



Supporting technical  
staff working in science,  
technology, engineering,  
digital, arts and media



**New!**

# e - Newsletter

Spring Edition - March 2019

'Now Is A Great Time To Be A Technician'

# IST Conference 2018 Workshop



Don't miss out on  
the 2019  
Conference in  
Birmingham

Read page 9 for  
more info

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## THANK YOU NOTES

Thank You to all the contributions to this edition of the e-Newsletter.

Please contact the IST Office if you would like the opportunity to write an article for any of the future editions.

If you would like to contribute to the next few e-Newsletter's the deadline for material/articles/adverts is:

Friday 3rd May 2019



Technical Services Manchester Fashion Institute

MOODLE





# HELEN'S UPDATE

**Dr Helen Sharman CMG OBE FIScT**

*PRESIDENT, IST*

Spring is in the air again and the IST has been thinking about how best to support members and the technical community at large. On 15 February, the IST held an event specially designed for technical managers and their staff working in the arts, media and digital fields, to enable them to input into a framework to support professional registration. I am told that talks were interesting and informative; of course some of the development requirements of technicians are quite specific to the area of expertise but the IST will be able to use the synergy of the knowledge, skills, and needs of a wide range of technical staff to benefit everyone.

The IST is proud to continue its partnership with the National Technician Development Centre (NTDC), which is going from strength to strength, having just celebrated one year since its official opening. The Centre is a one-stop shop, providing universities and other research organisations with access to information, expertise and a range of research and tools (including the nationally recognised TDM Toolkit) specifically designed to support the delivery of high-quality technical services across all areas including Arts, Science, Engineering or Medicine. A sign of how important the country perceives its technicians and technical skills base to be, is the investment of £546,000 into the NTDC by the former Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), now Office for Students.

You (or your manager – do pass this on!) can find out more information about the work of the National Technician Development Centre on their website at:

[nationaltechnicianscentre.ac.uk](http://nationaltechnicianscentre.ac.uk).

Talking about technical development, spring is a good time to freshen up skills with something new. Rather than wait for a review by your manager, why not take a moment to think about what would make you better at your job now, and what would make you more fulfilled? The IST provides a range of courses and ways to recognise technical skills and development for people wanting specific skills training as well as for those more interested in leadership and management. Courses and advice for the Higher Diploma, Professional Registration or Leading Your Technical Team Programme and others can all be found on our website.

So enjoy springing into a new (or slightly modified) you and make sure you get the recognition you and the technical community deserve!

*Helen.*

# TERRY'S BLOG



## **Terry Croft MBE CSci FIScT**

*CEO & CHAIR, IST*

### **Hello and welcome to the new edition of the e-Newsletter, we hope you like the new look.**

Since the last newsletter the IST and our valued volunteer teams have been up and down the country both promoting the Technician Commitment Initiative and delivering a variety of presentations and workshops keeping our members up to speed with the rapidly changing environments that we work in and supporting members on completing the professional registration competency forms.

This work has been well received and has brought about (positive) change by increasing visibility and allowing more recognition for vital technical skills. It is also evident that steps are being taken in the right direction to provide career development opportunities as well as sustainability for technical jobs in the Higher Education sector.

I would like to personally thank Joan Ward and John-Paul Ashton for their work on updating and developing the website. We are keen to ensure that our website provides our members with resources necessary for their careers - if you have any suggestions, opinions or would just like to tell us what you think about the website then feel free to contact Wendy at the IST Office.

I want to extend my thanks to the editors and contributors of the newsletter, who have worked hard to ensure the content and the 'new look' remains relevant and useful for our members. I would strongly encourage all members to take advantage of the newsletter and Journal by contributing as authors.

It is great to hear from Philippa, IST Education Officer, that she has been working very closely with one of our newest corporate affiliates; ALS UK, who have set up a bespoke Training Academy. Congratulations on this and we look forward to validating the training that is to be offered to their technical staff in the near future.

Our work with our official nominated charity WorkFit and the National Laboratory Service is continuing to make progress on working towards a bespoke laboratories qualification for people with Down's syndrome. My thanks go out to James Trout and Philippa for their efforts on this.

Once again, many thanks to all our volunteers and our members who make the IST what it is today.

# NEWS / EVENTS UPDATE

## IST at events across the UK

The IST attend many events to engage with the technical community as well as putting on professional registration workshops to promote the Science Council registers.

Look out for the e-Newsletters, our websites and social media platforms to find out what future events we will be at supporting the technical community. Please feel free to come and say hello to us.

We always welcome invitations to come and exhibit at your events - if we can support you, we will do. We also welcome help from our members to talk about their professional registration experiences, about the IST and all things good about being a technician!

### *Future Events to look out for us at:*

- **S-Lab Conference - Birmingham - 2nd and 3rd April 2019**
- **Wellcome Sanger Institute - Technician Commitment Launch - 4th June 2019**
- **HETS - University of Birmingham - 25th June 2019**
- **Exeter Technical Conference - University of Exeter - 27th June 2019**
- **Professional Services Conference - Newcastle University - 1st July 2019**



### *Previous Events Supported by the IST:(Since the Last Newsletter)*

**Fisher World - Manchester Old Trafford 27/09/2018**

**Science Council CPD Learning Group - London 15/10/2018**

**Lab Innovations - Birmingham NEC 01/11/2018**

**Technician Commitment (TCI) One-Year-On - Tower of London 06/11/2018**

**Technical Academy Conference - University of Birmingham 13/11/2018**

**TCI Launch - University of Edinburgh 05/12/2018**

**TCI & Professional Registration - Queen's University Belfast 09/01/2019**

**Creative Industries Promotion - St John York University 17/01/2019**

**Celebrating the Diversity of Technical Staff in the Arts and Creative Industries - Manchester Metropolitan University 15/02/2019**

# Celebrating the Diversity of Technical Staff in the Arts and Creative Industries

Manchester Metropolitan University - 15/02/2019



On a glorious day technical staff, managers, practitioners and senior university individuals met at Manchester Metropolitan University for an event which looked in depth at some of the challenges facing technical staff in Creative Industries and Arts. The day was keynoted by the Head of Design at Manchester School of Art, Joe McCullagh who gave a very interesting insight into the work their School carried out past and present, as well as identifying how technical staff are integral to the success of the School. Joe also shared some quotes from their Design students from the NSS.

*"Technicians have been wonderful. Nothing is too much trouble for them. Most of my time is spent in metal and ceramics workshops."*

*- DESIGN STUDENT NSS RESPONSE*

There were many talks and updates from individuals at Manchester Metropolitan University, IST, National Technician Development Centre and St John York University, including a facilitation exercise directed by one of our Focus Group member; Keith Hill from the University of Reading. The day ended with a tour of the School of Art.

Overall, the day was filled with vibrant discussions which was very informative for the framework development and interesting research gained for the business case to carry out the project to develop a bespoke register for the Creative Industries and Arts technical staff and specialists.



From the IST Focus Group; 17 of the 26 institutions were represented at this event (around 50 technical staff attended) and many outputs and actions were gained from the meeting.

If you would like to be involved in the Creative Industries / Arts pilot project to help shape the bespoke register, contact: [office@istonline.org.uk](mailto:office@istonline.org.uk)

The Institute of Science & Technology has a grade of membership for businesses and other organisations. This grade of Corporate Affiliate provides the member organisation a range of benefits which includes [validation of internal training programmes](#). [This article can be read on our website by clicking here.](#)



One of the IST's Corporate Affiliates from the industrial sector is ALS Laboratories (UK) Ltd. ALS Laboratories (UK) Ltd is part of [ALS Global](#), a leading testing, inspection, certification and verification company headquartered in Brisbane, Australia. Servicing multiple industries globally, ALS employs over **13,000** staff in **55** countries.



Whilst the core of its business is analytical testing, the company has built its reputation around technical innovation and on being a [high quality technical service provider](#) to its clients. This reputation extends across a broad spectrum of end markets including aerospace & defence, agriculture, consumer products, environmental, health & safety, food and pharmaceutical.

In the UK, ALS offers a comprehensive range of testing services to complement and enhance food safety and food quality programmes. Focusing on microbiological, nutritional and chemical, vitamins, minerals, and additives, allergens, contaminants and food authenticity testing it has a nationwide network of food testing laboratories located in Carlisle, Chatteris, Mirfield, Nottingham, Rotherham, Shrewsbury, Sittingbourne and Trowbridge. There are also environmental testing laboratories in Coventry and Wakefield.

The company has recently set up a bespoke [Training Academy](#) at Chatteris in Cambridgeshire and is running a microbiology training programme for new recruits from around the country. The IST has been pleased to validate this training. A second Training Academy, at the Rotherham site, is due to open in March, and a new training programme for chemical analysis is also being developed.

For more information about ALS, go to: <https://www.als-testing.co.uk/aboutus/about-als-global/>

# IST

## One-day Technical Conference

18TH SEPTEMBER 2019

Birmingham Conference  
and Events Centre

This exciting one-day conference and its talks and workshops offer you an opportunity to update technical knowledge, skills and further your career development. It will also provide valuable networking opportunities to engage and learn from other technical staff and technical supervisors and managers. The event is aimed at technical staff in any industry and sector, from science and engineering to arts and media.

### CONFERENCE CHAIR



**Dr Helen Sharman CMG OBE FIScT**

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Amy Martin**  
Creative Director & Producer



**Prof. Alberto Vecchio**  
Professor of Astrophysics

### WORKSHOPS

There will be a variety of workshops available to attend on the day, including creative industries talks, health and safety across institutions, equality, diversity and inclusion, reflecting on your profession and managing and development.

### IST AWARDS AND POSTERS



You can contribute to this conference through our poster competition. It's your chance to share your work experiences in an informal way, to tell a story in pictures and/or words. There's a chance to win up to £150 in Amazon vouchers.

### EARLY BIRD PRICES

Members: £57 | Non-Members: £67 | Groups of 6 or more: £57 each

Tickets available now: <https://istonline.org.uk/ist-conference-2019/>. Places are limited book now to avoid disappointment. Accommodation is also available on request.

### COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS CONFERENCES

"I enjoyed meeting like-minded people from other institutions and exchanging ideas and current thinking"

"It enabled me to gain better understanding of the diversity of our roles"

"The talks were very good, suitable length and the presenters clearly had in depth knowledge of their subjects. Held the interest very well"

# Virtual Learning Environment

## How To guides at the Manchester Fashion Institute

**Marie Slater - Technical Team Leader at the Manchester Fashion Institute introduced the Technical Services Virtual Learning Environment and its innovative directory of QR Codes, Videos, Booklets & “How To” guides, to support the Manchester Metropolitan University Student Experience & wider audience.**

I collaboratively created a virtual learning environment (VLE) with a Technology Enhanced Learning Advisor (TELA) at Manchester Fashion Institute (MFI) at Manchester Metropolitan University, giving student access to technical information when needed 24/7 in 2015. I used this innovative and novel method adapting to different types of learner and media, enhancing teaching, learning and the student experience.

Previously, starting in 2006 I created “How To” Learning aid for Dyslexic and International Students with language and learning barriers. “How To’s” are brightly coloured showing where pattern pieces start and finish and are also step-by-step instruction, guiding through a process.



Initially a laminated hard copy resource is available for the students to hire, and I added to VLE in 2012 as a digital resource, available to download onto smart devices, PC or Tablets, so students can have their own copy and look at them as often as they need to.

TECHNICAL SERVICES  
MANCHESTER FASHION  
INSTITUTE

**MOODLE**



To enhance learning, videos of the guides and specialist equipment became an addition to VLE. QR Code technology created and sited on equipment and learning aids and posters available in studios, giving just in-time learning experiences. (QR is a machine-readable code of black and white squares, used for storing URL's or other information accessed by smartphone camera) QR codes are on all the specialist equipment in the department and when scanned they explain what the equipment does and how it is operated. Previously you would need a QR reader app to scan QR codes on a smart device, however now, since 2018, the camera on a smart device is able to scan the QR code.

Technical Teams throughout MMU are currently adopting this Technology in each of their specialist areas. Simone Cipriani (Officer of United Nations) manager of ethical fashion is keen to licence the guides to educate and empower women in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. HM Prisons also want to licence the "How To" Guides to teach inmates sewing skills, as they have the largest sewing rooms in the UK.

In 2018, collaborating with the TELA, I introduced Virtual Reality (VR) to a specialist lab via a QR code on entry, providing a virtual 'walk-through'. This use of VR empowers individuals using interactive links and enhances their experience



and learning environment. This novel and innovative concept has significant impact on Student Experience at MMU and the potential to develop commercially but currently in the exploratory stages. I am dedicated and strive to make a difference wherever possible to the student learning experience.

If you would like any information or have any questions about this article, please get in touch with the IST Office and we will put you in touch with Marie.

## VR Navigate the Innovation Zone

**Floor plan of the ground floor**

**1. Scan the QR Code**

**2. Press 360**    **3. Press Arrow**

**From Floor plan to 360 degree photograph with added links to videos and information about the equipment**

Innovation Zone Door scan the QR Code

Press arrow to enter into VR

Press arrow to enter through the door

Use arrows to pan around

Green for information Blue for a video

**1. Scan the QR Code**

**2. Press 360**    **3. Press Arrow**



# CPD CORNER

## Less obvious Sources of CPD

Number.

06



### CPD Links:

[IST RESOURCES](#)

[CV BUILDER](#)

[HEaTED|STEM](#)

[ALISON COURSES](#)

[FUTURE LEARN](#)

[OPEN LEARN](#)

[OPEN UNIVERSITY](#)

[UDEMY](#)

All kinds of activities may **enhance skills and knowledge** and / or trigger the desire to change/improve/develop working practices and procedures. Sometimes these may not appear to be directly connected to your work but don't immediately discount anything that comes along! These less appealing activities can sometimes lead on to totally unexpected opportunities that can **change your direction in life**.

For example, your workplace may set up a working party or other type of group to look at something that is really not of interest to you or related to your work. But it may still be worth joining in:

- to raise your profile in the workplace, possibly amongst people who know little or nothing about you and your work
- to observe interactions within the group and how it works, noting good practice and techniques as well as aspects which are not productive
- develop skills needed to participate including logical discussion and presenting a balanced view
- be at the front when/if something more to your taste comes up

Another example is a course or event that lasts for more than 1 day. Instead of counting it as one activity, seek to identify evidence for more than one learning category (**work based, professional activity, formal / educational, self-directed learning, non-work related**). You will, however, require multiple entries in your CPD record in order to evaluate and reflect on the benefits you have gained for each category.

**Philippa Nobbs**

IST Education Officer



# The Benefits of Professional Registration

## A personal journey at the University of Leicester

### PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

#### Why did I choose to go for Registration?

I chose to become Professionally Registered to validate my lab based and teaching skills. Traditionally, apart from being cited on publications, there has been **no substantive vehicle for publically recognising the contributions technicians make to science.** Registration seeks to fill this gap and recognise these activities.

#### What do I see as the benefits of Registration?

Professional Registration validates skills and provides employers with 'real life' examples of skills sets which cover not just technical proficiency but also teaching and training; communicating with different constituency groups; & lab set up and management. These awards conform to a set of standards and are therefore portable throughout the UK.

Furthermore, Registration can open doors and add to those skills by creating additional opportunities.



#### My opportunities after becoming a Registrant

After becoming a Registered Scientist, I had the opportunity to attend training to become a **Registrant Assessor.** I subsequently became a Chartered Scientist and, because of this level of Registration; in concert with my publication portfolio, my emerging IST responsibilities, and

working alongside the executive of the IST, was awarded a Fellowship. I also became an IST Registrant Champion here at the University of Leicester. This allowed me to **network** and **promote Professional Registration** which, in turn, resulted in an invite to provide a lecture to University technicians on this very topic at the launch of the Technician Commitment event at my Institution. I have also spoken at our departmental away day about the relationship between the Technician Commitment, Registration & Athena Swan, by virtue of nurturing contacts and by raising my University profile in this way.

#### Final words of encouragement

Being proactive has led me to relish in the opportunities afforded to myself such as running workshops for both the IST and Science Council and an invitation to take up a freelance executive role with the Science Council as an official applicant support mentor. There is no reason why you can't go out and achieve the same or similar opportunities. Terry Croft remarked, at the University of Nottingham Technicians Summit, that you should **'never turn down opportunities because you never know where they might lead.'**

If I were personally to offer one piece of advice, it would be this: **'start YOUR journey by becoming Professionally Registered!'**

**Laurence Dawkins-Hall, FIScT CBiol CSci  
Research Technician & IST Fellow**



# Technical Spotlight

Claire Hutton, Senior Research Technician

#TechnicianJourney



**Claire works as Senior Research Technician at Newcastle University, Northern Institute for Cancer Research.**

## What do you do at your institution?

I am part of the Pharmacology Biomarker group in the Northern Institute for Cancer Research. I validate methods for the detection of biomarkers which may help diagnose or predict outcomes for patients with cancer. I also test clinical samples for biomarkers from patients on clinical trials. In addition to my research work I also have a number of Institute roles, including Mycoplasma testing for all of the cell lines we use in the Institute, ensuring our cell lines are authenticated, and curating a bank of these authenticated cell lines. I am also the Technical representative on our Equality and Diversity team, and at senior staff meetings.

## Why did you want to work as a Technician?

After completing my PhD I wanted a complete break from research and took a fundraising position for a charity. However, after a couple of years I missed science so took a position in a commercial lab, which was an excellent experience, but much more routine than a research environment. I made the decision to return to a Technical role as I knew this would allow me to carry out the research that I love, without having to write grants and papers, and give presentations which I don't enjoy as much. Technicians get to do all of the best bits that people go into science to do!

## What makes your role so vital at your institution?

Everyone in the Biomarker group has an important role, and we work as a team to ensure that all of the research gets done, and all of the clinical samples are analysed. I am working on a particular assay that I know very well, and that others in the group don't, so I am responsible for ensuring that all of the samples for that assay are analysed in a timely manner and the data reported.

My cell line bank is extremely important as we need to be sure that the cells we're working with are the cell lines we need, with no genetic changes, or contamination. It is also important that the cells are free from mycoplasma infection, so that we can be confident of our data. Most journals require evidence of cell line authenticity before publishing work.

## What did you do before you became a Technician?

After my A-levels I decided to take on a Trainee Technician role rather than go to University. This was like an apprenticeship where I learned all the laboratory basics and techniques while attending University on day release to get my degree. I then went on to do a PhD and worked in a commercial laboratory, before returning to a Technician role at Newcastle University.

## What do you enjoy doing when you are not working?

Outside of work I enjoy spending time with my family, and going on weekend breaks with them. I really enjoy Zumba, and I go running, but only if the sun is shining!



# Technical Spotlight

Claire E Kolenda, Research Technician

#TechnicianJourney



**Claire is a Research Technician at Newcastle University Bio-Screening Facility.**

## What do you do at your institution?

I am a research technician in the BioScreening Facility at Newcastle University. I work in a service lab offering technical help with bespoke research projects. Work ranges from mammalian cell lines to clinical samples, 10+ to 1000+. I work with sample sets from all over the world, and am involved with the planning, processing and final analysis; I carry out qPCR one day, ELISA's another... no two days are the same, I love it!

## Why did you want to work as a Technician?

I have always had a passion for science. I began working as a technician working on bovine embryo transfer,

I got to work with my beloved dairy cows, then I moved on to nuclear transfer and loved the team work involved. Next, I worked in molecular science and with North American Bisons, then to biomarkers of ageing and inflammation. Now finally to BioScreening.....it's never been boring!

## What makes your role so vital at your institution?

My knowledge base and communication skills. Not only have I used a huge range of scientific techniques over my past 30+years, but I have also worked with a great range of people. Half of being a great technician is being a good communicator and negotiator. It's seeing the bigger picture!

## What did you do before you became a Technician?

I have been a technician my whole career. As a farmer's daughter it began as a perfect mix of my love of animals with my passion for science.

## What do you enjoy doing when you are not working?

I enjoy time with my family, live music, cooking, crafts and the great British countryside in my little caravan!

**#TechnicianJourney** is an important part of both our Newsletter and Journal as this not only gives the following technicians more visibility for the excellent work they carry out but also lets everyone know what kind of work is being done by other technicians.

We will always have two pages dedicated to this per newsletter. Currently there is quite a bit of demand at the moment, so please contact the IST office to request a form if you wish to be part of this in future editions.

Look out for our next Newsletters to hear from Tracey Davey, Carly Foster and Rafiquel Hussain.

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY / JOBS

What's happening around the world for technical staff?

## S-Lab Birmingham Conference

**When:** April 2-3 2019

**Where:** University of Birmingham

## TMU Conference 2019 (Technical Managers in Universities)

**When:** 10th - 12th April

**Where:** Brighton, UK

## ASE National Technicians Conference

**South:** 13 June 2019 09:30 - 15:45, Hertfordshire University

**North:** 05 July 2019 09:30 - 15:45, National STEM Centre, University of York

## University of Leicester Technician's Conference

**When:** Jun 14, 2019 from 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM

**Where:** Education CPD+, Leicester

## Higher Education Technicians' Summit (HETS)

**When:** Tuesday 25th June 2019 (09:00-17:15)

**Where:** University of Birmingham

## Exeter Technical Services Conference

**When:** 27 June 2019

**Where:** Penryn Campus, University of Exeter

## IST One Day Technical Conference 2019

**When:** 18th September

**Where:** Birmingham, UK

## TechNet 2019: The Power of Connectivity (Australia)

**When:** Wednesday 4 December to Friday 6 December 2019

**Where:** Deakin University Geelong Waurin Ponds Campus, Geelong VIC 3216

## JOB VACANCIES

### National Technician Development Centre (NTDC) Manager

We have an exciting opportunity for a National Technician Development Centre Manager to play a critical role in the success of the National Technician Development

[Click here to find out more.](#)

If you'd like to post a job advertisement in our future newsletters, please contact [office@istonline.org.uk](mailto:office@istonline.org.uk)

<https://www.jobs.ac.uk>



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## SCIENCE INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

FUTURE PLACES, PEOPLE, SUPPORT AND TECHNOLOGIES

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
2-3 APRIL 2019

Free tickets available for Birmingham and other HE technical staff  
<https://birminghamstaff.eventbrite.co.uk/>

[www.effectivelab.org.uk](http://www.effectivelab.org.uk) | [www.ukspa.org.uk](http://www.ukspa.org.uk)



The **S Lab Conference** is taking place soon and is offering **FREE tickets for technical staff in Higher Education. Don't miss out.**

[Google Map Location](#)

**Book your ticket HERE**

# IST Corporate Affiliates

## Our Valued Affiliated Organisations



Environment Agency



The University Of Sheffield.



Brunel University London



Manchester Metropolitan University



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Our Corporate Affiliated organisations can receive a number of benefits from the IST including promotion / delivery of events and workshops for technical staff, support for and promotion of Professional Registration, validation of in-house training programmes etc. Other more bespoke benefits can be discussed, where appropriate.

Please contact [office@istonline.org.uk](mailto:office@istonline.org.uk) or visit our website for more information:

<https://istonline.org.uk/membership/corporate-affiliation/>

# GET INVOLVED

How you can get involved with the IST

## Contribute to our Newsletter

IST members have the opportunity to contribute to the quarterly newsletters and our international bi-annual Journal. Contact [office@istonline.org.uk](mailto:office@istonline.org.uk) to request an opportunity to write an article. It can also provide you with CPD points for your annual reviews. The Institute of Science and Technology is Your Professional Body, so make the most of your member benefits and consider writing for the Newsletter and Journal.

## Contribute to our bi-annual Journal

Do you have any articles that you feel would be of interest to the technical community? Or do you need to promote a relevant article or event? We are looking for articles to include in the next IST Newsletter, so if you do have anything then please get in touch. Please contact us at [office@istonline.org.uk](mailto:office@istonline.org.uk) or you can get in touch with the editors below.

## Special Thanks to This Month's Contributors:

The IST gives its thanks to their members and individuals who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter: Marie Slater (Manchester Metropolitan University), Laurence Dawkins-Hall (University of Leicester), Claire Hutton (Newcastle University), Claire E Kolenda (Newcastle University), Mel Leitch (Newcastle University) for organising the Technical Spotlights and Philippa Nobbs (IST Education Officer) on behalf of ALS.

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**A special welcome to Kirsty who is our new Assistant Editor of the IST Journal. Kirsty has a range of experience and skills and will be a key player in the IST Marketing Team.**