Who am I to create a Technical Network?

Geoff Blunt

Lisa Grady

Sarah Gumusgoz
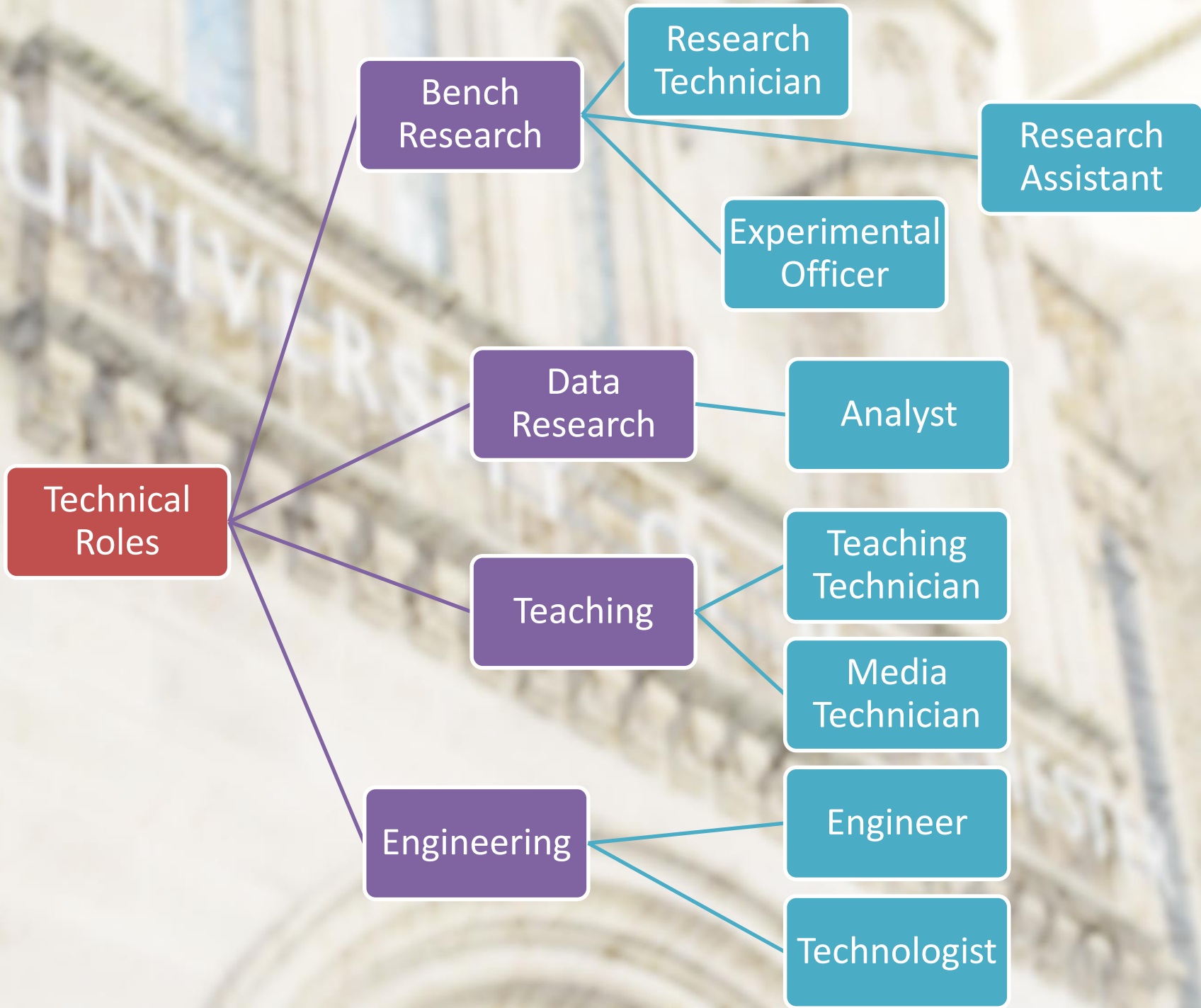
Rachel Watkins

30th June 2016

Who are we?

- **Four Technical Middle Managers**

- **71 years cumulative experience in biological research laboratories**

- **Line management**

- **Performance & Development Review**

- **Training, coaching & mentoring**
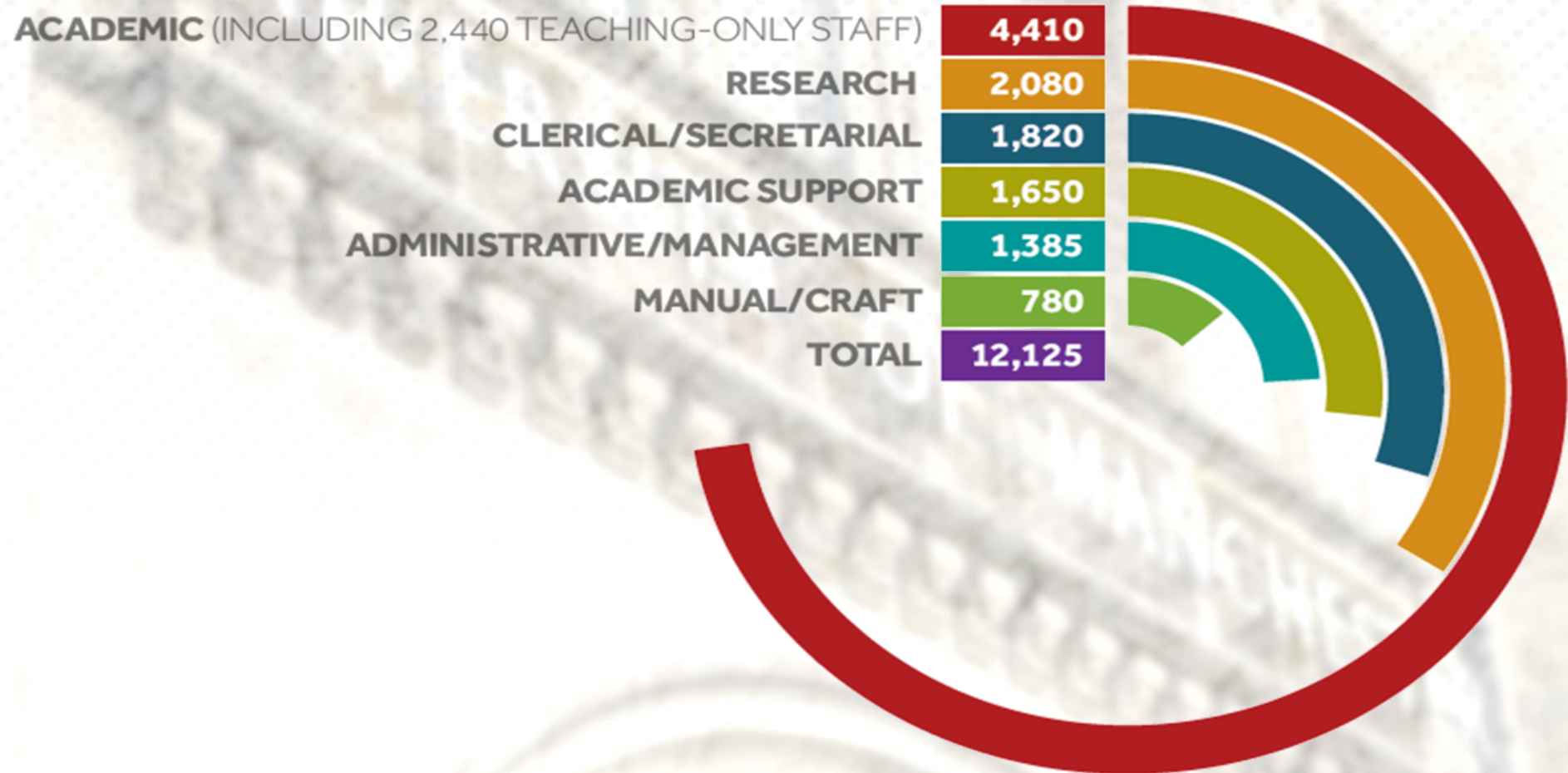
The University of Manchester

What does "technical" mean?

- **It can mean different things to different people in different roles**
  - **Examples: Experimental Officers, Research Assistants, Engineers, Technologists & Analysts and of course, Technicians**
  - **We used the word "Technical" to include all of the above**
  - **But, we expect our biggest population to be Technicians**

The Invisible Cohort

ACADEMIC (INCLUDING 2,440 TEACHING-ONLY STAFF)	4,410
RESEARCH	2,080
CLERICAL/SECRETARIAL	1,820
ACADEMIC SUPPORT	1,650
ADMINISTRATIVE/MANAGEMENT	1,385
MANUAL/CRAFT	780
TOTAL	12,125

Faculty of Humanities

- Alliance Manchester Business School
- School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
- School of Environment, Education and Development
- School of Social Sciences
- School of Law

Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences

- School of Dentistry
- Manchester Medical School
- School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work
- Manchester Pharmacy School
- School of Psychological Sciences
- Institute of Brain, Behaviour and Mental Health
- Institute of Cancer Sciences
- Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences
- Institute of Human Development
- Institute of Inflammation and Repair

Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences

- School of Chemical Engineering and Analytical Science
- School of Chemistry
- School of Computer Science
- School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences
- School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- School of Materials
- School of Mathematics
- School of Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineering
- School of Physics and Astronomy

Faculty of Life Sciences

- Single-School Faculty

Faculty of Life Sciences

- Single-School Faculty

University of Manchester

What are we doing?

- **Creating a Technical Network with members from the most senior to the most junior levels**

- **Widening participation**

- **Creating a forum for exchange of career & training information**

Natalie Kennerley is the technical manager for Neuroscience in the Department of Psychology at the University of Sheffield.

Natalie's real passion is the promotion of technicians as highly skilled experts and she co-founded "TechNet" a technical networking group which supports technicians in higher education institutions.

TechNet: Technicians' Network

- TechNet is a new way for technicians to discuss, collaborate and improve the way they work.
- Meet up with other technicians to share ideas and solve problems.
- Draw on the skills of technicians who can help make your job easier.
- Join an online community to find new ideas and better ways of working.

Technical Tours

Interested parties :-

- **FIRS Botanical Gardens**
- **Central Human Resources**
- **Wolfson Institute**
- **Computer Sciences**
- **Martin Harris Centre for Music & Drama**
- **Physics and Astronomy**
- **Salford Royal Hospital**
- **St Mary's Hospital**
- **Manchester Cancer Research Centre**
- **Geography, School of Environment, Education & Development**
- **Biological Services Facility**
- **Jodrell Bank Observatory**

Technical Issues

Technician profile

Phillip Clarke

A Telescope and Workshop Technician at Jodrell in the School of Physics and Astronomies, Phillip joined the university at the age of seventeen as an apprentice in the workshop. He now looks after the upkeep of the dish and helps solve technical problems, the most recent being- having to change and repair a flat tire on the dish. Phillip also oversees the annual painting and maintenance of the dish. Phillip said the best thing about his job is the unknown and the adventure of having to climb the dish every time there's a problem.

News

New Tiger Bag Waste Stream

Technicians across the University may well be affected by the introduction of a new waste stream in the coming months. Some waste, although non-infectious, contains body fluids, secretions or excretions and is classified as 'offensive/hygiene waste'. The definition incudes medical-looking waste, such as used gloves, pipettes, plastic ware or sanitary products. While this will still go to landfill as before, it needs to be bagged in yellow and black striped outer bags ('Tiger' bags) to code it as offensive so that the waste handlers can take extra care. Although principally being used in Biology and Medicine, these bags will be used in Humanities and EPS for disposal of sanitary waste and first aid products (plasters and bandages).

An environmental benefit of the new waste stream will be that the University will no longer have to incinerate some of its treated wastes, reducing its carbon footprint. Look for guidance on how the new stream will work over the next few weeks."

Publications

Putting out the flames of inflammation: immune cells dampen harmful responses to prevent disease.
John J Worthington, Aoife Kelly, **Catherine A. Smedley,** David Bauche, Simon Campbell, Julienne C Marie, Mark A Travis (20015) Immunity 42(5):903-15

Why are we doing this?

- **Create a channel of communication**
- **Raise the profile of Technical staff**
- **Recognition of technical workforce as a cohort equivalent to academics & administration staff**
- **Develop clear & transparent technical career pathways**
- **Address gaps for training & succession planning**

How to get the ball rolling?

- **Fact finding & networking with other HEIs**

- **Technical staff surveys**

- **Proposal document**

- **Gain managers' approval and financial support**

Who do we want to involve?

- **Needs to be driven by hands-on technical staff**

- **Senior management must buy-in as well**

- **Identify middle managers & gauge interest**

- **Seek out senior Academic to act as Champion**

- **No special interest/agenda groups**

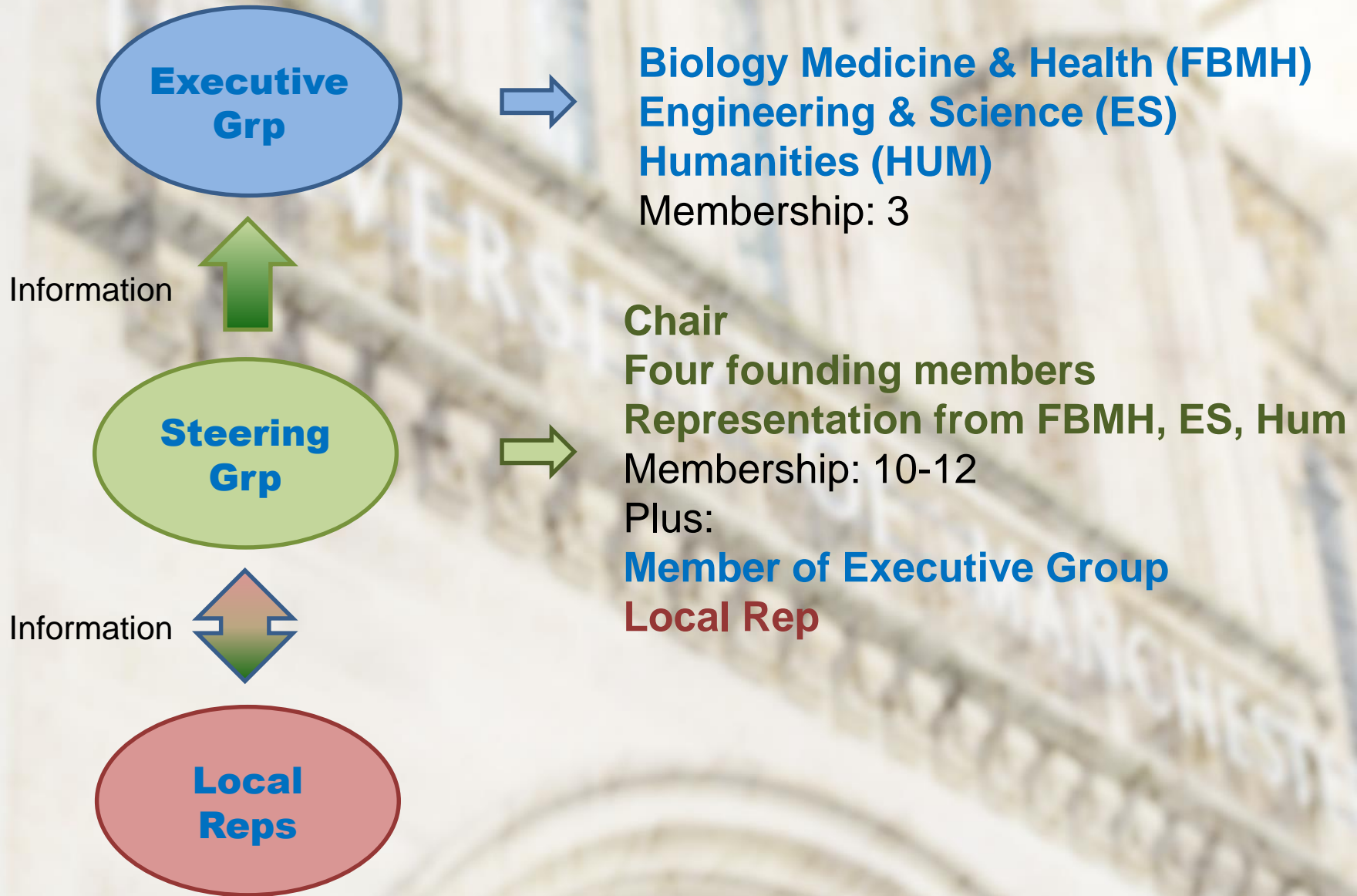- **Seek out a representative from Staff Learning & Development (SLD) to support technical training**

How do you maintain momentum?

- **Keep numbers of organisers low**

- **Hold regular meetings**

- **Engage with the technical cohort via large feedback groups**

How do you stay in control?

- **Structured consultation exercise**

- **Formation of a Steering Group with equal representation**

- **Initial meetings & creation of structure**

Network Structure

Executive Grp

→ **Biology Medicine & Health (FBMH)**
Engineering & Science (ES)
Humanities (HUM)
Membership: 3

Information ↑

Steering Grp

→ **Chair**
Four founding members
Representation from FBMH, ES, Hum
Membership: 10-12
Plus:
Member of Executive Group
Local Rep

Information ↕

Local Reps

Terms of Reference & Mission Statement

- **"To raise the profile of technical staff, recognise their contribution to the University and empower them to develop their careers"**

Steering Group

- **Debate & implement ideas to further the mission statement**

- **Continually expand the reach of the network**

- **Evaluate feedback from Local Representatives**

- **Four network events a year**

- **Steering Group to meet immediately after an event and again before the next event to achieve actions**

Where are we now?

- **Technical Champion – Deputy President & Deputy Vice Chancellor**
- **3 Faculty Directors**
- **Head of Human Resources**
- **Head of Staff Learning & Development (SLD)**
- **SLD Representative for Technical Staff**
- **Financial provision for start up**
- **Steering Group & Executive Groups**

Future Plans

- **Recruitment of more technical representation from satellite sites**

- **Identify Local Representatives**

- **Promotion of TE@M – Technical Excellence at Manchester University**

- **Increase UoM TechNet membership**

- **Launch Event- Technical Showcase Day**

- **Future events- CPD, seminar days, networking events and Technical Skills Days**

- **Webinars and podcasts**

- **Video profiles of job roles**