



Technicians' Corner

A Day in the Life of a Science Technician

It's Friday morning already, one of the Biology team have requested the G-1-P starch phosphorylase investigation for Period 1, better make a start on the tatties, get them peeled, liquidized and centrifuge that starch out of them!

Hi, I am a Science Technician at Wallace High School in Stirling, we have a pupil population of c. 1100, the Science team I am supporting has eleven full time teaching staff and a Chemistry probationer this year.

I've made a start on the starch free extract so while that's whizzing I go to check on the other requests for Friday morning: The Van de Graaff requested for period 1 in a Physics lab, (don't forget to move it to Chemistry for Period 3) hope it's behaving today, I'll give the dome a clean and give it a whirl just to check. While I'm here I decide to set up the trolleys, ramps and light gates that are needed later for Higher Physics, the class are moving on to acceleration this week so I can hopefully leave this set up for the week. Mr. B catches me whilst I'm in his room and asks me for any ideas on Peat Bogs, we have several classes from Ochil House (our pupils in Wallace with severe and complex additional support needs) in department this year and he is hoping to deliver some interesting practical work on this topic, I make a mental note to check SSERC website later. Next a flame test demo set up in a Chemistry lab and Investigating enzymes and effect of temperature for Biology and that is period 1, done and dusted.

So, 9.05am and I can look to the rest of the mornings orders, nothing out of the ordinary, a distillation of Crude Oil (fake) for 1st year Earths Materials class, Higher Chemistry are moving onto the Iodine Clock Investigation, the solutions were made up earlier in the week and I just need to make sure they are topped up as required. As I am setting up in the labs I have a catchup with the teaching staff, this is the time I am most likely to be given verbal requests for resources (a technicians' nightmare), unfortunately my memory isn't what it used to be and it is very possible I will be sidetracked before I manage to commit any requests to the online requisition.

Back to the Prep room and I am about to start preparing the nutrient agar plates I will need next week for the classes that are swabbing for microbes. Whilst the autoclave is out I will also prep some yeast glucose agar



plates for the Toilet Roll challenge, oh and I'd better move the portable incubator into the lab that will be using it.

This afternoon, S1 are doing a strawberry DNA extraction, I'll need to put the ice machine on again (one of the chemists just popped in and has taken the last of the ice.....aahhhh) and also the water bath will need to be switched on, I'd better not forget to get the strawberries out the freezer to let them defrost a little before the lesson.

Time to check in online with SSERC, and to my relief there are some resources that we could use, I pass this info to Mr. B who then suggests that it would be great if we could take the pupils out on a Peat Bog visit, we are lucky to have a site nearby so I make a note to contact them and see if we can arrange a visit (hope I get to go along with them, part of the job I really enjoy is going out with the pupils on field work and University lab visits).

As it's Friday I do a general sweep of the labs to clear up anything that will not be used next week, remind the team that next weeks' requisition is about to go 'live' and any further changes will need to be made to me personally (I hate surprises), take a set of heart and lungs out the freezer to defrost for Monday period 2 (probably a good idea to take these home and defrost overnight on Sunday, they can get quite whiffy if left too long). Last minute rush around the prep room to collect resources for a local associated Primary school who are hoping to study electricity next week, I'll drop this off on my way home. Final task for the week is to water the fantastic plant display we have within our department and give them a wee prune.

And that's it, another week and another day in the life of a Science Technician: always different; never dull.

The STEM Ambassador Programme: STEM Ambassadors in Scotland

Getting Started with STEM Ambassadors: requesting support



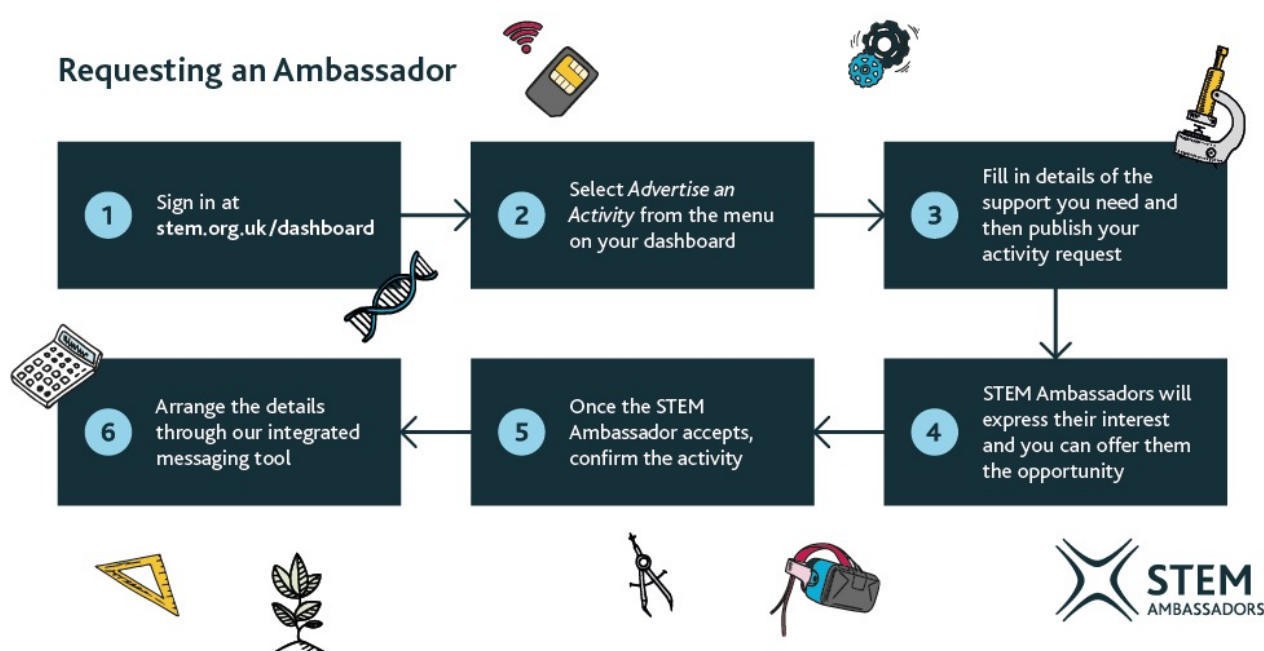
STEM AMBASSADORS IN SCOTLAND

Did you know there are thousands of volunteers in Scotland available to support you with a range of STEM activities in schools?

STEM Ambassadors can join STEM events and activities with young people. They can also support you with activity ideas, designing experiments, or increasing your confidence and understanding of a topic.

Registering to request a STEM Ambassador is simple:

1. Visit the STEM Learning website: www.stem.org.uk/register
2. Register for a new technician account
3. Complete the registration form
4. Registration complete! Place an activity or browse offers



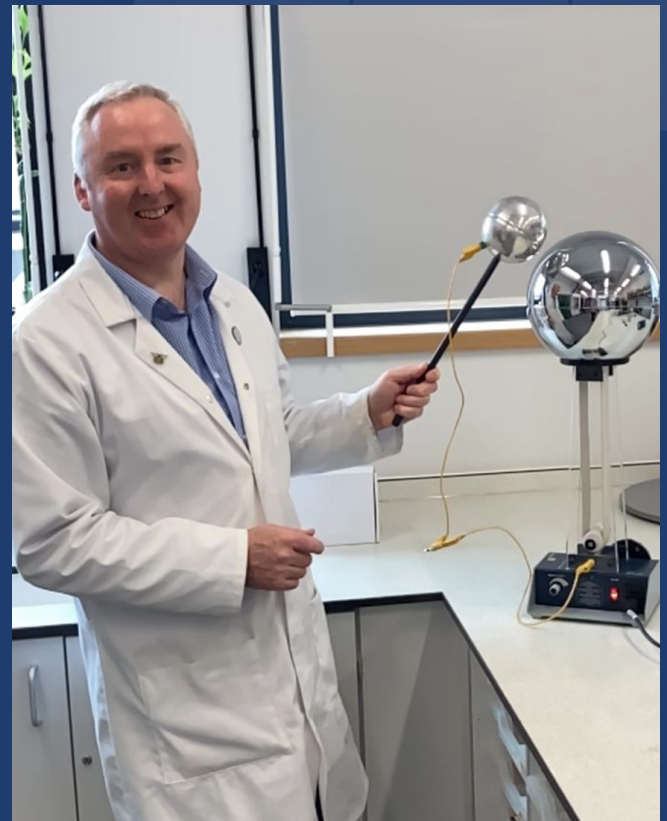
Meet STEM Ambassador and Senior Technician: James Cairney

James, from Cumbernauld Academy, is inspiring young people to find out more about the role of a Technician and the joys of his job by being a STEM Ambassador:

“The beauty of my job is that there is no two days the same and the variety of tasks to do over three disciplines Physics, Chemistry, Biology is plenty. You can be setting up apparatus for a multitude of different experiments or washing up the glassware or sanitising the goggles or filming an experiment or carry out electrical safety test on a piece of apparatus. The list is endless but never boring.”

Read the full Spotlight Profile [here](#).

Would you be interested in becoming a STEM Ambassador and sharing your story? Find out more [here](#).



“Using the Van de Graff generator is also another favourite, for your hair standing up and electric shocks. It is always a winner.”