****￼**Technician Commitment**

**Guidance for Completing the Self-Assessment & Action Plan**

The Technician Commitment is a university and research institution initiative, led by a steering group of sector bodies, with support from the Science Council and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation’s Technicians Make It Happen campaign. The Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines. Universities and research institutes are invited to become signatories of the Technician Commitment and pledge action against the key challenges affecting their technical staff.

The themes of the Technician Commitment are: Visibility, Recognition, Career Development, Sustainability and Evaluating Impact. The fifth theme of Evaluating Impact takes the form of a self-assessment process, to be undertaken one year after an organisation becomes a signatory and biennially thereafter.

The self-assessment process enables the Technician Commitment Steering Group to gain an understanding of the position of each signatory organisation and the measures to be put in place to ensure that signatories are making progress against the themes outlined in the Commitment. The self-assessment process asks for contextual information, progress to date and a detailed 24-month future action plan.

The Technician Commitment Steering Group 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 plan on a dedicated and discoverable webpage, along with their named point of contact. The Steering Group would like 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 Group 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 is emerging and the Steering Group aims to ensure a range of forums are available to enable peers to share expertise, good practice and experiences.

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, institutions may wish to reference Athena SWAN applications, 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 or tracey.dickens@gatsby.org.uk.

**Technician Commitment**

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

**Organisation: University of Leeds**

**Name of Institutional Lead: Professor Helen Gleeson**

**E-mail: H.F.Gleeson@leeds.ac.uk**

**Contact Number: 0113-34-33863**

**To provide some context, please provide a brief profile of your organisation (up to 250 words):**

The University, established in 1904, is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK. With 8 interdisciplinary academic faculties we are renowned globally for the quality of our teaching and research. The strength of our academic expertise combined with the breadth of disciplines we cover, provides a wealth of opportunities and has real impact on the world in cultural, economic & societal ways. We strive to achieve academic excellence within an ethical framework informed by our values of integrity, inclusiveness, community & professionalism.

With over 34,000 students which includes over 7,000 international students from more than 150 countries and over 8,000 staff we are the third largest employer in Leeds and the 8th largest university in the UK by income (£674 million), with £131m generated from research grants and contracts.

We were awarded TEF Gold in 2017 for delivering “consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for our students of the highest quality in the UK.”

Investment is happening at Leeds with integrating and growing engineering and physical sciences expertise via the new Bragg Centre and a new innovation and enterprise centre (NEXUS) which will enable high growth businesses and corporate R&D teams to access world class research, students, graduate talent and professional services, opening new opportunities for productivity growth.

Our current investment, interdisciplinary approach to research and commitment to providing outstanding education, creates an environment for our technicians to support the academic strategic ambition. The Technical Services Teams are critical to the achievement of the University’s success.

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| **Please tell us how your organisation defines its technicians:**At Leeds our Technicians and Technical Service Teams support and enable research and teaching activities by utilising individual and team specialist skills and knowledge. A Technician is a member of staff with a set of technical skills or knowledge (scientific, artistic, mechanical, etc) who supports academic research or teaching but is not generally expected to lead research or teaching. Classification of the technical staff vary across the institution. This is due to the size, complexity and interdisciplinary nature of the University. The broad classifications are:Research TechniciansTeaching TechniciansSupport TechniciansLaboratory TechniciansWorkshop TechniciansStudio TechniciansAnalytical Technicians |

**How many technicians are there in your organisation? Please provide some information on where they are based and/or how they are structured (in terms of subject/discipline/department):**

The University of Leeds employs 480 technicians in total (37% female and 67% male) with 383 in academic faculties and 97 in Professional Services. Those Technical Service staff within Professional Services are predominantly part of IT Services (77 staff) with 20 within the Facilities and Support Services Directorate. For the purposes of effective and timely delivery of the Technician’s Commitment it has been decided to prioritise technical service staff in faculties initially.

The Technician Commitment Committee is in the process of investigating and progressing apprenticeships with academic faculties. Currently we have 4 Apprenticeships and 2 Graduate Technicians across the institution.

Academic Faculties

The Faculty of Biological Sciences (FBS) has a Technical Service team of 83 staff comprising of service leads (Managers), Teaching Technicians, Research Technicians and Technical Support staff across a range of grades from 2 – 8. Equipment specialists and H&S specialists are included in this figure.

The Faculty of Earth and Environment has a Technical Service team of 27 staff, 1 technical manager at faculty level, 18 in the School of Earth and Environment and 8 in the School of Geography.

The Faculty of Mathematics and Physical Sciences (MaPS) has a Technical Services team of 37 staff, 14 in the School of Chemistry, 9 in Food Science and Nutrition and 14 (inc 1 Apprentice) in the School of Physics and Astronomy. Although the technical service teams are located at school level without a dedicated Technical Services Manager, the technical staff in Physics and Chemistry have developed strong links with the technical service teams in the Faculty of Engineering. These links and ways of working will continue to develop with the integration and growth in Engineering and Physical Sciences and the new investments (new Bragg Centre and an Innovation and Enterprise Centre – NEXUS).

The Faculty of Engineering has a Technical Services team of 80 staff, 15 (inc 3 Apprentices) in the School of Mechanical Engineering, 20 in the School of Chemical Engineering, 14 in the School of Civil Engineering, 22 technical staff in Faculty Engineering Services, 7 in the Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering (iMBE) and 2 in Robotics Technical Services. The team is led by a Senior Technical Services Manager (line managed by the Faculty Dean), with 4 Service leads (Managers).

Faculty of Medicine and Health, our largest and most complex Faculty has a technical Services Team of 126 across the University and St James’s Teaching Hospital sites. 8 Technical staff work at St James’s campus, 20 in the Faculty Technical Service Team, 1 in the School of Healthcare, 12 in the Institute of Biomedical and Clinical Trails, 7 in SCIF, 8 in the Institute of Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal, 27 in the Leeds Institute of Cardiovascular and MetabolicMedicine, 5 in the School of Dentistry and 38 in the Institute of Cancer and Pathology

The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Culture (AHC) has a technical service team of 30. There are 6 (inc 2 Graduate Technicians) in the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, 5 in the School of Performance and cultural Industries, 10 in the School of Design, 2 in the School of English (Theatre Workshop), 1 in the School of Languages, Cultures and Society (Language Centre), 2 in Media and Communications and 4 in the School of Music. The Faculty is newly formed following the integration of the former Faculties of Arts and Performance, Visual Arts and Communications (PVAC). As part of the Faculty integration it was agreed to realign the technical services teams in such a way to best match service requirements, promote a one team ethos, and provide greater opportunities for staff development and career progression. This work started in early 2017 and continues to progress.

**Please provide details of initiatives/programmes/activities that were already in place for the technical community within your organisation prior to becoming a signatory of the Technician Commitment:**

The Technicians Network was established in 2013 to raise the profile of technicians across the University. The Network is still running and has quarterly meetings where technicians come together to socialise with tea and coffee. Each meeting has a speaker or other focus. Previous meetings have included a Q&A with the VC, a workshop on mindfulness, and a historical tour of the campus. The network also acts as a communication conduit, both at meetings but also via an email list.

Tech-a-break – was developed as a drop-in meeting group for technical staff to share ideas, concerns and best practice over coffee once a month, but due to logistical issues this has currently been lapsed. The technical staff cohort is spread across a 10-mile radius from the centre of campus and this created numerous travel challenges.

Technicians Digest - Since 2017 weekly technician emails (Technicians Digest) have kept technicians updated about events in Leeds, and also national technician campaign news and information about technicians in the media.

Technically Speaking - is the University’s Technician’s newsletter which publishes articles for and by technicians. These include informative articles about what technicians have been doing as well as interviews with technicians. There have also been articles on changes to purchasing procedures and H&S matters that directly affect technicians. These can be found here:<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/news/125152/technicians_network>

We have been a member of HEaTED for a number of years and have encouraged our technicians to attend HEaTED’s specialist development workshops and the IST conferences. A small number of technical service teams have taken advantage of these opportunities. Technicians have been attending the IST conference independently. This has been financially supported by their faculty or the individual’s line managers.

Professional Registration – Faculty Deans agreed to fund one application (includes first year of professional registration) per member of staff in the first year. This successful venture has also encouraged senior technical staff to train as future assessors within the scheme, and the university is proud to have 3 fully trained assessors amongst its teams at present.

In terms of career development annual appraisals (Staff Review and Development Scheme meetings (SRDS)) take place with all staff. During the meeting, focused career development conversations take place, where appropriate CPD opportunities are discussed and agreed.

In the Faculties of Biological Sciences (FBS) and Environment trainees were supported to attend day/block release training to gain a professional qualification e.g. BTec, HNC,Degree. In the Faculty of Engineering there is a formal, faculty supported plan whereby apprentices are employed annually and attend college leading to a formal qualification.

FBS held away days and following the evaluation of these it has been decided that the away day model will be broadened out to include Technicians from all areas of the University, this will be an annual Technician’s Conference.

An FBS Technicians’ Showcasing event has taken place and is considered good practice by the Technician’s Commitment Committee. This will be rolled out to other Faculties and will support the visibility aspect of the Commitment.

Professional development courses have been attended, which are run by Organisational Development and Professional Learning (OD&PL), by our technical staff who are wanting to progress their careers into leadership and management roles.

Our Logik Centre which sits within OD&PL offer courses to all support staff (including technicians) who want help with CV writing, skills training, interview techniques. Also for support staff (i.e. including technicians at grades 2-4) the Logik Centre managed the “learning for Life initiative” whereby staff could improve/develop their life skills i.e. EDCL, using Office, help with Maths.

Prior to becoming a signatory, we had appointed the 4 apprentices in academic faculties and we aim to increase the number of apprenticeships in the future. AHC are currently considering the appointment of apprenticeships as part of their technical services realignment and new ways of working.

**The Technician Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technical staff across higher education and research. Please tell us of any initiatives your organisation has put in place to address these themes since becoming a signatory of the Technician Commitment:**

**Visibility**

We have established the Technician Commitment Committee (TCC). The Committee is made of representatives from the technical, academic and professional managerial communities across the University. The Committee meets quarterly. We have also appointed Technician’s Champions in each faculty. These Champions will represent each academic faculty on the committee and will attend and play an active part in the Technician’s Network. The Faculty Deans have committed to supporting these roles and have agreed to workload remission for the role holders.

The Technician Commitment has been used to actively encourage technicians to access internal and external CPD activities/opportunities, such as attendance at conferences and leadership development courses to support career development. To raise the profile and understanding of our technical teams, we are developing and progressing a skills matrix, this work has started in 3 of our faculties, Medicine and Health, Engineering and FBS. This will give greater visibility to what our technical staff do and will identify where we have potential skills gaps and inform succession planning.

We are focusing on expanding the Technician’s Network to increase membership. As the network progresses it will strengthen the technician’s voice and will continue to share best practice, provide support through communications, events and continue to encourage professional registration.

A Technician’s survey has been run and responses analysed, which has informed elements of the action plan.

Steps have been taken with Athena SWAN Leads to encourage Technicians to sit on the Athena SWAN steering groups and play an active role.

We have developed a web page on the OD&PL site for the Technician’s Commitment.

**Recognition**

At an institutional level we publicise individual/team achievements on the University intranet for staff site.

We continue to promote the reward and recognition scheme to managers, including the benefits of using the new reward portal to recognise staff achievements in a more timely manner.

**Career Development**

In terms of career development work has and continues in respect of realigning/refocusing technical services structures with the aim of providing opportunities for networking, staff development and a clear transparent career pathway across the university.

Work on standardising job descriptions has started but is in the very early stages of development.

We support attendance and participation at the NE & Yorkshire University meeting where, last time, representatives from Leeds explored ways of working together to share good practice with counterparts from other universities

We continue to encourage and support applications for Professional Registration through our communications and at work shop events.

Our FBS Technicians conference, has included showcasing technical skills, and encourages knowledge sharing amongst the teams

In addition, workshops have taken place in some Faculties which have raised awareness of the Technicians Commitment. Other workshops are being scheduled to take place across the current academic year

**Sustainability**

Work has started in the Faculties of Medicine and Health, Engineering and Biological Sciences on developing a skills matrix. This, together with the future work on standardising job descriptions and the refocusing/realigning technical services structures to support career development will ensure the future sustainability of the technician workforce.

Human Resources colleagues are working with individual faculties to progress apprenticeships.

We are monitoring progress against the action plan at the Technician Commitment quarterly committee meetings. Each member of the committee has been allocated actions to progress.

Please provide a 24-month action plan, detailing future plans to ensure your organisation addresses 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 refer to Appendix 1.**

**Please evidence how the ‘technician voice’ was present in the development and formation of the institutional action plan:**

The action plan has been developed by the Technician Commitment Committee, which comprises technician representatives from across the academic faculties. The contents have been developed in response to feedback from the technician’s survey and attendance at the event for Technical representatives and OD/SD leads from NE & Yorkshire Universities to explore how we can work together to share good practice, expand training opportunities and support the Technician Commitment, and subsequent feedback to Technical community re opportunities via the Technician Network. The Technician Champions are now members of the Technician’s Commitment Committee and will play an active role between the Committee and Network**.**

Please confirm that your Technician Commitment status and action plan is published on your organisation’s website and provide the relevant URL here: [https://leeds365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/perwebm\_leeds\_ac\_uk/EU0NdAJivLZNqa8OaOHxubEBbcmL4SW68KeYWW914jPSFA?e=F2EbLJ](https://leeds365-my.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/g/personal/perwebm_leeds_ac_uk/EU0NdAJivLZNqa8OaOHxubEBbcmL4SW68KeYWW914jPSFA?e=F2EbLJ)

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

Date:

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

Date:

**Appendix 1: University of Leeds activities and initiatives to address the themes of the Technician Commitment**

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| **Our Values: Integrity, Inclusiveness, Community, Professionalism, Academic Excellence** |
| **Work stream** | **6-12 months** | **1 to 2 years** | **2 to 5 years** | **Success Measures** |
| ***ALL*** | University-wide Technicians conference  |  |  | Involvement and attendance from 60% of technicians community |
| ***Visibility*** | Expand Technicians’ Network to include more members, and encourage greater internal and external networking opportunitiesIntroduction of Technician Champions and development of their role within the UniversityUniversity web pages/intranet developed to act as a central location for technicians to access information about opportunities, professional development, promotions, etc. Increase visibility of technical managers by building a network of technical managers across the UniversityIdentify who our Technician community is and understand what they do. Continue to develop the technician skills matrix in Faculties of Medicine & Health , Engineering and Biological Sciences | Survey current technician representation on committees and increase their representation/contributions (e.g. Athena Swan, school / faculty research / teaching committees)Encourage technicians to complete *outward facing* profile web pages – showcasing areas of expertiseDevelop the technicians skills matrix for the Faculties of AHC, Environment and MaPS | Identify and communicate / showcase how Technicians are contributing to the 2021 REF submission. Post 2021 identify exemplars where Technician input was vital to REF success Identify and communicate / showcase how Technicians are contributing to the TEF submission/NSS results.Identify and communicate how a variety of Technician roles contribute and support our 2020 – 2025 strategy  | Greater proactive involvement, engagement and representation from the technicians community *and* those they report intoTechnicians roles and expertise visible outside of the UniversityTechnicians representing UoL, contributing and presenting at external eventsVisibility (and recognition) of how Technicians and their roles impact UoL REF, and contribute to the wider strategy All Technical Services staff to be clear on skills, knowledge requirements for each level of role  |
| **Work stream** | **6-12 months** | **1 to 2 years** | **2 to 5 years** | **Success Measures** |
| ***Recognition*** | Wider recognition and celebrate those that achieve their professional registration Continue to promote reward and recognition scheme widely in the University, including the new reward portalCase study career pathways / talking heads on dedicated web page | Communicate the potential / contributions to the University’s external and international profileDevelopment of an internal award / recognition scheme for Technicians  | Technicians invited to show case their expertise during Open Days and Student Induction Inclusion of Technicians at student graduation ceremonies Students have an increased awareness and appreciation of the roles and contributions Technicians make.  | Faculty/school level celebration of technician professional registration and other achievementsManagers/academic staff actively promoting and presenting technicians for recognition schemesTechnical staff recognised as an integral part of the research community, student experience, and achievement/contribution to the success of organisational goals.  |

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| **Work stream** | **6-12 months** | **1 to 2 years** | **2 to 5 years** | **Success Measures** |
| ***Career Development*** | Realign/refocus technical structures in faculties which promote clear, transparent career pathways. FBS and Engineering have achieved this. Wider communication for all Technical Staff to gain their professional registration.Investigate ways for technicians to explore their skill sets. (e.g. job crafting)Case studies of career pathways / ‘talking heads’ on dedicated web page Attendance and participation in NE & Yorkshire Universities group meetings – to explore how we can work together to share good practice and expand training opportunities | AHC, MaPS and Environment to have fully implemented a re-aligned/refocused structure Developed clear standardised job descriptions for all technical roles embedding the Leadership Behaviours Actively encourage Technicians to become mentors to other Technicians and assessorsInclude professional registration as desirable on Technician job adverts.Focused SRDS support for the technician community to ensure focused career development conversations take place, including appropriate CPD. | Medicine and Health to have fully implemented a realigned/refocused structure Clear promotion structure for Technicians with clear job roles and opportunities for progression/cross-faculty/school movement Provide the opportunity for Technical Staff to obtain their associateship/fellowship with other recognised professional bodies (e.g. HEA)Transparent training/development budgets in each faculty with clear information about how to get access to these.Cross faculty mentoring, job shadowing, job exchange, and coaching opportunities for technicians | All academic faculties have structures with a clearly defined career pathwaySchool/faculty support and provide funding for Technicians developmentTechnical staff can work across faculties, and have a wider/diverse skill setEvidence of career progression across the university Skilled internal coaching/mentoring community |

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| **Work stream** | **6-12 months** | **1 to 2 years** | **2 to 5 years** | **Success Measures** |
| ***Sustainability***  | Follow up on technician survey to monitor actions taken / progress since last surveyEnsure that we work with Athena Swan at all stages to avoid repetition of workEnhance and maintain opportunities for Technicians to network, engage and build relationships with other national bodies / HEI’s to increase knowledge sharing and development opportunities | Establish routes to allow technical staff to apply for funding to attend appropriate conferences to both develop and knowledge-share their expertise Fully utilise the apprenticeship levy | Work towards building a sustainable talent pipeline for attracting (and maintaining) Technicians to the UniversityIdentify equality and diversity priority areas within Technical Services and ensure we contribute/are incorporated into our Equality and Inclusion strategies Each Faculty to have between 1-5 apprentices dependant on the size of the faculty | A diverse and (skill/knowledge-based) sustainable Technician’s community is recognisableIncrease in job applications / apprenticeship applications  |