

Gratnells Science Technician of the Year Awards...and Happy 50th Birthday!

2020 was an unusual year for everyone, and those in education had to make drastic changes to the ways in which learning and teaching took place. As we continue through 2021, we all have some celebrating to do, including a very special anniversary at Gratnells.

With schools reopening and some things seemingly returning to how they were pre-pandemic, we're now accepting applications for the Gratnells Science Technician of the Year Awards 2021. Things have been delayed due to further uncertainty at the start of the year, but it's important to continue to recognise the role of a school science technician, even more so now than ever.



We appreciate that, throughout the pandemic, technicians' roles may have changed, resulting in their workload and tasks being different from their usual day-to-day activity. With that being said, we know that technicians went above and beyond for their departments and schools and, as always, this deserves to be recognised.

Similar to last year, we're opening the competition to teams of technicians as well as individual applicants, and we are continuing to present awards to science technicians in both the UK and internationally. The initial application process requires submission of just three photographs highlighting your daily life as a technician; this can be anything from prep room pictures, activity photos or selfies of you and the team. We want to see what you've been up to!

We invite technicians to nominate themselves, a colleague or a team of technicians for consideration. We will be accepting applications throughout the summer break and into the new school term, allowing technicians ample time to gather their photos and get them across to us before the deadline on **1st October 2021**.

And this impressive accolade doesn't come without prizes. The individual named Science Technician of the Year 2021 will win a £500 voucher to spend with Gratnells and £300 in cash, along with some Gratnells goodies, including a social media-famous #GratnellsTeaTray and exclusive Gratnells mini trays. The prizes for the international winner, winning team and the runners-up are just as rich, with Gratnells goodies, vouchers and cash up for grabs by all.

For more information on this year's competition and how you can nominate yourself or someone else, please visit www.gratnells.com/stoty2021/

Now in its 13th year, the Gratnells Science Technician of the Year award aims to highlight, celebrate and reward the hard work of science technicians around the world. Although it started as a local award for technicians in the UK, the competition has grown over years and now sees us connecting with technicians and their teams from all around the world. We've had entrants and winners from up and down the UK, as well as international winners from Gibraltar, Australia, Dubai and beyond.

As always, through the Gratnells Science Technician of the Year Awards we consciously recognise the hard work of science technicians in schools and this was no different in 2020. Although we couldn't have a live presentation or visit the winner's school, we were still able to award some outstanding science technicians and celebrate the work that they do.

The Science Technician of the Year 2020 was awarded to Stacey Wheeler of Mounts Bay Academy in Cornwall. A science technician for 11 years, she supports a department of 11 teachers and six labs, alongside offering training and support to other schools in her network. She also runs regular additional clubs for students to allow them to experience things that they wouldn't usually get to in lessons, including CREST Club, a weekly science club and a gardening and polytunnel club, as well as offering regular open-door support meet-ups.

The 2020 runner-up was Irene Gomes of Greig City Academy in London. She offers excellent support for cross-curricular access to science and STEM and works hard to obtain funding to support these clubs.

The third-place winner for 2020 was Karen Giles of Aylesbury Grammar School in Buckinghamshire. She has spent 16 years as a science technician and enjoys trying, testing and developing new things.

Receiving special recognition in 2020 was Grainne McAdam of Caister Academy in Great Yarmouth. During her 9 years as a science technician, she has worked to build a technician network and plans to launch a science club and pursue funding in the future.

Patricio Vasquez-Aguilar and Sarah Linkman of Liverpool Life Sciences UTC were awarded our first team award in 2020. They actively help students to improve lab skills across all subjects and support BTEC, GCSE and A-Level in a very technical lab environment. Together they share expertise, equipment and sometimes train one another in different techniques.

The International Science Technician of the Year award was presented to Olivia Frost of Caloundra State High School in Caloundra, Australia. She inspires and develops students through close interaction with them. She also trains student teachers and is skilled at managing experienced teachers. She does a huge amount to go above and beyond her day-to-day role and makes a real difference through the technicians' network that she has established.



Science Technician of the Year Award 2020 winners

2021 also requires celebration beyond the Science Technician of the Year Awards, and brings Gratnells a special anniversary. This year sees us celebrate 50 years of school storage. Since 1971, and the first year that we presented at an ASE conference, we have been offering storage solutions to schools and, in particular, school science departments.

Hitting a 50th anniversary is a rare thing for a British manufacturer these days, but we are doing just that in 2021 and we have ambitious plans for the future. As well as the iconic school trays, we also make a wide range of storage furniture including trolleys, frames and storage accessories that are popular in learning environments across the world.

Gratnells is a family-run company, which can trace its roots all the way back to 1890s Shoreditch, although the current Gratnells Company was incorporated fifty years ago in 1971. Back then we launched the slotted square tube storage frame, still in production today. Take a look around your science labs and prep rooms and you'll likely find the Gratnells name in there somewhere.

2020 and the height of the pandemic saw us turn our focus towards our healthcare range. We were proud to support and supply equipment to the NHS, including the Nightingale Hospital at ExCeL London. We also introduced an antimicrobial range for the education market. This range uses the same technology as for the healthcare products and can help to minimise the spread of surface contamination in the classroom, and will continue to be favoured as students return to school in September.

To help us celebrate our special anniversary, we want to hear from you. Do you have Gratnells in your prep room or science labs? We wonder if you've got some older trays, trolleys or frames with a story to tell? Take some snaps and share them with us on social media, using #Gratnells50th.

We've got some very exclusive gold trays up for grabs, so be sure to follow us and keep an eye out to be in with a chance of winning one! We'll be running competitions and giveaways throughout the year.

