

## Technician Commitment: Stage 3 Self-Assessment & Action Plan Guidance

*Please note: This guidance and template is for institutions who have already submitted their Stage One and Two Self-Assessments & Action Plans, 1 and 3 years after becoming an official signatory of the Technician Commitment. This guidance and template refers to the third stage of self-assessment and action planning to be submitted 6 years after the submission of the original submission.*

The Technician Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines.

The third stage of self-assessment and action planning process asks for reflection on past action plans, evidence of progress and engagement and a further 36 month action plan. The self-assessment includes a 'RAG' analysis of previous action plans - a 'Red, Amber & Green' status report.

The Technician Commitment Steering Board does not seek to dictate how organisations promote a positive culture for the technician community. This is a matter for autonomous institutions and the technician, research and academic community to agree. It is expected that as a minimum, signatories publicly state their Technician Commitment signatory status and institutional action plans on a dedicated and discoverable webpage, along with their named point of contact. The Steering Board asks signatories to evidence that the 'technician voice' is present in the development and formation of institutional action plans. The Technician Commitment is a collaborative endeavour and the Steering Board will support and facilitate the establishment and sharing of best practice demonstrated in the self-assessments and action plans. A vibrant community of Institutional Leads tasked with implementing the Technician Commitment has developed since the Commitment's inception and the Steering Board aims to ensure a range of forums are available to enable peers to share expertise, good practice and experiences.

Cross referencing to other sector institutional reviews relevant to technicians is welcomed; for example, the Steering Board are keen to learn how signatories are advancing equality, diversity and inclusion for the technical community and institutions may wish to reference Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter submissions. The Steering Board are also keen to learn of Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submissions and Research Excellence Framework (REF) environment statements where technicians have been explicitly mentioned. The Steering Board are particularly keen to see activity and plans to enact the recommendations of the TALENT Commission embedded in Stage 3 self-assessments and action plans.

The Technician Commitment Steering Board, through the executive team, will choose a limited number of submissions for active review between the institution and the Technician Commitment.

Please note that finalised Action Plans should be signed off at an institutional leadership level (e.g. Vice-Chancellor/President/Director level).

For any additional queries, please contact [techscommit@gatsby.org.uk](mailto:techscommit@gatsby.org.uk)

## Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

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**Contact Number: 0151 794 2193**

Please provide an overview of technical staff structures in your organisation, along with details of any changes to these over the past 6 years in response to the Technician Commitment.

### Part 1: Role distribution data.

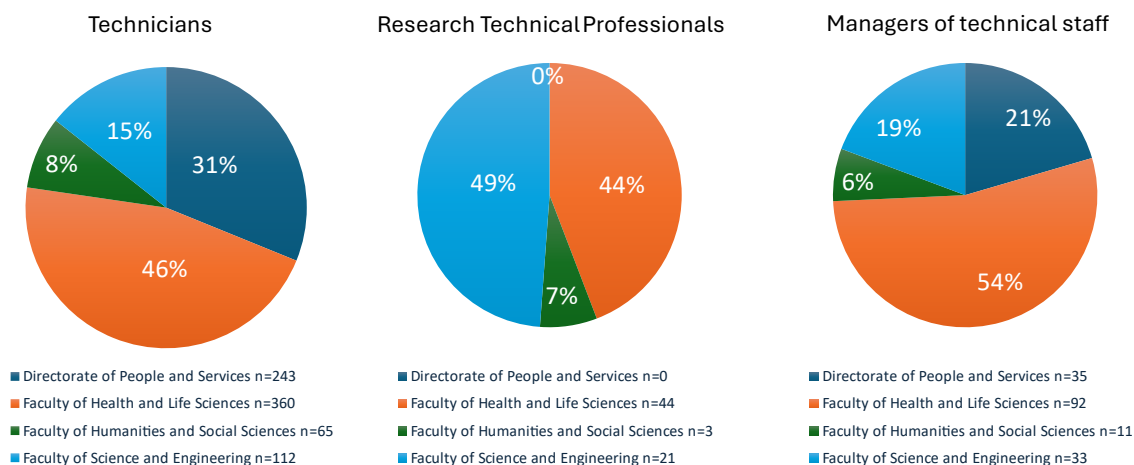
There are 780 staff in technical roles at the University of Liverpool (May 2024).

The technical workforce has grown since our stage 2 submission; increasing by 111 staff from 669, which is a positive sign that we are investing in and creating technical roles. One area of growth is in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with the creation of our [Tung Auditorium](#) which is supported by a technical team within the School of the Arts. Staff in technical roles are primarily located at our main campus in Liverpool, our Leahurst campus and Ness Gardens in Wirral, although we also have technical staff based on several hospital sites in the Liverpool city region.

In 2023 we launched our sector leading [Research Technical Professional](#) (RTP) promotion pathway to recognise, attract and retain our specialist technical staff. Our pathway runs from grade 6 (senior technician equivalent) to grade 10 (professorial level equivalent), with the option for grade 5 technical staff to apply onto the pathway. To date, in addition to our 780 technicians, we also have 43 Research Technical Professionals at the University. The creation of our pathway has been recognised as trailblazing in the sector and, in recognition of this, we were runners up in the [Universities Human Resources \(UHR\) award](#) for Reward and Recruitment.

Below we present data on our technical workforce, research technical professionals and managers of technical staff. These data provide the background against which we have interpreted a) areas in which we see continued improvements, for example the gender split of our technical workforce and b) areas that will receive additional focus over the next three years, for example diversifying the ethnicity of our technical and RTP staff.

Figure 1: Distribution of staff across the organisation



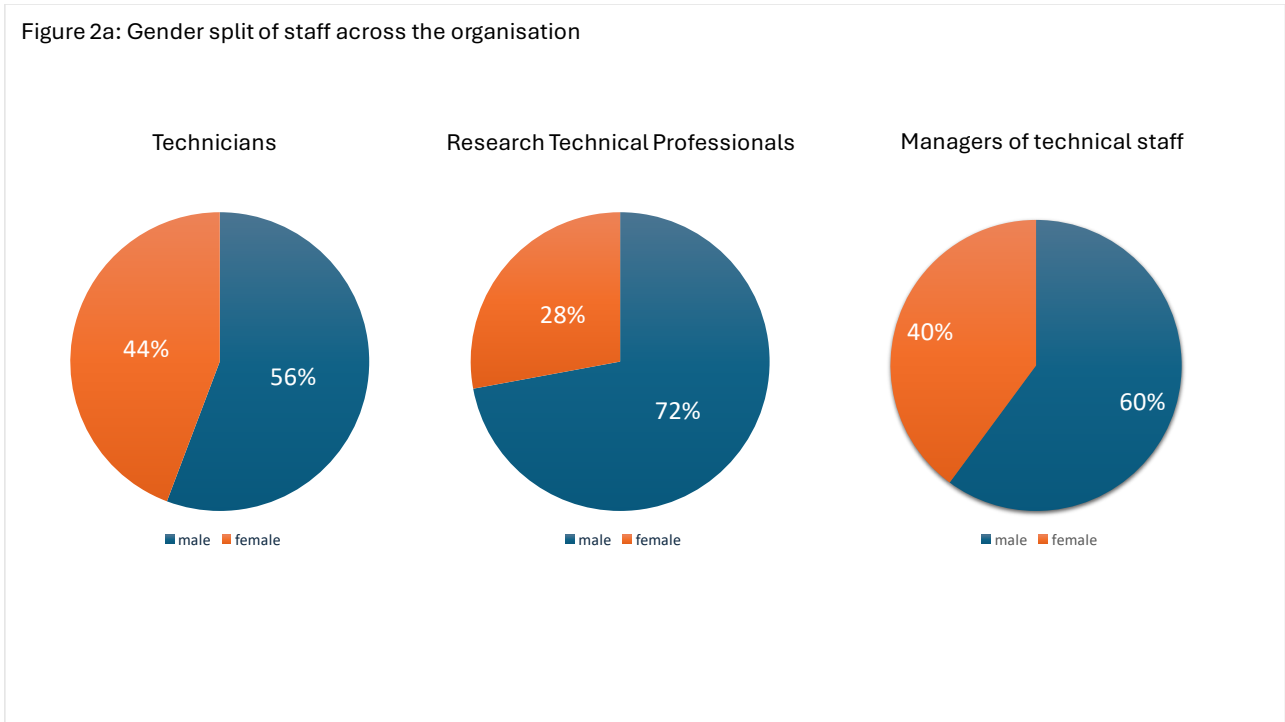
Part 2: Gender distribution data.

The gender split across technical roles in our university has become more equal across the organisation over the last three years - our stage 2 assessment showed a ratio of 58:42 Male: Female, whereas as can be seen in Fig 2a it is now it is 56:44.

There is a less equal split of RTPs; however, as we have only had two cohorts of staff apply to move onto the pathway to date, it is still too early to draw conclusions. This data will be monitored and reported on going forward.

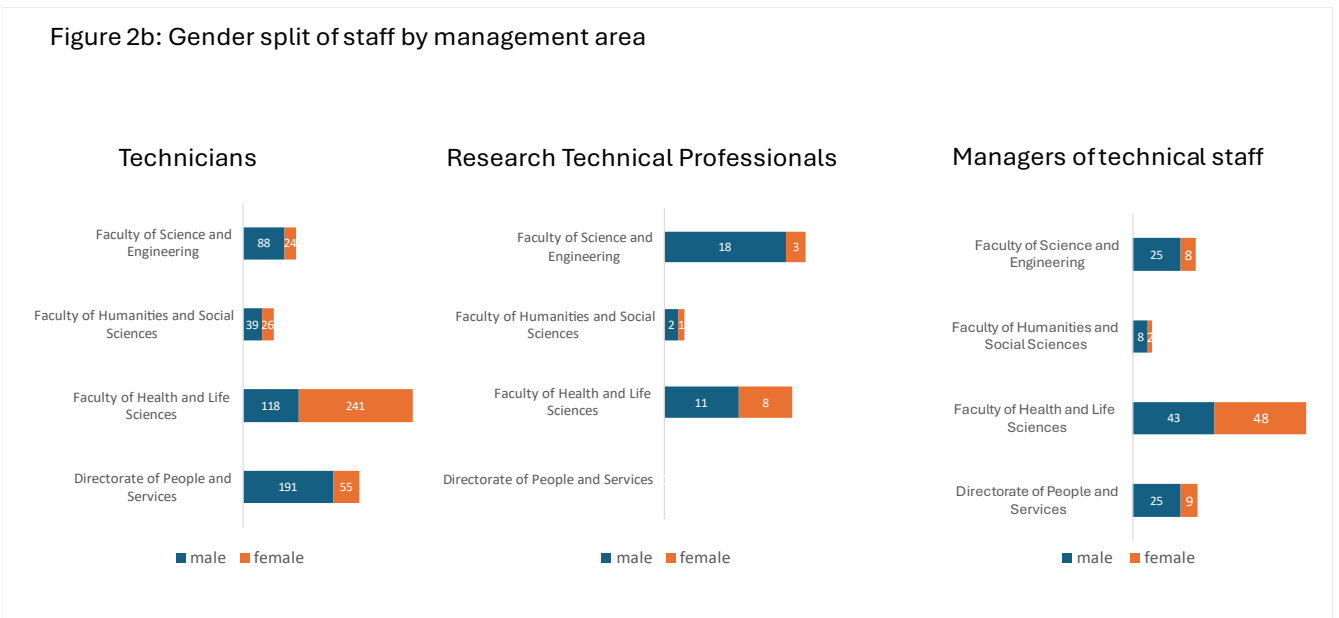
We recognise we have a less equal gender split of staff managing technicians, 60 Male: 40 Female compared to technicians themselves 56 Male: 44 Females. We are committed to supporting our female technicians to move into senior positions and have supported twenty-two women to participate in the Herschell programme for women in technical leadership so far. Nearly half of our participants have since progressed into higher positions within the organisation or externally. Sarah Northey and Sandra Pereira-Cachinho have moved into technical supervisor positions, while Catherine Hartley and Val Tilston have been promoted onto the RTP pathway. Sam Williams moved from senior technician to become a project manager, while Rachael Bell was awarded the very first [technical staff award](#) at The University, further highlighting the increased recognition of our technical staff.

Figure 2a: Gender split of staff across the organisation



We are pleased with our progress in relation to the technical staff gender balance at Liverpool. However, Fig 2.b highlights that we still have further work to do when we break this down by management area. In the Faculty of Science and Engineering and the Directorate of People and Services, the gender split continues to show more male technicians and in the Life Sciences, the gender split favours female technicians. While we recognise that these inequalities are observed nationally in these disciplines and are not unique to the University of Liverpool, they indicate the focus for further activity over the coming period.

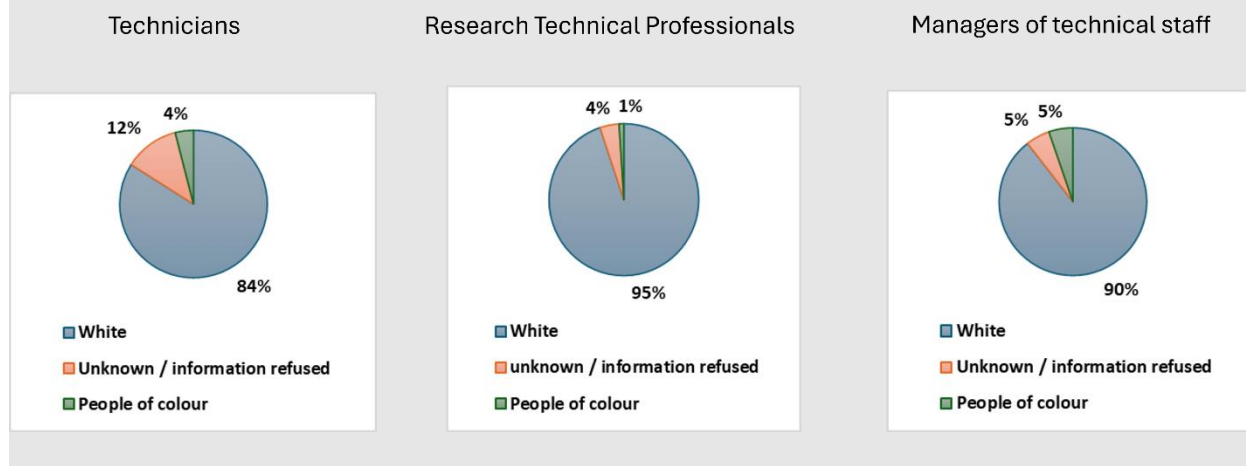
Figure 2b: Gender split of staff by management area



Part 3 Ethnicity data.

Figure 3 show the ethnicity data of our workforces.

Figure 3: Ethnicity of staff across the organisation



The ethnicity data above highlights a further focus for our activities in the coming years, driven by our Equality Objectives Action Plan. During 2024 we plan to review inclusive recruitment practices and guidance, including development for panel members, to include a focus on positive action, unconscious bias, understanding neurodiversity and reasonable adjustments.

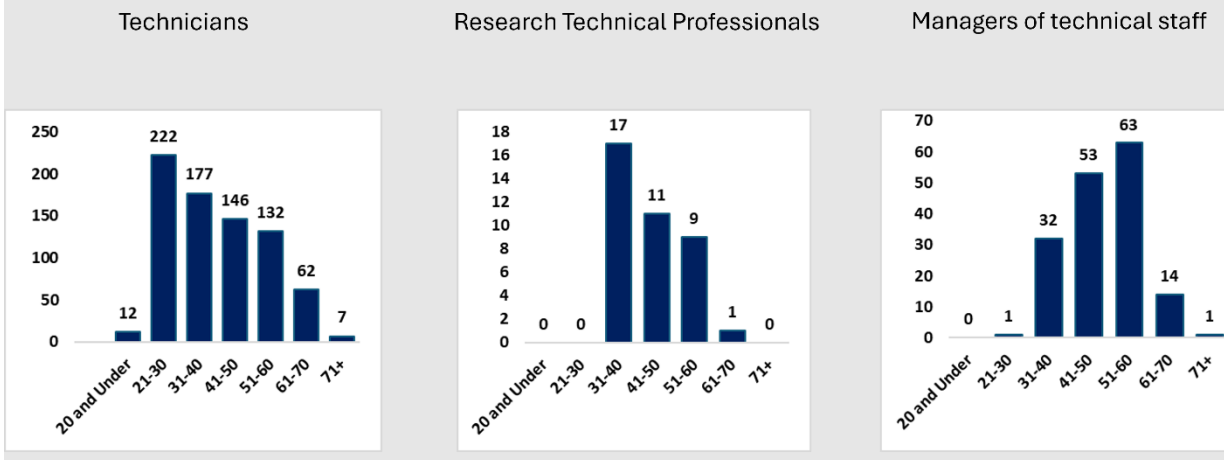
We are also planning more outreach and engagement via events such as the [Black Science Bootcamp](#) which has run for two years to date and [In2ScienceUK](#) placements, plus targeted T-level placement offerings with local further education colleges in the Liverpool City Region.

#### Part 4 Age data.

Figure 4 shows our age distribution data of relevant staff. Our largest group of technical staff sit in age group 21-30 years, highlighting a shift towards a younger technical workforce since stage 2, when most staff were 30-39 years old. We have also been recruiting at entry level with a view to “grow our own” and now have twelve technicians aged twenty or younger in the University, whereas we had no staff of this age previously.

With relation to colleagues on the RTP Pathway, we have no staff under 30 years of age and only one manager; reflecting the time colleagues need to develop and increase their experience in order to become technical specialists or managers.

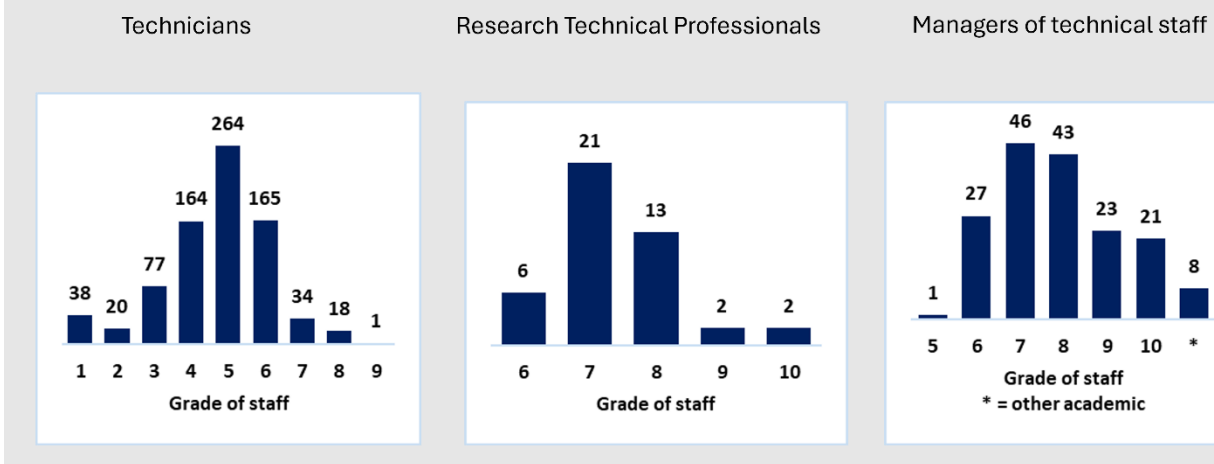
Figure 4: Age distribution of staff across the organisation



Part 5 Grade distribution data.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of our staff by grade. Our biggest cohort of technical staff are working at the start of senior technician level grade 5, which reflects the high qualification or experience level our technical staff hold at The University of Liverpool. This technical grade distribution is reflected nationally.

Figure 5: Grade distribution of staff across the organisation

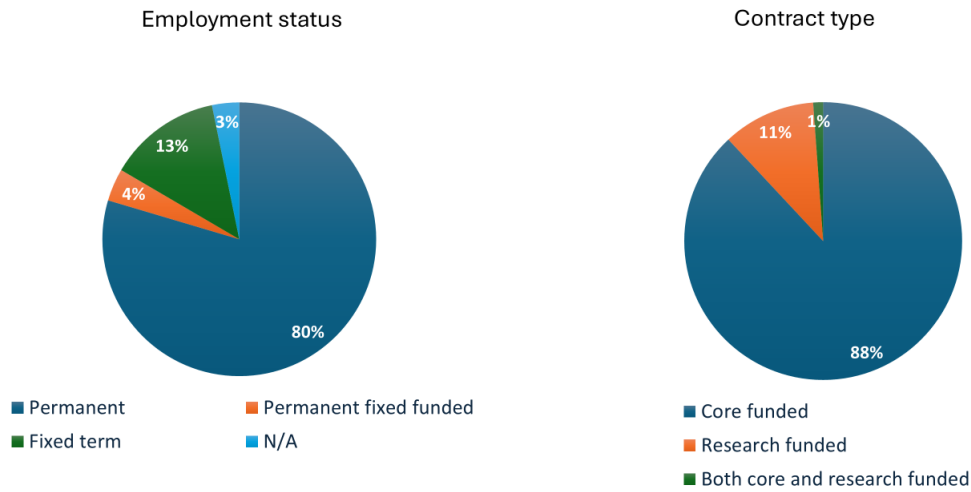


Our RTP pathway starts at grade 6. In 2023 ten grade 6 technicians were promoted to grade 7 RTP, progressing due to their specialism, when previously they had been at the top of grade 6 on the technical scale for several years. This is a remarkable success story of “smashing the glass ceiling.” We have also seen two RTP staff reach grade 10 professorial equivalent, which motivates and supports the aspirations of the whole workforce. In 2024, for the second cohort, we opened applications for grade 5 technical staff to apply for promotion onto the RTP pathway.

We have a wide distribution of grading for staff managing our technicians. We will review this going forward.

Part 6. employment status and contract type.

Figure 6: Employment status and contract type for our technical staff



The percentage of permanent technical posts remains the same since our stage 3 submission at 80% and 88% of our technical staff are core funded staff, providing security and helping retain technical skills within the organisation.

This year we have embarked upon a review of staff on fixed term contracts, which is a very positive move. The University intends that those employees with 4 or more years of continuous service, who have held more than one fixed-term contract (FTC) during their service (i.e., have been employed on successive FTCs for 4 years or more), should have their appointments converted to permanent contracts, unless a valid objective justification for continued use of a FTC applies. This principle reflects the University's commitment to adopting progressive and inclusive employment practices, for the benefit of all colleagues.

Please provide an overview of the governance, leadership and reporting lines of the Technician Commitment at your institution, along with details on how it is resourced, and information on how your organisation has engaged with the wider community within and beyond your institution. How has this developed since you became a signatory?

The Leadership, Organisational, Professional and Academic Development Academy (The Academy) is responsible for the Technician Commitment at the University of Liverpool. The Technician Commitment Steering Group is made up of the following staff:

Chair – Dr James Howard, Director of the Academy

Matthew Davis, Organisational Developer, The Academy

Paul Gilbert, Technical Manager, Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

Dr Kevin Cham, Technical Manager, Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

Jan Brett, Strategic Technical Lead, Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

Caroline Billing, Head of Operations, Faculty of Science & Engineering

Kathryn Knuckey, Head of MIF Technical Operations, Faculty of Science & Engineering

Laura Lightfoot, Faculty Director of Operations, Faculty of Science & Engineering

Matthew Bayliss, Senior School IT & AV Technician, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Fintan Dineen, Technical Team Leader, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Sarah Northey, Technical Supervisor, Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

Steven Chappell, Assistant Technical Supervisor, and Instrument Technician

Tony Topping, Senior Learning Technologist, Faculty of Science & Engineering

This group reports into our Human Resources Senior Leadership Team which then reports to our University Senior Leadership Team.

Please see appendix 1 for a summary of progress made since becoming a signatory.

Please provide a RAG analysis on your institutional 36-month action plan indicating which activities you have undertaken and completed (green), which are in progress (amber) and which are still to be carried out (red). Please provide an explanation for those categorised as red.

This may be detailed here or attached to this document as an appendix.

Please see appendix 2



Please provide evidence that your previous action plans are having impact. (For example, you may wish to provide links to initiatives, websites, testimonials, articles/blogs).

The Technician Commitment Steering Group, Technical Leaders' Forum, Technicians' Network and Technician Ambassadors are used on a continuous basis to iteratively evaluate the effectiveness and fit of any proposed action. Note that all these groups have been formed as a direct result of becoming a signatory of the commitment and each group offer their own unique methods to enhance the visibility, sustainability, career progression and recognition of our technical workforce.

Building on some of our sector leading work completed under previous actions plans, such as the [Statement of Expectations](#), [Fair Attribution Guidance](#), and delivery of the [Technicians' Development Fund](#) we have now created and implemented the renowned [Research Technical Professional Career Pathway](#).

The Research Technical Professional Career Pathway has been developed for three main purposes: recruitment, retention, and recognition. It is the realisation of a key element of our previous Technician Commitment Action Plan and a clear indication of our investment in the technical workforce. Details on how this works at Liverpool and the scope of its participants can be found in the [RTP brochure](#).

Please provide details of how your institution is enacting the recommendations of the TALENT Commission (<https://www.mitalent.ac.uk/theTALENTcommission>).

We have embedded the TALENT recommendations directly into our action plan for 2024-2027. They are clearly marked as \*TCR.

Please provide a 36-month action plan; detailing plans to ensure your organisation continues to address the themes of the Technician Commitment and details of how impact will be evidenced and initiatives resourced: (this may be detailed here or attached to this document as an appendix). Please evidence how the 'technician voice' was present in the development and formation of the 36-month action plan.

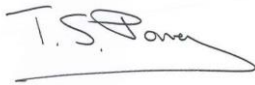
Please see appendix 3

Please confirm that your Technician Commitment status and 3-year action plan is published on your organisation's website and provide the relevant URL here:



Signed (Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead)

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024



Signed (Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 23 July 2024