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# CORE TECHNOLOGIES FOR LIFE SCIENCES

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2024

### Calling all CTLS members....CTLS needs you!

How about kicking off 2024 by joining a CTLS Working Group?

Come and join the eager band of volunteers that we already have. It really is true that the more you put in, the more you get out!

There is something for everyone with such a broad range of activities taking place across the CTLS Working Groups.



Check out the [website](#), under Working Groups, to learn all about the Working Groups that we have... and then [email us](#) to express your interest, find out more or arrange to talk to someone.

CTLS is a small organisation with big aspirations to grow but we need the active support of our members to do this! Thank you.

## CTLS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE FOR CORE FACILITY STAFF... APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN!

CTLS is pleased to announce that applications are now open for the 2024 CTLS Professional Development Course for Core Facility Staff. This course will comprise six half-day sessions held on-line from 28th May to 14th June.

Click [here](#) for all the details and how to apply.

Course fee is 1160 EUR.

12 bursaries for CTLS members of 500 EUR each are available to apply for.



Deadline to apply is Friday 12th April.

Core Facility Staff can find themselves in new roles that demand a broad set of skills that they have often not been traditionally taught in their academic career. Transitioning into these roles, handling multiple projects simultaneously, having a service and team-oriented mindset and dealing with users are some of the challenges people typically face in this position.

CTLS in collaboration with hfp consulting, a group specialised in supporting scientists to improve their leadership and management skills, have developed an intense, interactive, and highly specialised course that addresses these challenges. The course has been developed and enhanced, by hfp consulting, after working with many core facility members and managers across different institutes all over the world. Since 2013, this type of course has been well received by many participants and organisers.

### **Give your input on CTLS 2025 Congress topics!**

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey below to express your interest in the proposed congress topics for the

main sessions.

Click [here](#) to access the survey,  
thank you.

The CTLS 2025 Congress will be  
hosted by [CEITEC](#) in Brno, Czech  
Republic, 10th to 12th June 2025.  
Click [here](#) to watch the invitation  
video!



**CTLS 10-12 JUNE 2025**  
BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC

## MASARYK UNIVERSITY STAFF TRAINING (MUST) FOR RESEARCH MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Ondřej Hradil (Research  
Infrastructure Manager, Masaryk  
University) would like to invite  
you all to the first edition of the  
**Masaryk University Staff  
Training (MUST) Week for  
Research Managers and  
Administrators.**



This will be held 17th to 21st June 2024 in Brno. Ondřej Hradil is  
organising this course with colleagues from the Research Office of  
Masaryk University Rectorate and with Kateřina Hošková of CEITEC MU,  
the core facility part.

Please see the preliminary programme [here](#).

A “tour” of central services essential for developing excellent research at  
universities and other research institutions: grant support, research  
evaluation, and management of research infrastructures will be  
included. Participation to individual topics can be considered as well.

Feel free to share the invitation with your colleagues. Participation in the

MUST Week can be funded by Erasmus+ (but this is not essential).

**More information, including how to apply is available [HERE](#). The deadline for applications is 29th February 2024.**

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## CTLS SHADOWING & STAFF EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The new Focus Group Lead is Ilaria Guerini. A scientist by training, Ilaria works as Scientific Training Coordinator at Human Technopole in Milan, Italy.



A strong believer that core-facilities are an asset in any research environment, she is keen to promote professional development, training, and networking within this community at every level.

**The new 2024 [CTLS Shadowing and Staff Exchange Programme](#) is now open!**

This Programme provides successful Applicants with a CTLS Award to fund a visit to a different core facility with priority given to mobility between countries. Through this framework CTLS fosters scientific exchange, collaboration, and networking among the core facility international community.

The Programme has now been running for 2 years and has been very successful. Seventeen Visits have taken place during this time. These are typically for one working week with travel on a Monday and Friday and the Visitor with the Host for 3 full days to enable professional development including the development of core facility management skills.

**In 2023 CTLS funded 10 successful Visits** and below are brief summaries from the Visitors:-

- **João Sobral** (Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência (IGC), Lisbon, Portugal) celebrated 12 years of working as a Genomics Facility Technician by visiting Karim Gharbi (Earlham Institute, Norwich, UK) in the area of

genomics and specifically single-cell and spatial transcriptomics. João was able to acquire many insights as he connected and interacted with more experienced peers. The availability provided by the teams led by Karim Gharbi (Genomics Pipeline) and Iain Macaulay (Technical Development Group) allowed for a sharing of experiences, knowledge of different scientific realities and discussion of ideas in an informal and enriching conversation mode. João has noted that the Programme has served as a catalyst for professional development and created the opportunity to enrich knowledge and assimilate information. This can be applied to daily life or in the future to embed certain ideas, help develop new expertise and improve facility management.

- **Ailsa Laird** (Institute of Regeneration and Repair, University of Edinburgh Edinburgh, UK) visited Andy Riddell (Francis Crick Institute, UK) in the area of flow cytometry. The Visit to a facility of equivalent size enabled Ailsa to learn more on the administrative and operational challenges to develop her new facility into a sustainable cutting edge flow cytometry centre. The area of focus was on training practices the Crick employs to train not only users but also staff whilst ensuring the high quality service is maintained. Both staff training and development are at the heart of Francis Crick Flow Cytometry Facility and the benefits are clear to see within their dynamic team. Ailsa noted that the Visit has impressed upon her how she would like to be as a future core facility manager. She emphasised that the Visit was an invaluable experience for both her personal and professional development and a great opportunity for networking.
- **Sally-Ann Clark** (MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford, UK) visited Peter O'Toole (Biology Technology Facility, University of York, UK) in the area of imaging/cytometry. Sally is a Flow Cytometry Specialist whose primary objective for participating in the CTLS Shadowing Programme was to gain a greater understanding of a shared resource laboratory (SRL) operating under a full economic costing (fEC) financial model, which is the favoured financial model for UK SRLs. Sally was particularly interested in how this can be implemented without a negative impact on service provision or sustainability of the SRL. The Visit was incredibly beneficial with this being covered as well as multiple other insights across one of the UK's leading SRLs.

- **Luis Antonio de Castro Anta** (Confocal Microscopy Service at the Institute of Neurosciences of Castilla y Leon (INCYL-USAL) in Salamanca, Spain) visited Luisa Cortes (Coimbra, Portugal) in the area of microscopy. Luis reported that the Programme offered an excellent opportunity to expand his knowledge and was an incredible learning experience. Working as a Support Technician this Programme helped him improve his skills and gain new skills to support researchers better in confocal microscopy, image analysis using diverse software and the organizational/operational standards of the reservation system. Luis plans to integrate some of these approaches at his Institute to enhance operational efficiency. Overall, the opportunity to experience a different country's approach to microscopy services was very enriching.
- **Niccolò Alfano** (Human Technopole, Milan, Italy) visited Mikael Åberg (SciLifeLab, Uppsala University, Sweden) in the area of proteomics. This was a fantastic opportunity to initiate collaborations and expand both personal and professional development. Immersing in a new laboratory environment abroad, connecting with individuals from diverse backgrounds and engaging with the professionals at the Host institution were valuable experiences. As a technician who has primarily worked within a single facility thus far, this opportunity allowed Niccolò to gain valuable insights into the operations and workflows of different facilities. As a Genomics Specialist with limited experience in proteomics, acquiring knowledge of managing the O-Link Explorer platform in particular was very valuable.
- **Megan Hamilton** (Babraham Institute, Cambridge, UK) visited Stefaan Derveaux (VIB, Belgium) in the area of genomics. Megan is relatively new to the role of a Core Facility Manager and this was an invaluable opportunity to gain real-life experience of similar facilities to her own. Discussions comparing different facilities were very beneficial and included insight into facility management, how to successfully introduce new technologies into the facility, how to adapt services to these new technologies and how to expand and develop a core facility whilst managing budgets and user expectations. Megan especially benefitted from the in-person experience seeing how the day-to-day operations of a core similar to hers worked. Additionally, she got to see two very different sequencing systems and how they compare and integrate into a

genomics core, which has been invaluable as she will be upgrading her own core instrumentation in the coming weeks.

- **Fabio Simeoni** (Human Technopole, Milan, Italy) visited Vladimir Beneš (EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany) in the area of genomics. Immersing himself in such an enriching environment aligned with his goals for personal and professional development and developing a global network with like-minded individuals. The HT Genomics Facility, a dynamic and forward-thinking establishment, is currently facing the need to accommodate a growing number of samples. Simultaneously, maintaining the highest quality standards remains paramount and achieving these goals necessitates the integration of automation systems into workflows. Fabio is a Senior Technician within the Genomics Facility and realizing the full potential of two new instruments in terms of quality and throughput was a big driver for visiting EMBL's Genomics Facility with both these platforms already operational.
- **Natalia Meani** (Human Technopole, Milan, Italy) visited Jussi Helppi (Max Planck Institute, Dresden, Germany) in the area of facilities management. Natalia is a senior Advisor at Human Technopole (HT) who has been deeply immersed in the development of research infrastructures for the HT scientific campus. Spending valuable time with Jussi Helppi, a distinguished representative of MPI Core Facilities (CFs) and services and Head of Biomedical Services (BMS), and the management team enabled discussions and brainstorming. Topics covered included decision-making processes related to resource allocation, such as space management and budget allocation for new equipment. Natalia also explored the operational model, particularly in the context of collaborative projects that require coordination across facilities. Additionally, Natalia and Jussi delved into the tools used to track processes across units and allocate costs.
- **Simone Bugani** (Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences and the Center for Applied Biomedical Research at the University of Bologna, Italy) visited Juan Garcia Vallejo (Amsterdam University Medical Center, Netherlands) in the area of facilities management. Simone is the Coordinator of the laboratories and this opportunity aligned perfectly with professional goals. His primary responsibilities revolve around the organization and management of research laboratories and

support services. Following contact at CTLS Dublin Simone visited Prof Vallejo's lab and shared experiences and insights into overcoming challenges in core facilities. This is hopefully the first step in establishing an ongoing collaboration and a network of research facilities operating in clinical contexts or in direct collaboration with hospitals, where the exchange of ideas and best practices becomes an integral part of our professional growth.

- **Biljana Petrovic** (Applied Biomedical Research Center (CRBA), University of Bologna, Italy) also visited Juan Garcia Vallejo (Amsterdam University Medical Center, Netherlands), Director of Microscopy and Cytometry Core Facility (MCCF). As Head of the Single Cell Analysis and Imaging Core Facility, Biljana supports researchers in the development, execution and data analysis of the experimentation involving different equipment, including a live-cell imaging platform and flow cytometer. With the expansion of the flow cytometry equipment this Visit provided a good chance to get inspiration, new ideas and motivation as well as developing Biljana's network of professional contacts. She had the opportunity to talk with many managers and each of them helped to give her an insight into the management of a big facility centre. It was also an opportunity to share experiences and discuss and solve issues and opportunities that concern many core facilities, including core facility management software systems, user training, experimental/data analysis execution and integrating new technologies. She also found it very useful to shadow the cytofluorimetry facility manager during a user's training to better understand what to focus on to make the user as independent as possible.





**Biljana Petrovic and Simone Bugani** (University of Bologna, Italy) visited Juan Garcia Vallejo (Amsterdam University Medical Center, Netherlands) in the areas of live cell imaging/flow cytometry and facilities management, respectively (top figures). **João Sobral** visited Karim Gharbi and Iain MacAulay (Earlham Institute, Norwich, UK) in the area of single-cell and spatial transcriptomics (bottom figure).

Many thanks to the Shadowing and Staff Exchange Focus Group (Luisa Cortes, Vicktoryia Sidarovich, Veronica de Sanctis, Marion Berard, Rashi Halder and Ian Brewis, former Lead of the Group) for managing this Scheme which is part of the Training Working Group (led by Luisa Cortes).

Happy New Year,

Ilaria Guerini (Shadowing and Staff Exchange Focus Group Lead)

### Check out the upcoming ABRF2024 conference!



The [ABRF2024](#) conference will be held 21st to 24th April in Minneapolis, USA.

Click [here](#) to view the conference agenda.

### More events to consider....

#### 1st German FlowCore Summit

This will take place 12th and 13th March 2024 in Mainz, Germany.

Click [here](#) to learn all about this summit. Registration is now open.

ABRF promotes education and career advancement for scientists, core administrators, and staff through conferences, a quarterly journal, publication of research group studies and conference scholarships. The society also sponsors multi-center research studies designed to help members incorporate new biotechnologies into their laboratories.



Click [here](#) to learn all about this conference.



Each seminar can be a single presentation or several shorter presentations by several presenters within one technological platform (or maybe an integrated multi-platform approach toward well defined analytical or scientific problem).

The seminars are expected to attract specialist audiences, strengthening interactions between CTLS and EU-Life members from different entities within a particular technological platform.

The seminars will be organised by EU-Life, with input from CTLS. To organise this CTLS input, Krzysztof wants to set up a CTLS Steering Committee (as part of Community Engagement Working group) responsible for identifying and choosing new seminar subjects. The aim is to encompass a broad range of Core Facility specialities such as microscopy, flow cytometry, mass spectrometry, genomics and structural biology.



**Do you have ideas for subjects and presenters for this webinar series? Please click [here](#) to complete this short survey to give your input, thank you.**

**Would you like to join this CTLS Steering Committee to support this exciting new initiative? Please [email Krzysztof](#) to find out more and to volunteer.**

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### **CTLS membership**

Remember to invite your colleagues and friends to join us!

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CTLS membership has many benefits including:

- Reduced rates and priority registration at CTLS congresses and events
- Access to CTLS sponsored trainings at preferred rates
- Networking opportunities with other core facility staff



- Access to CTLS webpages with news, job listings and event

Click [here](#) to renew or join.



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