

Fair Attribution Guidelines for Technical & Specialist Support

We recognise the importance of technicians, equipment, and facilities in conducting research within the University. Users of facilities and services will interact with technicians either during the development of items related to experiments, the preparation of materials, training on equipment, running of routine samples, or during experimental design and analysis of results. It is only fair that the contribution of technicians and facilities to a user's research is attributed in the appropriate manner.

Where appropriate, we expect research active academic staff to follow these guidelines. We also expect that Post-Doctoral Research Assistants and PhD students agree to follow the fair attribution guidelines below, with their supervisors, in advance of conducting their experiments.

There are five distinct cases in which facilities and services are used:

1. User led experiments within the University, with initial training by Technicians, Research Technical Professionals (RTPs) or Shared Research Facility (SRF) staff.
2. Technician support in experimental design and/or data acquisition and/or data interpretation and analysis. This includes support provided as a service via an SRF.
3. Collaboration with external users in which technicians support experimental design and/or data acquisition, and/or data interpretation.
4. Occasional use, to obtain data for a simple experiment, where technicians perform routine characterisation, sending data to the user to analyse, including routine service work provided by SRF staff.
5. The preparation of items or materials used during experiments.

For all five cases, we anticipate that publications and reports will include the following acknowledgement statement:

"The Authors acknowledge use of [insert equipment or service used] provided by [insert team or department name], University of Liverpool."

In cases (2) and (3) the research has required intellectual contributions from one or more technicians or specialist staff. These technicians/specialist staff should be included within the author list of the resultant publication or report and included in discussions during drafting and publication.

Where the research contribution was part of a paid service to an SRF, the staff should still be included in the author list where intellectual contributions have been made.

Although use of an SRF incurs a charge, continued support for LIV-SRF facilities from the university relies in part on demonstrating the success of the SRFs through the outstanding research that we enable; cost recovery in SRFs should not preclude including staff in author lists or acknowledgements, in publications resulting from SRF work.

In case (4) the technicians or specialist staff assisting with the experiment should be acknowledged by name:

"The Authors would like to acknowledge the help of [insert name] and the use of [insert service or characterisation facilities] within the [insert team or department name] at University of Liverpool."

In situations where a technician or other specialist staff member feels that they have contributed to the work, or a researcher wishes to engage the support of a staff member; a discussion should be initiated with the researcher on what would be fair attribution in this instance. If the work is published and fair attribution is not followed, the technician/specialist should raise this with their line manager in the first instance.