



Karen Haggerty

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Northumbria technician wins acclaimed Papin Prize

An inspirational technician from Northumbria University, Newcastle, has achieved national recognition for her contribution to teaching.

Applied Sciences senior technician Karen Haggerty was one of the winners at this year's prestigious Papin Prizes, which recognise excellence in academia at the only national event dedicated to celebrating the success and achievements of technical staff. Among just 11 winners from 357 nominations, she was presented with her award at the biennial Higher

Education Technicians Summit organised by Midlands Innovation and MI TALENT in partnership with the Technician Commitment and the Science Council.

The Papin Prizes are among the most highly regarded awards for technicians in the higher education sector, recognising the varied and valuable role they play in research and teaching. This year's event was also sponsored for the first time by UK Research and Innovation.

Karen was awarded for her contribution to teaching and enhancing the learning experience for students diagnosed with the development disability Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). She created a series of storyboard scripts for the chemistry lab practicals, providing a visual step-by-step guide to support practical-based learning and to help students with ASD understand what was required. Feedback has been so positive that Karen's storyboard concept is now being offered to other students, including those whose first language isn't English.

Brian McMahon, Faculty Technical Support Manager, said: "This is well deserved recognition for Karen, and reflects the positive contribution she has made to the student learning experience. The lab-based practicals can be difficult and stressful for some, and it is noticeable to see just how many students are now using Karen's storyboards and how much more confident they are as a result. This additional learning resource really does complement the existing material and has benefited a wide range of learners across multiple programmes."

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange at Northumbria Professor Louise Bracken, added: "The contribution our technicians make to research and teaching is a fundamental part of Northumbria's success, and essential to the learning experience, positive outcomes enjoyed by our students and undertaking quality research. We actually had three Northumbria technicians shortlisted for the Papin prizes this year, and they were all truly inspirational. So well done to each of them on their achievement, and a special congratulations to Karen for winning the contribution to teaching category."

The Papin Prizes are named after Denis Papin, a 17th century technician who worked with Robert Boyle. Papin invented the steam digester and was one of the first technicians to publish in his own name.

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