**Technicians Development Fund – Jade Waller - Hortisystems Training.**

**Training sessions: Tuesday 11th May and Monday 24th May 2021.**

The training I applied for was for a piece of software that was used to automatically control the three glasshouses on the roof of the life science building. We were struggling to get the system to work as we would like, which was having a detrimental effect on some plant science research projects. It is a hugely complex system that no one at the University previously understood. This meant that we were struggling to meet the needs of academics within our department.

**Ease of applying for grant / how you found the process.**

Applying for the Technician’s development fund was a very straightforward and easy process. It was a simple document where we had to detail the type of training we needed and why we really needed it. Due to how crucial the training I was applying for was, I received support from my head of department in my application too. Once hearing that the application was successful, the money was quickly transferred to the relevant account to enable us to progress with organising the training. I really enjoyed developing my skills and already have plans for the next application.

**The immediate impact of having the funds.**

The immediate impact was enabling me to confirm the training course that I obtained a quote for. I was also able to offer this virtual training course to other individuals including technicians, academics and members of FRCS.

**The short-term impact the development has had.**

In the short term, this training course helped myself and our trainer from Hortisystems to identify an issue with the software. Some of the last software update had not installed correctly, and so even if we had known how to use the system to it’s full potential, we would have been unable to. A few small issues within the mechanics of the glasshouse themselves were also suspected. A site visit was then organised for all these problems to be fixed in one mornings work, and now the glasshouse works perfectly. This training has therefore already helped prevent downtime, where areas of the glasshouse could not be used, enabling more research to be conducted. I have also now produced a 37-page manual on how to use the software should anything need to be changed, and explaining what each setting means.

**The longer-term hope for impact of the development.**

As multiple members of the University staff now understand the system to control the glasshouse this will mean that while I am away on maternity leave, all of the plant science researchers will still be able to receive full support for glasshouse climate control. It will also help technicians diagnose faults in the glasshouse more quickly, and with FRCS now having training too, they should be able to understand and fix the issues more rapidly as well.

The manual I have produced is also available to anyone who needs to use the software, with a copy next to the machine, as well as it being available to all technicians on Teams.

We also now have contact details from a member of Hortisystems, who is happy for us to contact him at any time if we have any programming issues.

Overall, this training has enabled a much more efficient and productive technical service to be provided for all glasshouse users, which is already starting to result in increased research outputs. Myself and the other three members of staff who received training all feel much more confident in using the system.