

Technician Commitment Update Paper - February 2024

Background

In October 2017 the Technician Commitment was signed by then VC Janet Beer and a subsequent steering group was formed to begin work on the four areas stated below.

- Visibility
- Recognition
- Career Development
- Sustainability

The first action plan was submitted in October 2018 which had a 2-year lifespan. The achievements made in relation to that plan are summarised below:

Action	Achievements
Visibility – Ensure that all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution.	Established a regular Technical Leaders’ Forum for senior technical staff, to give a voice to this key technical community and ensure strategic engagement with the steering group and Technician Ambassadors (two members of SLT).
	Launched the Technicians’ Network as a mechanism for further community building, fostering relationships, enabling communication across the technical workforce and as a route for development activity.
	Held two flagship Technical Showcase events to raise the visibility of the role, impact and expertise of the technical community. These events proved very successful, attracting over 1000 staff in total between the two.
	Launched a dedicated web presence, the Technicians’ Hub, hosted on the University’s external website. The Hub provides a single point of access to all information related to the Commitment and associated development and support for the technical community.
Recognition – Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration.	Established a dedicated fund to support technicians’ engagement with professional registration. The fund enables the reimbursement of the first year of fees for any technician who becomes professionally registered with their relevant awarding body.
	Published and communicated Fair attribution guidance which outlines how technicians and technical facilities should be recognised as contributors to the research endeavour of the University.
Career Development – Enable career progression	Created a Statement of Expectations which has been agreed by our Senior Leadership Team, communicated throughout the University

opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways.	and published on our external webpages. The Statement outlines the expectations placed on technicians and technical leaders and captures the commitment the university gives to the development of its technical workforce.
	Started the scoping the development of a professional career pathway for technicians. Which in 2023 became the Research Technical Professional Career Pathway.
	Created a dedicated Technicians' Development Fund to directly support opportunities for individual technicians and technical teams to engage in high-value development.
	Continued investment in our technical workforce through subscription to HEaTED and communication of the opportunities for development it presents.
Sustainability – Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised.	Created a skills-sharing app that technicians can use to learn new skills and techniques from fellow technicians within the university.
	Each school and department within the three faculties were provided with workforce planning data to support managers to actively address talent development and ensure that the sustainability of technical services is being considered

In March 2021 we submitted our self-assessment for our first plan together with a new 36-month action plan. The feedback on our work to this date was extremely positive as Helen Pain CSci CChem FRSC and Kelly Vere MBE of the Science Council wrote “The University has delivered great progress on all Technician Commitment themes and proposes a strong action plan that builds on the excellent work attained so far. Some of the initiatives have had great success and we encourage the University to continue the good work with potential consideration for a) emphasising how the technician voice is captured and contributes to the initiatives taken forward and b) how outcomes can be qualitatively/quantitatively measured to demonstrate impact. Overall, this is a sector leading submission – well done to the team behind it.”

The new plan had the same overarching 4 area of focus. The summary of achievements made up until December 2023 are as follows:

Action	Achievements
Visibility - Ensure that technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution	Continued to support the Technical Network in the creation of workplace tours and also held quarterly forums for the technical leaders to disseminate good practice and share individual insights.
	Published and distributed a e-zine ‘Technically speaking’ focussed on the work of technical teams. This eventually was amalgamated into LivUni People magazine.
Recognition – Support technicians to gain	We achieved a 50% increase on technicians becoming professional registered by supporting a mentoring scheme for technicians across

recognition through professional registration.	all faculties to be supported in their applications. This was also supported by the dedicated fund to pay for the first years of professional registration Fees.
	Increased applications from the technical community to the 'unsung hero' staff award. With the 2023 winner being a technician. This has since been a factor in winning the argument for a Technician of the Year staff award which will be implemented from 2024.
	Achieved a 20% increase in technicians accessing development in mental health first aid. This was as a direct outcome of the Institute of Physicians report into Technicians providing frontline and vital support for student mental health and wellbeing.
Career Development – Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways.	In March 2023 we became the first university in the UK to introduce a comprehensive promotion pathway for specialist technical support staff.
	Successfully granted funds for novel and practice enhancing development activities for technician via the Technicians Development Fund.
Sustainability – Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised.	We provided support which enabled successful outreach activities to schools and colleges in the LCR. These then led to the creation of multiple T Level Placements in HLS and SE.
	We achieved a 20 % increase in technicians completing leadership training to further their careers.

Going Forward

The next self-assessment and action plan is being written and will be submitted before the deadline of 31st July 2024. There is still lots to achieve. The N8 broadly support the 16 recommendations issued in the [Talent Commission Report](#) and our next action plan will ensure these recommendations amongst UoL specific requirements are met.