of Technology  
The President of the Dublin Institute of Technology

## **Arrangements for Technician Grades in the Institutes of Technology**

The Minister for Education and Science wishes to inform the management authorities of Institutes of Technology that, following the Report of the Review Group on Technician Grades in the Institutes of Technology has been accepted. Accordingly I am to convey sanction for the implementation of the proposals as set out hereunder.

The proposals provide for a revised career structure, revised salary scales, contracts and job descriptions. There is also provision for a sub-committee of the Review Group to oversee any issues and resolve any difficulties that may arise in the implementation of the agreement.

It should be noted that vacancies should now be advertised at the entry grade of Technician.

### **Dissemination of Circular**

Copies of this circular should be made available to the appropriate representatives of Technicians for transmission to individual Technicians. The Circular may also be viewed on the Department website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

### **Queries in Relation to this Circular Letter**

Any queries in relation to this Circular Letter should be e-mailed to [technology\\_training@education.gov.ie](mailto:technology_training@education.gov.ie)

## **Technician Grades in the Institutes of Technology**

### **1. Background**

Following a claim by MSF (now AMICUS) in May 2002 and talks between the relevant parties, it was agreed to set up a Review Group to examine and report on the grade(s) of technician in the sector in the context of the report of the Expert Group for medical laboratory technicians/technologists.

The Review Group comprised of an independent chairperson (agreed by both parties) and representatives of the employers and the staff trade unions. The terms of reference were agreed and the report was finalised on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2005.

### **2. Career Structure**

There will be three grades in the technician structure; Technician, Technical Officer and Senior Technical Officer

#### **a. Technician**

This will be the entry grade for all new technicians to the sector. The minimum qualification will be an appropriate qualification of at least Level 7 under the NQAI Framework and ideally at least one-year postgraduate experience. (In the case of Trades/Crafts areas see interim proposal below) Progression to the career grade of Technical Officer will be as follows:

After completing a minimum of 5 years continuous service within the grade or equivalent within the third level sector, a year of which must have been at the maximum of the scale and have attained a further qualification of at least Level 8 under the NQAI Framework i.e. Honours Primary Degree or equivalent (National Diploma level or equivalent will not be deemed equivalent where course was completed prior to introduction of NQAI Framework).

Or

After completing 3 years continuous service within the grade or equivalent within the sector and having attained a further qualification of at least Masters Degree or equivalent level (Note: Senior Trades is not deemed equivalent in this situation). The person will then be placed on the nearest point (not below) of the Technical Officer Grade scale to that which they are currently on in the Technician grade and remain on that point for 2 years. After the satisfactory completion of that period, they will then be incremental in the normal manner.

*Qualifications for entry to Trade or Craft areas as Technician – Interim Arrangement*

While awaiting the outcome of discussions with the NQAI on equivalence and where no current arrangements are in operation, for trade and craft areas, the following interim arrangement will apply. (This will be reviewed on completion of the NQAI discussions). In particular circumstances, the President/Director, where this is in line with the existing practice in the Institute, may deem the following as meeting the entry requirements as a Technician for trade or craft areas only:

Hold the relevant Senior Trades or equivalent or National Craft Certificate and ideally at least one-year postgraduate experience

*Progression to the career grade of Technical Officer will be as follows:*

After completing a minimum of 5 years continuous service within the grade or equivalent within the third level sector, a year of which must have been at the maximum of the scale and have attained a further qualification of at least Level 8 under the NQAI Framework i.e. Honours Primary Degree or equivalent (National Diploma level or equivalent will not be deemed equivalent where course was completed prior to introduction of NQAI Framework).

Or

After completing a minimum of 5 years continuous service within the grade or equivalent within the third level sector, a year of which must have been at the maximum of the scale and have obtained the appropriate advanced qualification in the relevant trade/craft achieved since meeting minimum entry requirement (award must be examination and/or assessment based) – plus a minimum of 8 years relevant experience (in industry and/or teaching) obtained since meeting the minimum academic requirements.

Or

After completing 3 years continuous service within the grade or equivalent within the sector and having attained a further qualification of at least Masters Degree or equivalent level (Note: Senior Trades is not deemed equivalent in this situation). The person will then be placed on the nearest point (not below) of the Technical Officer Grade scale to which they are currently on in the Technician grade and remain on that point for 2 years. After the satisfactory completion of that period, they will then be incremental in the normal manner.

**b. Technical Officer (Career Grade)**

This is the Career grade for all technicians. Entry to the grade will be via the Technician route as outlined above. **However, in exceptional circumstances, an institute may recruit at this grade.** In such circumstances, entrants must satisfy all the qualification requirements of the grade. The qualification requirement for progression from Technician grade is as above. In the case of open competition the requirements will be:

An appropriate Level 8 under the NQAI Framework i.e. Primary Honours Degree or equivalent.

and

At least 3 years relevant professional postgraduate experience at an appropriate level

**c. Senior Technical Officer**

This will be the senior technical grade in the sector.

The qualifications required are a minimum of a Masters Degree and at least 5 years post qualification experience in a relevant environment and at an appropriate level.

**3. Salary Scales**

The relevant salary scales are attached as Appendix A.

Entry will normally at Point 1 for new appointees. However, in determining starting salary, incremental credit, up to a maximum of five increments (i.e. the sixth point of the scale) may be awarded where the appointee has relevant professional experience over and above the minimum required for appointment. No more than one increment may be awarded for each year of such experience.

In exceptional circumstances, where an appointee to a post has more than five years relevant experience over and above the minimum required for appointment AND where the application of the above would result in less than current salary \* being achieved, s/he may enter the scale at a point higher than the sixth point, at the discretion of the Institute. Similarly, no more than one increment may be awarded for each year of such experience.

\* Current Salary being certified/verified annual gross remuneration (including pension contributions) immediately prior to appointment, taking account of BIK (Benefit-in-Kind) and other perquisites i.e. benefits in addition to normal earnings, as declared to the Revenue Commissioners.

**4. Senior Posts**

The following procedures will apply for the identification of senior posts and the selection and appointment of suitable candidates.

- (i) It is agreed that the number and location of the Senior Technical Officer posts in each Institute is dependent on a number of factors, in particular:
  - The structure of the Institute, i.e. Number of Faculties, Schools, Departments and Function areas.
  - Number of advanced, specialist technical areas, if any.

In proposing any ratio of Senior Technical Officers to the Technical Officer career Grade, cognisance must be taken of ratios of other career structures within the Institute sector.

Taking these into consideration, the ratio proposed is 1 Senior Technical Officer to every 6 Technical Officers within the Institute.

- (ii) The first filling of these posts will be confined to an internal competition, which will be open to all current technicians with the minimum service requirement of 5 years for Senior Technical Officer. Competition will be by application and interview.

Ideally, each Institute should have at least one Senior Technical Officer post in each School or major functional area e.g. Computer Services, Estates, etc. within the Institute but this is dependent on the number of technicians currently within that School/Function, the School/Function structure, etc. Note: Terminology re structures on School/Dept/Function may vary from Institute to Institute.

Any posts that remain unfilled after this competition will be filled by public competition under the qualification criteria outlined above. No additional posts or funding will be allocated to institutes for these positions and all posts must come from within quota sanctioned from Dept of Education and Science.

Any vacancies that arise in the future for these posts will be filled by public competition.

(iii) The Selection Board will consist of 4 members.

Governing Body Representative  
Director/President or nominee  
Internal Management staff member  
External member

The Board will have the necessary gender balance.

(iv) The date of implementation for the senior posts will be the date of appointment following the appropriate competitive process.

(v) Existing post holders should be assimilated into the new scales under the normal rules governing assimilation for institute staff i.e. nearest point (but not lower) plus one if 3 years or more on the maximum of the current technician scale; nearest point (but not lower) if less than 3 years on maximum.

## **5. Salary Scale for Existing Technicians who have 20 Years service or more**

Technicians currently serving, who have attained 20 years incremental service or more as of 01<sup>st</sup> May 2005 and who are not appointed to the post of Senior Technical Officer, will be eligible for two additional increments - above the current maximum of the Technician scale - on the Senior Technical Officer scale. Payment of these increments is confined to those technicians only and NO future technicians attaining this period of service will be eligible for these increments. Payment of these additional increments is with effect from 01<sup>st</sup> January 2004, i.e. those technicians who have attained 20 years incremental service as of that date and 01<sup>st</sup> May 2005 will receive appropriate back monies. This allowance is subject to the following:

- Service for the purpose of these increments is service in respect of which incremental credit is allowed.

## 6. Annual Leave

The annual leave\* for each grade will be as follows:

Technician	-	24 Days.
Technical Officer	-	26 Days plus an additional day after 5 and 10 years service during which he/she was in receipt of an annual leave allowance of not less than 26 and 27 days respectively. Maximum 28 days.
Senior Technical Officer	-	27 Days plus an additional day after 5 and 10 years service during which he/she was in receipt of an annual leave allowance of not less than 27 and 28 days respectively. Maximum 29 days.

\* *These annual leave entitlements include allowance for all Church Holy days.*

All technician grades will also be entitled to other concession days as allowed by the institute.

**NOTE: The implementation date for new leave entitlements is 01<sup>st</sup> October 2005. The annual leave year operated by each institute remains unaltered.**

## 7. Contracts and job descriptions

Copies of agreed contracts and full job descriptions for each of the three grades are attached.

### a. Senior Technical Officer Grade

The Senior Technical Officer will be responsible to the President, Director, and Head of School/Department/Function for the supervision, coordination, administration and development of technical facilities within Institute, Faculty, School, Department, and Function level. S/He will be required to work closely with students, management, academic, technical and other staff.

*Essential competencies, skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience.*

- Masters Degree and at least 5 years post qualification experience in relevant environment and at an appropriate level.
- Skills necessary to supervise, co-ordinate and direct technical staff.
- Good organisational and problem solving skills.
- Management and interpersonal skills.
- Good knowledge of Health and Safety legislation.
- Evidence of personal development through further educational training.
- Ability to take initiative, give leadership and work with people.
- Specialist technical knowledge in designated area.
- In addition, ideally have the ability to assist in writing up research proposals. at Institute, Faculty, School, Department and Function level.

**b. Technical Officer Grade**

The Technical Officer will be responsible to the President, Director, Head of School, Head of Department/Function and Senior Technical Officer for the co-ordination, administration and development of technical facilities at Institute, Faculty, School, Department, and Function level. Required to work closely with students, management, academic, technical and other staff.

*Essential competencies, skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience.*

- Primary Honours Degree (Level 8) and at least three years relevant postgraduate experience at an appropriate level.
- Ability to take initiative, give leadership and work with people.
- Good organisational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to provide on the job learning and coaching of other staff.
- Good technical knowledge in designate area.
- Good knowledge of Health and Safety legislation.
- Evidence of personal development through further skills development.

In addition, ideally have the ability to assist in writing up research proposals at Institute, Faculty, School, Department and Function level.

**c. Technician Grade**

The Technician will be responsible to the President, Director, Head of School, Head of Department/Function, and Senior Technical Officer/Technical Officer for the administration and development of technical facilities within Institute, Faculty, School, Department, Function level. Required to work closely with students, management, academic, technical and other staff.

*Essential competences, skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience.*

- Ordinary Degree (Level 7) and at least one year's postgraduate experience. Where appropriate, the President/Director may deem the following as meeting the entry requirements as a Technician for trade or craft areas only:

Hold the relevant Senior Trades or equivalent or National Craft Certificate and at least one-year postgraduate experience (This is an interim arrangement while awaiting the outcome of NQAI discussions.).

- Ability to take initiative, give leadership and work with people.
- Good organisational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Good knowledge of Health and Safety legislation.
- Evidence of personal development through further skills development.
- Good technical knowledge in designated area.

**8. Implementation**

A Sub Committee consisting of all parties (8 members – 4 from each side) to this Agreement will oversee any issues and resolve any difficulties that may arise. Any further difficulties should be referred to the Labour Relations Commission and, if necessary, to the Labour Court.

## **9. Training and Education Requirements Including Funding and Facilities.**

The personal and professional development of all technical grades is vital to maintaining a high quality of service; therefore it is essential to ensure that technicians are fully integrated into the institute's training and development programme.

Additional management training should be given to staff that are expected to manage a laboratory or other facilities.

In-service training places should be provided for individuals with non-standard qualification to adapt to professional requirements.

## **10. Management reporting structures**

- a. Senior Technical Officers may report to the relevant Institute officer with the appropriate management or supervisory function as designated by the Director/President. This includes Heads of School/Department, recognised Functional Heads i.e. Central Service Manager Grades.
- b. Technical Officer and Technician grades will, in the main, report to the Senior Technical Officer as designated by the President/Director. In some exceptional cases, they may report to the Manager as listed above or to a researcher (Note: does not include MSc, PhD students or Research Assistants) designated by the President/Director.
- c. The Senior Technical Officer to whom the Technical Officer or Technician reports may not necessarily be in the same Department/School/Functional area as the Technical Officer/Technician.

## **11. Development plans for delivery of services.**

Technicians provide consultative, advisory and analytical technical services for staff and students in laboratory techniques. Due to the rapid changes that have taken place in science and technology it is essential that the technician profession respond to these changes in a proper organized and efficient manner.

Information technology is now an essential tool in all institutes activities particularly in laboratories. Strategic investment in this area must be made in an appropriate and cost effective way. This will lead to a more efficient service.

The change in the diversity and level of courses offered at certificate, degrees, masters and Ph.D. levels and the considerable development in the area of research supervision of students at all levels and consultancy work have necessitated the introduction of more sophisticated equipment and analytical techniques requiring higher competency levels.

Due to the specialist nature and the wide spread of disciplines supported by the technicians in the institutes, staff development problems are exacerbated, since it is difficult to attend off the job training and development.



## **12. Interaction with other staff, students and support services**

Technicians interact with students, other staff grades and the public on a daily basis as well as membership of bodies/committees such as:

- 1) Governing Body
- 2) Faculty Boards
- 3) Steering committees/work groups
- 4) Staff development committees
- 5) Safety advisory committees
- 6) Student support committees
- 7) Project teams
- 8) Trade Union committees
- 9) Partnership committee
- 10) PMDS committee.

### **View Files**

Additional Information (Format Word) - [View File](#)

#### **Senior Technical Officer –**

Job Description (Format Word) - [View File](#)

Contract of Employment (Format Word) – [View File](#)

Salary Scales (Fromat Excel) – [View File](#)

#### **Technical Officer -**

Job Description (Format Word) - [View File](#)

Contract of Employment (Format Word) – [View File](#)

Salary Scales (Fromat Excel) – [View File](#)

#### **Technician –**

Job Description (Format Word) - [View File](#)

Contract of Employment (Format Word) – [View File](#)

Salary Scales (Fromat Excel) – [View File](#)