

Steve Johnson – Operations Manager (Infrastructure), College of Medical and Dental Sciences



Steve began his varied and successful career at the University in 1975 on a training programme for technical staff based in the School of Biochemistry. After completing his training he progressed to a basic teaching grade post servicing practical classes. He did this for six years before deciding that it was time for a change of scene and moved to a similar grade job but this time carrying out research in the School of Malting and Brewing, which he did until the School closed.

He then moved to a research position in the Dental School before moving to the Biochemistry department to work alongside a former colleague from Brewing doing research into barley. Eventually he moved to a senior technical post in the Institute of Child Health. Steve really enjoyed this role and worked there for some nine years, being promoted to laboratory manager when the Director of Laboratories very sadly and suddenly passed away. During this period, the relocation of the Children's Hospital took place and Steve took up the challenge of working as project manager on behalf of the Institute, which had close links with the Children's Hospital. This required an entirely new set of skills and Steve found that he had to be unafraid to ask questions and learn new things.

Following a period of restructuring in the Medical School, Steve stepped into the new, higher grade role of Divisional Technical Manager. He became involved in developing the specifications for the new Institute of Biomedical Research, then in planning stages. This project evolved from one day a week to three or four days a week, and eventually Steve was released full time to concentrate on the development of several new laboratory buildings. In 2002 the Medical School recognised the need to bring together professional leadership for technical management and create a conduit for more productive and effective working partnership with corporate service colleagues, and Steve was appointed Buildings and Technical Manager.

Following the University of Birmingham's reorganisation into Colleges in 2008, Steve became Operations Manager for Infrastructure in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, responsible for College-wide technical staff, health and safety, technology hub, new build and refurbishment projects, and much more, with a core management team of around fifteen and a wider responsibility for over one hundred other staff.

Steve says, "It's all about taking opportunities and saying 'I want to do this' rather than waiting for people to offer it to you. Sometimes people think you lack ambition when you say you have worked at the University for over thirty years, but in reality the University is like a small town providing opportunities for new experiences, if you're willing to take them. In collaboration with external funding bodies, extremely generous donations via our Alumni / DARO initiatives and University investment, my College has been proactive in the delivery of over £80million in new facilities in the last 10 years. There are a whole host of projects and proposals underway in MDS and I still get a buzz coming into work. **I consider myself fortunate in that opportunities have presented themselves throughout my career with the University and I have been very lucky to have received the level of support and encouragement I have from numerous people within the College and greater University, and this is something I try to provide to my own team.** I don't feel I have reached the top of the career ladder just yet. I am very supportive of continuing professional development for those who want it, and personally I would like to continue developing my career perhaps into a university-wide role or maybe someday within a university central management team."