Technician Commitment: Stage Two Self-Assessment & Action Plan Guidance

Please note: This guidance and template is for institutions who have already submitted their Stage One Self-Assessment & Action Plan, 12-13 months after becoming an official signatory of the Technician Commitment. This guidance and template refers to the second stage of self-assessment and action planning to be submitted 2 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 second stage of self-assessment and action planning process asks for reflection on past action plans, 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.

To continue to support institutional action planning, please see Appendix A for examples of activities and initiatives that have been successfully implemented in a range of universities and research institutes. Additional details are available on the Technician Commitment's dedicated online resource, available at http://technicians.org.uk/techniciancommitment/. 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.

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 k.vere@sciencecouncil.org

Please note that finalised 3-year Action Plans should be signed off at an institutional leadership level (e.g. Vice-Chancellor/President/Director level).

Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: University of Birmingham (UoB)

Name of Institutional Lead: Dr Kate Bishop, Director of Operations, College of Medical and Dental Sciences

E-mail: k.bishop@bham.ac.uk

Contact Number: 07854257198

Please provide an overview of technical staff structures in your organisation.

For more than a century, the University of Birmingham (UoB) has thrived by being innovative, ambitious and collaborative. Founded in 1900, it now employs more than 8,000 staff and has an annual turnover of more than £700 million.

With more than 20,000 undergraduate and 14,000 postgraduates distributed across five academic colleges, Birmingham is constantly developing and evolving in its desire to become a leading global university. Characterised by a tradition of innovation, research at the University has broken new ground, pushed forward the boundaries of knowledge and made an impact on people's lives. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, 28% of its submitted research was rated as world-leading and a further 53% rated internationally excellent. The University submission to REF 2021 covered 34 different subject areas, exemplifying the diversity of the research base. The University is a member of the Russell Group of universities and a founder member of the Universitas 21 international network, as well as the Midlands Innovation group of universities.

In September 2018 Birmingham welcomed its first cohort of students to its newly established Dubai campus, becoming the first global top 100 and Russell Group University to establish a campus in Dubai. In 2018 new £40m Collaborative Teaching Laboratory was opened, which brings together practical teaching activities across a broad range of science and engineering disciplines, transforming the way STEM subjects are taught at the University. As part of the University's ambitious capital plan the new School of Engineering opened in 2021 and new Molecular Sciences Research Facilities and a new Biomedical and Clinical Skills Centre are planned for completion within the forthcoming period.

Within the University of Birmingham, there are 459 technicians across the institution, with the majority in the 3 STEM Colleges of Life and Environmental Sciences, Medical and Dental Sciences and Engineering and Physical Sciences. A number of technicians (n=58) are located within central professional services teams including Estates, IT and Campus Services.

There are similar technical staffing structures, with the use of generic job descriptions, within the three STEM Colleges. The structure aims to provide fair and transparent opportunities for staff to progress on general technical, specialist, operational and management career pathways. It also ensures that technical staff are embedded within supportive and knowledgeable management structures. Technical staff across the University are all members of the University's professional services structure which ultimately reports to the University's Registrar, via College Directors of Operations or University Senior Officers.

Staffing related support is delivered via the University's Human Resources Team, which includes HR Operations, Workplace Wellbeing and People and Organisational Development.

Please tell us about your institution's approach to the Technician Commitment since becoming a signatory. Comments on governance and reporting lines, resources and wider community engagement are welcomed.

The Birmingham Professional (https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/excellence/professional/index.aspx) is a University of Birmingham initiative aimed at supporting all staff working in professional services roles (including technical staff) and affirms the University's commitment to, and expectations of, professional services staff. The initiative focusses on supporting all professional services staff to demonstrate the University's values of being ambitious, innovative, open, collaborative and responsible. The Birmingham Professional ethos is underpinned by a culture of partnership and trust between academic and professional colleagues working to common goals. Staff are supported and encouraged to co-create solutions and are committed to delivering high quality support and services, taking pride in their work, taking personal responsibility for their own development and working well with others.

The Birmingham Technical Academy was launched in 2017 to highlight and provide support to all technical staff working across the University. The Technical Academy is part of the Birmingham Professional and focusses on the specific needs of technical staff. The Technician Commitment at the University has contributed to ensuring the visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technical staff across the institution.

A Steering Group (see appendix 1 for terms of reference) was established to oversee the delivery of the Technical Academy and the membership of this group has recently been updated. The Steering Group is chaired by Professor Mark Sterling, Deputy PVC for Staffing, which ensures effective integration of the Technical Academy but also the necessary commitment from relevant groups across the University. The leadership and composition of Technical Academy Operations Group (see appendix 2 for terms of reference) has also been updated and continues to provide an essential forum through which new developments can been proposed and facilitated. The Technical Academy Operations Group reports to Steering Group and the Chair of the Steering Group reports on the Technical Academy to the Pro Vice

Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange (Professor Heather Widdows) who is a member of the University Executive Board.

Please provide a RAG analysis on your institutional 24-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.

A RAG rating and update is provided below for each area of the action plan:

The actions detailed in the original plan have all been started and 12 have been completed, with 3 still in progress.

Visibility:

Launch of the Technical Academy in November 2017 – Completed (green) - The Technical Academy continues to provide the necessary structure, support and visibility for technical staff across the institution. Technical Academy events have continued to operate until the start of the national lockdown, and now that on-campus operations are now restored planning has commenced on the future schedule. Events have covered networking, training, professional development and social. Engagement of the technical community with Technical Academy events has been positive.

Creation of the Technical Academy website and intranet site for members of staff highlighting technical staff on publications – Completed (green) – A website and intranet site have been established and remain in place, with the maintenance being the responsibility of members of the Technical Academy Operations Group.

https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/excellence/professional/technical-academy/index.aspx)

Through the Technical Academy provide a forum for technical staff to network both within the University and other organisations – Completed (green) – The Technical Academy Operations Group has been established and provides a variety of opportunities for networking. The University's participation in the Midlands TALENT Programme provides a variety of opportunities for external networking and training, with 33 applications from UoB technical staff being submitted for soft skills training programmes. Technical staff are also encouraged and supported to attend external networking events and opportunities.

Recognition:

Creation of a new BUAFTA (Birmingham University Award for Tremendous Achievement) category for Technical Team of the Year for 2019 – Completed (green) - The new award category for technicians and technical teams has been established and continues as part of

the ongoing BUAFTA programme. 28 nominations (team and individual) were submitted in this new category in the 2019 BUAFTAs.

Technical staff to be members of the Technical Academy Operations Group and attend the Steering Group when appropriate – Completed (green) – Technical staff are the fundamental members of the Technical Academy Operations Group and are represented at the Steering Group, see terms of reference for both groups in appendix 1 and 2.

Delivery of a Technical Academy Twitter account to promote activities and successes of staff involved in the Technical Academy – Completed (green) – The @UOBTechnicians twitter account is established and is managed by members of the Technical Academy Operations Group.

Career Development:

Provision of training, interaction with industry and networking with other HEIs via the Enabling Technology initiative across the 3 STEM Colleges to support career development of technical staff who provide specialist support for state-of-the art equipment – Completed (green) – The Technical Academy provides access to a wide variety of training, networking and support, which is complimented and supported via the University's participation in the Midlands TALENT Programme. Technical staff are also supported to attend training and networking events through their managers.

Provision of support for writing CVs and Job Applications – Completed (green) – Technical staff have access to dedicated support to prepare their CVs and job applications through the University's People and Organisational Development Team, training includes online career development courses and interview skills workshops. Specific training sessions targeted to technical staff have been delivered via the Technical Academy Operations Group.

Provision of events to support technical staff to become professionally registered (Science Council, HEaTED and Engineering Council) – Completed (green) – Technical Academy Operations Group events have provided information and support for staff to secure professional registration.

Provision of software training for technician-based equipment - In progress (amber) - Specialist training has been provided for technical, staff from the Technology Hub, covering key software solutions. Additional software training needs and the provision of training continues to be considered by the Technical Academy Operations Group.

Provision of support from line managers to enable technical staff to attend conferences e.g: HETS 2019 – Higher Education Technicians Summit – University of Birmingham – Completed (green) – All technical staff are supported to attend relevant conferences and financial resources have been made available. Attendance is encouraged and facilitated by managers.

Provision of funding to attend conferences and achieve professional registration is promoted through the PDR process, with individuals assessed on a case by case basis – Completed (green) – Staff across the University have received financial support to attend conferences.

Sustainability:

Development of succession plans within 3 STEM Colleges to ensure retention of knowledge and expertise – In progress (amber) – The STEM Colleges now have similar technical management structures, with the consistent use of template job descriptions, and succession plans have been put in place in some key areas, see case studies in next section.

Expansion of the numbers of apprentices across the institution - In progress (amber) – The University now hosts 22 apprentices in posts across estates, IT and the Colleges. This figure is projected to rise to 27 for the forthcoming year. See next section for apprentice case study.

Promotion of secondment opportunities across the Colleges to support staff to secure new job opportunities and retain talent – Completed (green) – Secondment opportunities are shared across technical teams to ensure fair and transparent opportunities and process.

Please tell us how you evidence that your action plan has had/is having impact?

Engagement of staff with the Technical Academy and technician focussed events continues to be monitored by the Technical Academy Operations Group. Attendance at Technical Academy events is recorded and satisfaction and feedback surveys are conducted following all events. Feedback has been positive and technical staff express comments about the quality and their appreciation of the events. Feedback to inform the future programme/schedule development has also been secured which is bring incorporated into the development of the forthcoming schedule. The annual Technical Academy Conference continues to be the most well attended event in the schedule (150 attendees) and will be a future focal point in the forward look schedule.

The response to the inclusion of the technician focussed BUAFTA category (UoB recognition event) has been particularly encouraging, with 28 nominations being received following the initial launch. Staff also continue to be recognised in local recognition schemes, which are actively promoted through the Technical Academy Operations Group.

Through our reflection on the impact to date of the Technical Academy the following case studies have been prepared, which provide an insight into the career development and sustainability impact of the Technical Academy:

Developing apprenticeships in practical teaching support

In 2018 an apprentice on the level 3 laboratory technician standard[1] was appointed as a laboratory assistant within the wet teaching laboratory team of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences. This was intended as a proof of concept position with the intent that if successful in the apprenticeship the post would remain permanent and that the appointee would be supported to continue developing into a higher-level position. In 2021 on the conclusion of the apprenticeship the postholder was promoted into a higher-grade vacancy

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[1] https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/laboratory-technician-v1-2

within the same team. With the support of the University apprenticeship manager and the postholder's line manager consideration is being given to the postholder continuation into a level 6 (degree level) apprenticeship. Having learnt from the apprentice's experience with the specific standard[2], the University's Apprenticeship Manager was part of the trailblazer group which developed a level 3 HE specific standard for education technicians. Given the success of this proof of concept project the scheme has been expanded to two apprenticeships on the new standard within the College of Medical and Dental Sciences practical teaching team, with a broader exposure to different types of practical education support including anatomy and clinical skills. A third apprenticeship in the Collaborative Teaching Laboratories within the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, on the new standard, has also been introduced. All 3 new apprentices are due to commence in autumn 2021.

Flexible Succession Planning - Health and Safety Management

The College of Medical and Dental Sciences has been successful in developing and delivering a succession plan to ensure continuity of the essential Health and Safety Advisor role. The role is a complex one supporting a range of academic activity across a large College and the original role holder has extensive experience and professional qualification, as a chartered member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (CMIOSH)[3]. With an open culture of communication within the Infrastructure and Facilities Team, staff within the local team were aware of the retirement plans of the original role holder and two junior staff members expressed an interest in the health and safety role within their personal development reviews in 2019. One of the members of staff had a personal interest in health and safety and had successfully completed TechIOSH, in September 2021 they were appointed to a revised Health and Safety Manager role and will commence a level 7 apprenticeship in risk and safety leadership at the University of Portsmouth[4]. On completion of that apprenticeship and alongside the in-work component the new post holder is expected to achieve CMIOSH and following due process for promotion to deliver of the full requirements of the Health and Safety Advisor level role.

Flexible Succession Planning - Laboratory Management and Specialist Roles

As a research-intensive organisation many of UoB research technicians are employed on projects with a fixed-term external funding. Alongside the standard redeployment processes in place within the University, professional services leaders within the Infrastructure and Facilities Team actively try to recruit to permanent roles, such as laboratory managers and specialist roles, from within the pool of fixed term research technicians. Within the last 3 years three of four vacant Laboratory Manager and two permanent technician roles have been filled this way. It has been observed that often research technicians have been unable to evidence some of the softer management skills required in senior technical or laboratory

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[2] https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/education-technician-(he-assistant-technician-and-simulation-based-technician)-v1-0

[3] https://iosh.com/membership/membership-categories/chartered-member/

[4] https://www.port.ac.uk/study/courses/msc-risk-and-safety-leadership-degree-apprenticeship

manager roles, which has an impact on their ability to compete. Leads within the Infrastructure and Facilities Team have used short term vacancies, created as a consequence of unplanned absences or increased activity as an opportunity to support staff to gain crucial experience and management skills. The following examples demonstrate how this approach has worked in practice. In 2018 with two concurrent lab manager vacancies across the College it wasn't possible to absorb all the workload within the existing team pending recruitment to permanent roles. Secondments were offered across the college and two research funded staff on fixed term contracts expressed an interest. Working with the principle investigator for the projects in both cases it was agreed that a partial buy out of the research technician from their projects could be feasible, allowing them to continue to support the research project and develop their management soft skills, whilst providing essential support to the College. In other cases the research funders allowed a no cost extension of the project which allowed them to return to the projects at the end of the secondments with an extended contract. One of them returned to the research role and subsequently applied for a permanent role within the NHS. The other secured one of the permanent roles and has proven himself to be invaluable in that role.

In 2020 as part of the Covid effort the College of Medical and Dental Sciences employed a number of fixed term staff to deliver a Turnkey Lab, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. As that activity declined in 2021 and the Turnkey project ended the University was approached by the Midlands Innovation TALENT scheme to explore whether the Microscopy and Imaging Facility could support some work for Keele University. At that time there were no additional staff available within the Microscopy and Imaging Facility to undertake the work, however as a consequence of close woking between staff within the Infrastructure and Facilities Team and the Turnkey Lab, a member of the Turnkey staff was identified to have recently obtained a masters in Imaging at the University of Birmingham, and was approached about supporting the work with Keele University. This work has now resulted in the individual being appointed to a permanent role within the Microscopy and Imaging Team.

Please provide details of any additional initiatives/programmes/activities aligned to your Technician Commitment that are not covered in your original action plan.

Other activities delivered by staff and groups at the University of Birmingham which are in support of the Technician's Commitment, but not originally described in the 24month plan include:

1. Generation of template job descriptions for technical support staff roles (up to band 500) are now available via the University intranet for ongoing and future recruitment. Existing staff are migrating to template JDs. Generic role descriptors for grade 6 and above are being developed by a dedicated Operations Group, led by the Head of HR Projects.

2. The Papin Prize winner (Matt Mckenzie) was recognised at the launch of the Technical Academy in November 2017 where he was presented with a bottle of champagne by Helen Sharman OBE. Prize and recognition opportunities continue to be disseminated by the Technical Academy Operations Group and staff nominations are encouraged and supported.

3. Technicians can actively get involved with the Technical Academy online, with engagement through Twitter and signing up to the Technical Academy contact list through which events, news and general information gets distributed. A generic email address has been established through which comments, compliments and complaints can be submitted and responded to on an individual basis (technicalacademy@contacts.bham.ac.uk).

4. Through the technical structures implemented in the STEM Colleges, technicians across the Colleges have achieved promotion within the organisation, see case studies in the above section.

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: (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.

The original focus of the Technical Academy was to ensure:

1. That all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution is **visible** within and the beyond the institution.

2. That technical staff are supported to gain **recognition** through professional registration.

3. That technical staff are enabled and supported to progress in their **careers** through the provision of clear, documented career pathways.

4. The future **sustainability** of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised.

The original aims remain at the centre of the delivery of the Technical Academy, however looking forward there will be a focus on the following principles:

1. Build on the existing good practice established within the Technical Academy.

2. Ensure awareness across the institution of the Technical Academy, in particular senior leaders including Heads of College and Pro Vice Chancellors, senior academics, Senior Officers and Operational Leads.

3. Improving the communications and networking across the technical community and ensure that learning from other communities of practice within the organisation is implemented for the benefit of all technical staff.

4. A commitment to supporting the career development of technical staff across the organisation, both in terms of defining and implementing a clear strategy, but also through the delivery of essential training and development resources.

5. Ensure that UoB technical staff are engaged with and benefit from relevant external programmes, including Midlands TALENT.

An action plan for the next 36 months (see appendix 3) has been developed and the Technical Academy Operations Group is working on a prioritised schedule of events and activities.

The technician's voice is incorporated into all aspects of the Technical Academy via Operations Group, which was formed shortly after the launch of the Technical Academy in November 2017. The Group has been chaired by Richard Marguerie, Deputy Director of Operations (Infrastructure and Facilities) in the College of Life and Environmental Sciences. Moving forward the Operations Group will be chaired by Karen Willis, Deputy Director of Operations (Infrastructure and Facilities) in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences.

The purpose of the Technical Academy Operations Group is to coordinate and deliver the operational aspects of the Technical Academy, including activities and development of skills, and offer representation of and communication to the technical workforce regarding the Technical Academy agenda. To allow for a full representation of the 'technician voice', its membership is made of managers and technicians from various background e.g., Engineering, Estates, IT, life and medical sciences. It is each member's responsibility to highlight any questions, requirements, complaints that their technicians have, as well as promoting the Technical Academy through advertising events and actively encouraging staff or team members to participate.

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:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/tech-academy

Signed………… ………………………………(Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead)

Date: 30 September 2021

Signed…………………………………………..(Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 30 September 2021

Appendix A: Examples of activities and initiatives to address the themes of the Technician Commitment

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, it intends to demonstrate example activities to support institutions in action planning.

Theme	Example Activities
Visibility Ensure that technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution	• Organisations can identify how many technicians they employ • Technician roles have clear job descriptions • Technicians to feature in organisation prospectuses and marketing materials • Technicians present on decision making committees where appropriate • Technicians visible in costing mechanisms for research grants • There is a mechanism for celebrating technician achievements across the organisation • Organisation strategy documents include technicians where appropriate • A vibrant and active 'Technician Network' • Films/images showcasing technicians (see examples on the Technician Commitment website) • Technicians present and active in careers, outreach and widening participation activities • Technicians visible on institutional social media channels • Technician exhibition/poster events showcasing skills, talent and research • Technician 'Open Lab/Workshop/Studio' events • Technical roles and skills showcased at external events: for example: New Scientist live, The Royal Society Summer Exhibition, WorldSkills UK Live etc.
Recognition Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration	• Organisation communicates the opportunity to become professionally registered to technical staff (Science Council, Engineering Council, BCS). Conferment of the organisational level Science Council Employer Champion award in recognition of the support given to technical staff to gain professional registration and engage in continued professional development • Recognition and support of the teaching aspect of many technician roles through the accreditation of teaching practice through Advance HE (Higher Education Academy). • Internal award schemes recognise the contribution of technical staff • Nominations to external award schemes that recognise the contribution of technical staff • An institutional policy that ensures that technicians have recognition on research outputs
Career Development Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways	• Technician specific professional career paths/frameworks which clearly document progression opportunities • Professional development opportunities, signposted to technicians and aligned to career pathways • A dedicated webpage showcasing case studies of technician careers • Expansion of technician specific job families in recognition of high level technical specialisms • Career development and professional registration workshops • Dedicated technical training provision
Sustainability	• Appropriate succession planning for technical roles including the analysis of technician profiles to ensure future sustainability of skills within the organisation

Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised	• Secondment/placement programmes for technical staff to develop new skills • A technician trainee/apprenticeship programme • Utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy to train and upskill existing staff

Appendix 1

University of Birmingham Technical Academy Steering Group

Terms of Reference & Membership 2021-22

The Technical Academy is a platform to support and represent all the technical workforce of the University of Birmingham, working collaboratively with Colleges and Professional Services to deliver its four key objectives.

The aim of the group is to ensure the Technical Academy is delivering against core objectives:

1. Supporting the skills, professional and career development of all technical staff
2. To recognise and value the contribution technical staff make to the achievements of the University
3. Ensuring that the technical workforce has the skills, knowledge, and capacity required to meet the challenges of teaching and research in a leading global university
4. Ensure that UoB fulfils its obligations as a signatory to the Science Council's 'Technician Commitment'

Composition of group (2021)

Chair –Professor Mark Sterling - Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor Staffing

Senior Operations Lead – Dr Kate Bishop - Director of Operations College of MDS

HR Representative - Emma Stanway – HR Business Partner College of EPS

POD Representative - Vince O'Grady – POD Consultant

Chair of TA Operations Group - Karen Willis – Deputy Director of Operations MDS (Infrastructure and Facilities)

UoB Talent Programme Contact – Richard Marguerie – Deputy Director of Operations MDS (Infrastructure and Facilities)

Academic representative – Professor Jon Rowe

Technical Representative – Mark Carter

Strategic Change - Mark Straw – Change Manager supporting the Research and Teaching Facilities Functional Leadership Programme

TA Project Support - Rupee Sanghera

Appendix 2

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University of Birmingham
Technical Academy – Operations Group
Terms of Reference & Membership – 2021/22

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Background

The University of Birmingham is a signatory of the Science Council's Technician Commitment which targets 4 key areas for technical staff within the UK, these key areas are visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability.

Following the launch of the University of Birmingham Technical Academy on the 29th November 2017, the Technical Academy Operations Group (TAOG) will coordinate and deliver the operational aspects of the Academy. The Operations Group will report to the Technical Academy Steering Committee who will ensure that the stated aims and objectives are achieved.

Responsibility

The role of the Technical Academy Operations Group will be to translate the Steering Group's operational aims and objectives by:

- Delivering or coordinating the Technical Academy activities
- Coordinating and developing the technical career pathways
- Delivering or coordinating the development of skills
- Offering representation and communicating the Technical Academy's aims and objectives to the technical workforce

Membership

Chair: Deputy Director of Operations from a STEM College or similar role within other area of Technical Operation

Technical representatives:

Representatives should be a mix of functions and grades to represent the technical community and should include:

- Technical staff from all Colleges
- IT Services
- Estates
- LRAT/TAMU
- HR advisor
- HR POD representative
- Other key areas as identified

Terms of Reference

Visibility

- Advise and report to the Technical Academy Steering Group
- Advise and report to own areas of the University on the activity of the Technical Academy by engaging all technicians with the Technical Academy by providing clear communications utilising the website, MS Teams, social media, email and live events as appropriate

Recognition

- Deliver a programme of Technical Academy events in support of the objectives of the Technical Academy and Technicians Commitment

- Develop a fully costed annual action plan to include diary of events

Career development
- Operationalise activity in support of the career pathways
- Support skills development by establishing training events and promoting, encouraging and supporting uptake of internal and external programmes

Sustainability
- Proactively encourage the recruitment of Technical Apprentices in all areas of responsibility
- Identify current and future requirements for technical skills
- Establish small Operations Groups as required to support key activities eg communications group

Frequency of meeting
Monthly

Reporting Lines
Written and verbal reports will be made to and from the Technical Academy Steering Group.
Operations Group members will provide written and verbal reports to and from the Operations group
Members will disseminate and share information with staff within their College or area of responsibility in line with the communications plan or the local reporting mechanisms

Appendix 3 - Technical Academy 36 month Plan

Technician's Commitment Priority Area(s)	Aim	Actions	Planned outcomes/outputs	Markers of success	Timescale	Owner
Career development **Visibility** **Recognition**	Enhance the career development, recognition and visibility of technical staff	Update PDR guidance and templates for technical staff and managers so that it references the Technical Academy and the opportunities for Technicians	- Increased awareness of the Technical Academy and opportunities for technical staff and line managers - Increased engagement with the Technical Academy by technical staff - Open and enabling conversations around paper authorship between PIs, line managers and technicians - Increased engagement of technical staff with teaching, training and development, secondments and shadowing opportunities - Increased numbers of technical staff undertaking professional registration	1. Increase in numbers of staff participating in Technical Academy events and training and development 2. Increased numbers of technicians being named on papers 3. Increased numbers of technical staff securing professional registration	For implementation in 2022 PDR cycle	TA Steering Group
		Develop a revised and consistent functional on-boarding and induction process for technical staff	- New staff are signposted to and encouraged to engage with the Technical Academy and Technicians Commitment - Shared awareness and engagement with the priorities		January 2022	

			- and aims of our commitment to technical staff - Technical staff are aware of opportunities, development pathways, resources etc			
Visibility **Sustainability** **Recognition**	Raise visibility of technical staff Enhance understanding of contribution of technical staff to research and education Enhance influence and professional capital of technical staff	Increase internal and external communications and showcase activities to grow reputation, value and influence of the Technical Academy and technical workforce	- More technical staff participating and showcasing their talents in University events e.g. Open Days and University Showcase events - Increased inclusion of technician profiles on internal and external websites e.g. group websites, facilities websites etc - A dedicated Technical Academy newsletter and dedicated Technical section in key internal comms (e.g. Buzz) - Increased promotion of technical vacancies to students via Careers Network, local employability teams, the Guild etc	Increased visibility of the technical workforce across the Universities communication channels, including website, publications and events	Ongoing throughout the 36 month period	TA Steering Group
Career Development **Sustainability**	Raise understanding and availability of resources to help technical staff Enhance sense of belonging and community amongst technical staff	Deliver an ongoing programme of events through the Technical Academy Operations Group Increased communications and information/guidance resources for technical staff and their line managers	- Continued access for technical staff to networking, training and social events - A network of Technical Champions embedded in Colleges - An online resources hub for technical staff to access guidance, advice, general updates, key information, notices about upcoming training and events, best practice, upcoming	Development and delivery of a refreshed schedule of TA events Provision of dedicated communications and guidance to the technical community	Initial planning to be completed within first 6 months, with delivery and ongoing development continuing throughout the 36 month period	TA Steering Group

Enhance sense of self-worth and connection to the core purpose of the University amongst technical staff		internal and external prize opportunities, secondments, professional registration etc - Increased engagement of technical staff with internal recognition and reward schemes, and external recognition events (e.g. Papin Prize) - Increased conference and events attendance and uptake of appropriate funding opportunities			
Encourage greater mobility and skills diversity Encourage ambition and broadening of horizons for technical staff and their line managers Development of a growth mind-set	Development of new training and development schemes and programmes for technical staff, with appropriate promotion and dissemination of existing and new training and development opportunities to technical staff and managers	- New training pathways resulting in a recognised qualifications - Defined career progression framework for technical staff - Increased apprenticeship opportunities across UoB - Increased engagement with MI Talent programme - Establishment of network of mentors for targeted support to staff and applicants during recruitment and application stages - Increased engagement and uptake of technical staff with current POD coaching and mentoring programme - Establishment of a work-shadowing scheme	1. Provision of clear career development pathways for technical workforce 2. Increased apprentice opportunities 3. Increased engagement with Midlands TALENT 4. Increased access to technical mentors and coaching	Ongoing throughout the 36 month period	TA Steering Group

| Sustainability | Integrated view of skills and development needs of technical staff | Integrated planning and strategy tools | - Succession planning integrated with School and College strategic plans
- Skills audit and training needs analysis
- Analysis of staff survey results | Identification of business critical posts and development of clear succession plans to ensure business continuity | Ongoing throughout the 36 month period | TA Steering Group |