

14th Signatory Event

Welcome to Belfast



14 May 2025



Technician **Commitment**

Wilson Sherriff

Simon Wilson

10.00-10:30	Registration, refreshments & networking
10.30-10.50	Welcome & Technician Commitment Update
10.50-11.05	Round table introductions
11.05 - 11.35	The Technician Commitment: Queen's University Belfast
11.35 - 12.05	<i>Coffee and refreshments</i>
12.05 - 12.35	REF 2029 and the People, Culture and Environment Pilot
<i>12.35 - 1.30</i>	How can Technician Commitment Leads/Technicians engage with REF 2029 and drive positive research culture change?
13.30 -14.30	<i>Lunch</i>

14.30 - 15.10 **Career Pathways for Technicians**

15.10 - 15.40 **Sharing Best Practice**

UKRI – Nik Ogryzko

All Ireland Network – Dermot Barry and Gillian Riddell

The Chartered Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (CASES)

Wellcome Project

15.40 - 16.05 ***Coffee and refreshments***

16.05 - 16.35 ***Future-proofing our universities: the role of technical professionals***

16.35 - 16.50 **Mapping interactions**

16.50 **Closing remarks**

17.00 - 18.30 **Evening drinks and networking reception**

Technician Commitment Update



UK INSTITUTE FOR
TECHNICAL
SKILLS & STRATEGY



**Research
& Policy
Group**

**Community
& Practice
Hub**

**Technician
Commitment**

**Learning &
Development
Academy**

**Education
& Pathways
Lab**


CONSULTING

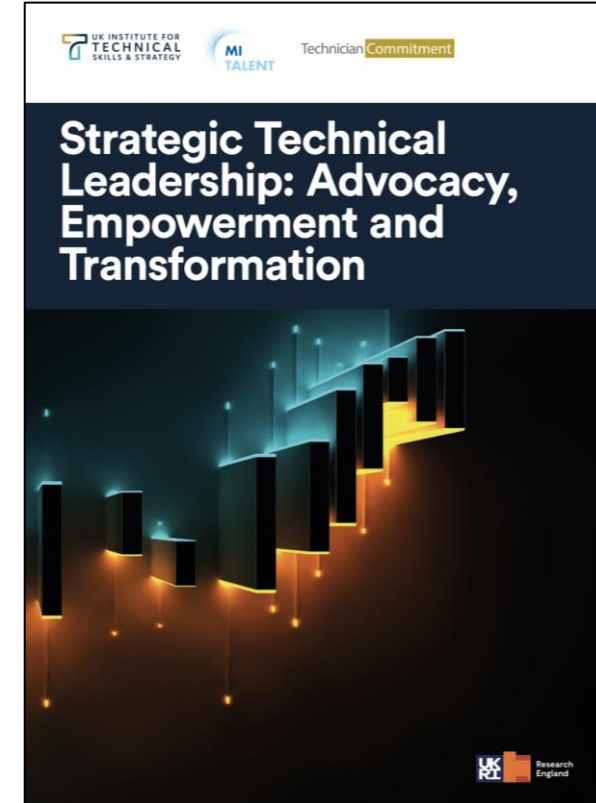
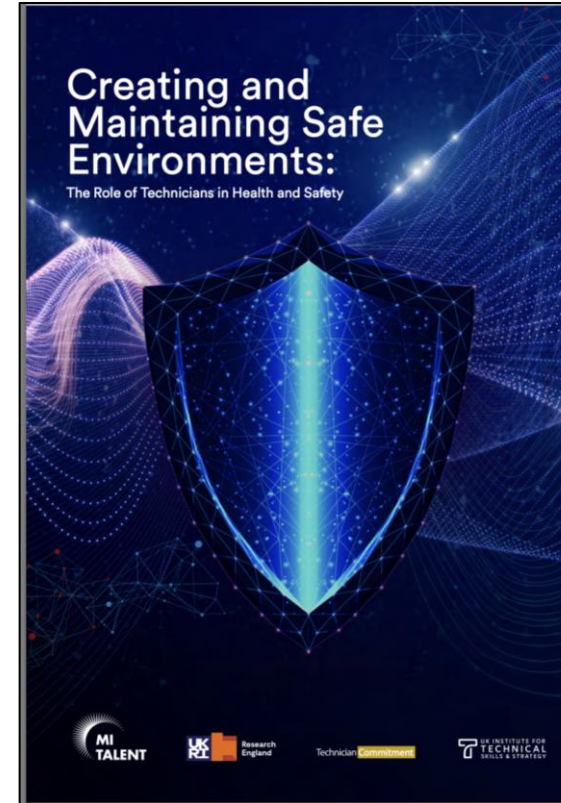
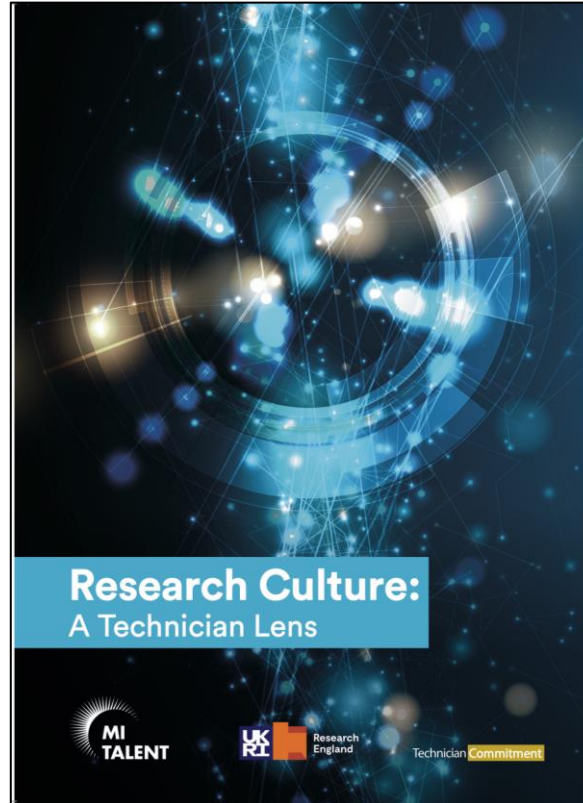

**ITSS
International**



Research & Policy Group

Providing evidence-based insights and data and influencing policy to guide technical workforce development and investment.

New research and policy insights into technical roles, skills and careers



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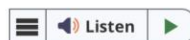
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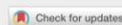
Research Article

Technicians as teachers: the emerging role of technical staff within higher education teaching and learning environments

F. P. H. Wragg , C. Harris , A. Noyes & K. Vere

Pages 1196-1210 | Received 05 Jul 2022, Accepted 14 Jun 2023, Published online: 10 Jul 2023

Cite this article | <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2023.2231380>



Full Article

Figures & data

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In this article

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Method

Results

ABSTRACT

Technicians and technical staff are making increasingly significant contributions to the teaching and learning of undergraduate and postgraduate students in the UK. This paper reports on a survey of 1766 technical staff regarding their roles within teaching and learning environments, and a series of follow-up focus groups with 44 technical staff further exploring the roles, visibility, and

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Joanne Caldwell

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Why is it problematic for technicians to say they teach in higher education?

Tim Savage

University for the Creative Arts

Kelly Vere

University of Nottingham

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2208-671X>**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.47408/jldhe.vi33.1191>**Keywords:** technicians, technical, teaching, pedagogy, third space

ABSTRACT

This article challenges the popular misconception that technicians do not teach within higher education (HE). Writing from their experiences as technicians and educational researchers within the creative arts (Savage)

 PDF

PUBLISHED

30-01-2025

HOW TO CITE

Savage, T. and Vere, K. (2025) "Why is it problematic for technicians to say they teach in higher education?", *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education* [Preprint], (33). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.47408/jldhe.vi33.1191>.

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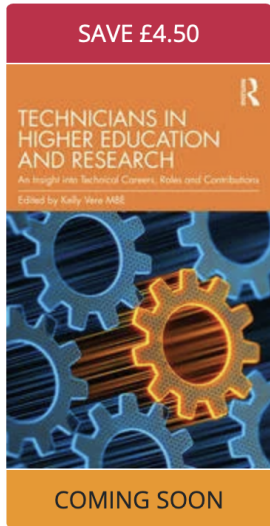


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Book Description

Critics' Reviews

1st Edition

Technicians in Higher Education and Research

An Insight into Technical Careers, Roles and Contributions

Edited By [Kelly Vere](#)

Copyright 2025

Paperback
£25.49

Hardback
£102.00

ISBN 9781032282855

196 Pages 18 B/W Illustrations

August 8, 2024 by Routledge

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Paperback

Available for pre-order on July 18, 2024. Item will ship after August 8, 2024

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1




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UK government policy influence



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 Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Policy paper

UK Research and Development Roadmap

Published 1 July 2020

- Contents
- [Foreword](#)
- [Executive Summary](#)
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Foreword

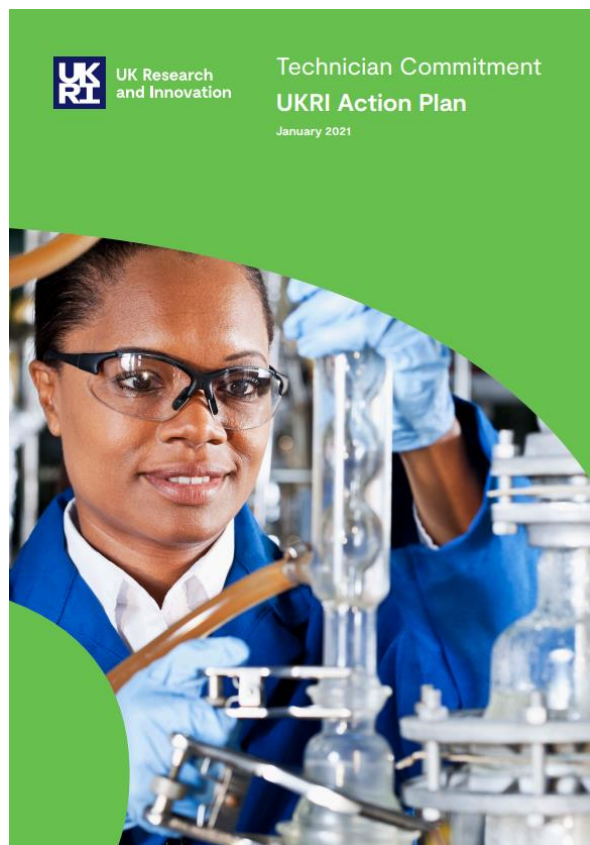
The UK is internationally recognised for our leadership in research, the excellence of our scientific institutions, and the innovation in our economy. We can proudly claim to be the nation that gave the world the steam engine and the jet engine. We discovered graphene and we decoded the structure of DNA. Today, we are by far the top destination in Europe for venture capital, with inward investors attracted by our talented and diverse workforce as well as our cutting-edge technologies and services.

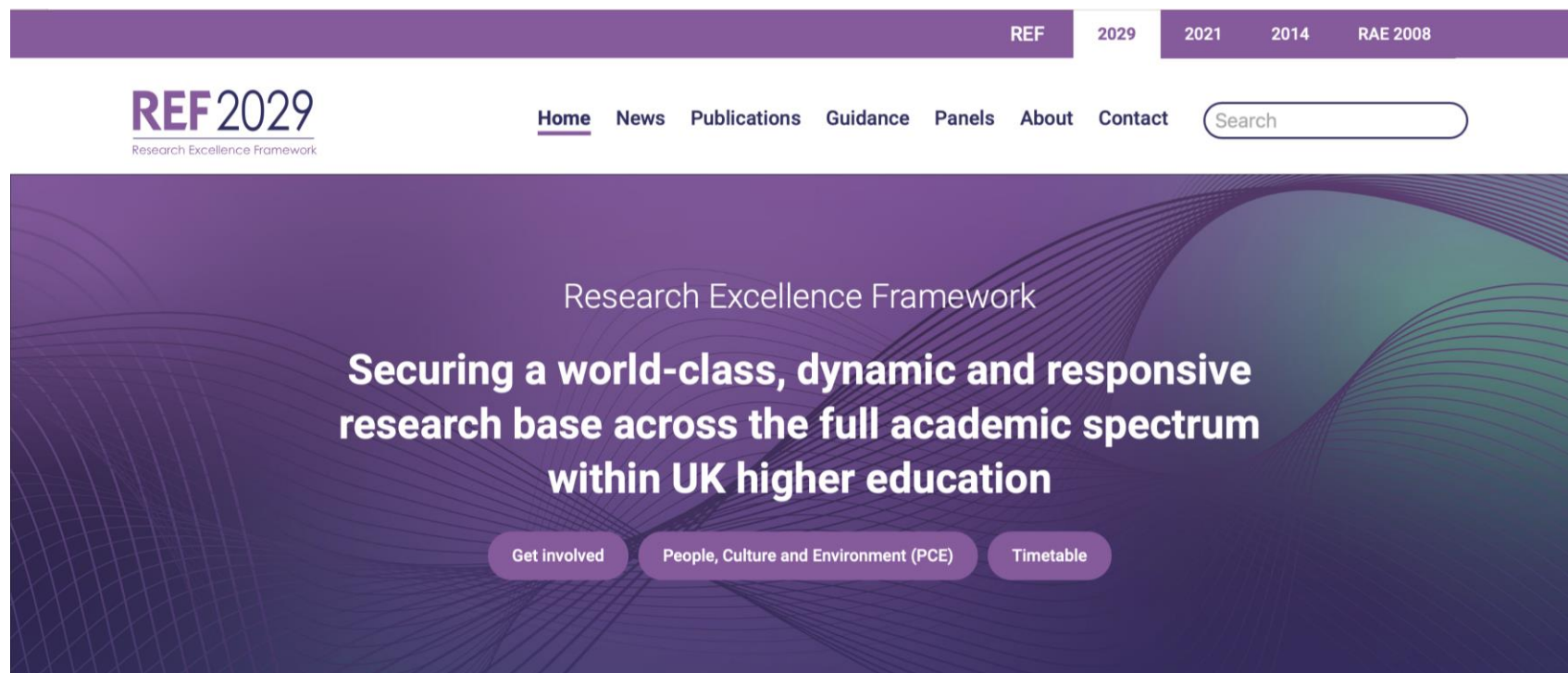
The COVID-19 pandemic has shown all of us the vital importance of science and innovation. British researchers are at the forefront of global efforts to find a vaccine and are working hard to map out the impact of the pandemic on our lives and livelihoods. Organisations of all shapes and sizes have worked tirelessly to respond to the crisis in innovative new ways.

In March, the Chancellor announced a record increase in public investment in research and development (R&D) – committing to reaching £22 billion per year by 2024 to 2025. Just a few months on, this commitment has added importance. We will need to be even more creative and innovative to adapt to the ‘new normal’, and to recover swiftly from COVID-19. It is our duty to build a future which is greener, safer and healthier than before.



Working with UK funding councils





The **REF** is the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. It first took place in [2014](#) and [2021](#). The next exercise is planned for 2029.





Independent report

UK Quantum Skills Taskforce report

Published 13 May 2025

Contents

[Foreword](#)[Executive summary](#)[Introduction](#)[Quantum technologies in the UK](#)[Skills needs of the sector](#)[Building on our strengths in quantum](#)[Forging new pathways into the sector](#)[Promoting career opportunities in quantum](#)[Collaboration](#)

Foreword

Ensuring the UK has the skills to develop and adopt quantum technologies will be critical to realise the benefits to society from their applications and to enable future economic growth. These advances range from new sensors to diagnose and treat diseases earlier, to an exponential increase in computing power to develop new drugs, or novel materials to reduce emissions.

The UK has benefitted from the fruits of a pioneering 10-year quantum programme, which has gifted the UK economy with a wealth of quantum talent, powering the economy and the growth of the quantum sector in the UK. This acts as a significant draw for many companies and academic groups looking to either partner with, or set up activities in, the UK.

Technicians in the academic workforce

Technicians make up a core part of the academic workforce, enabling both teaching and research activities. While there is a shortage of relevant technicians across the quantum sector and the broader economy, anecdotal feedback indicates that this shortage is particularly acute within higher education and research institutions. Further analysis is required to better understand the situation for institutions undertaking quantum research.

Initiatives such as the UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy (UK ITSS), the TALENT Commission, and the Technician Commitment are aiming to address this shortage and the Taskforce is supportive of these efforts. They are doing so by advocating for the technical community, with the aim of accelerating and advancing technical skills and careers through insights, influence, innovation and integration.

Finding: Stakeholder feedback indicates there is a potentially acute shortage of technicians in academia. It will be important to monitor whether existing initiatives such as UKITSS and the Technician Commitment are having the desired effect and to consider if specific actions are required in institutions undertaking quantum research.

Recommendation 8: There is a need to ensure that quantum is a great place to work for technicians in research. Relevant academic departments should continue to follow the recommendations identified by the UK ITSS, TALENT Commission and the Technician Commitment to support the quantum technician workforce. DSIT and UKRI should support those universities to adopt these recommendations and share good practice on their implementation.

DSIT should work with the UK ITSS to gather further evidence on the quantum technician workforce in academia as part of wider efforts to improve evidence about the sector.

Case Study - UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy

The UK Institute for Technical Skills & Strategy (UK ITSS), established in August 2023, is a national entity driving strategic change for the UK's technical workforce in higher education and research. Building on the legacy of the Research England funded TALENT Programme and now hosting the Technician Commitment, UK ITSS addresses the urgent need to make technical careers more visible, attractive and supported.

Technical professionals play a critical role in delivering the UK's research, innovation and economic growth ambitions, particularly in the development and implementation of critical technologies.

UK ITSS is delivering against seven strategic priorities: policy influence, learning and development, education pathways, community building, consulting, international engagement and the Technician Commitment.

Activities include flagship and unique technical leadership programmes, a national Technical Capability Showcase of over 200 facilities, and a thriving international knowledge exchange placement scheme. Through its Research and Policy Group, UK ITSS provides evidence-based insights to shape policy, while its Education and Career Pathways Lab is supporting apprenticeships, T Level placements and improved career entry routes and pathways.

Thousands of technical professionals have already benefitted from UK ITSS programmes, and over 130 institutions are signed up to the Technician Commitment, signalling growing momentum for cultural change.



Learning & Development Academy

Empowering future technical leaders, educators and practitioners through tailored learning and development programmes.

Learning and Development Academy



Technical development and leadership

A range of flagship national leadership and development programmes, designed for the technical community in academia (teaching and research roles) and research institutes.

- **Executive Programme in Strategic Technical Leadership**
- **Herschel Programme for Women in Technical Leadership**
- **Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Global for technical professionals**
- **Vivien Thomas Technical Leadership Programme**

SpringFest and WinterFest Online Learning Festivals

Bitesize learning and development opportunities delivered through a programme of online workshops. Topics include career planning, professional registration, panel discussions and more. Delivered by learning and development experts and volunteers from the technical community.

[View full programme and register for workshops.](#)

Project Management for Technicians

Learn new project management skills and tools to enhance your workload planning. Designed for technical professionals who have one, or more, packages of work to manage and deliver.

Technical Teaching Recognition Programme

Helping technical professionals who support learning to gain professional recognition. Designed for technical professionals who would like support applying for professional recognition via Advance HE.

Technician Career Development Programme

Understand your own strengths, skills, values and motivations to take the next step in your career through unique group coaching sessions.



HERSCHEL
Programme
For Women in Technical Leadership

THE HERSCHEL PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN IN TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP

#HerschelLeaders @ML_TechTALENT





Education & Pathways Lab

Transforming technical career pathways, from entry to advanced levels by enabling T-Level industry placements, supporting technical apprenticeships, and reimagining progression routes and opportunities.

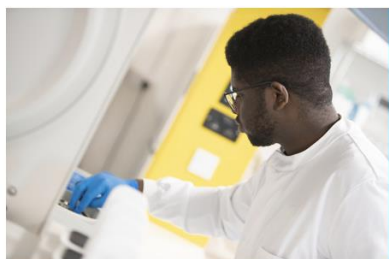
Technical Careers Pathways Lab

We are supporting the development of career frameworks for technical staff with higher education and research institutions. Our lab is funded by Research England, part of UK Research and Innovation and builds on the work of the TALENT Commission.

[Home](#) » [Support for Organisations](#) » [Technical Careers Pathway Lab](#)

The UK's technical workforce needs clearer progression, with greater opportunities and mechanisms to move between career pathways and across sectors.

With multiple entry routes into technical careers that are well understood by everyone, we can help build technical capacity and capability in science, technologies, engineering, medicine and the creative industries.



We have set up a Technician Career Pathways Resource on Teams

This is a space to share documents, insights, ideas and conversation about technical pathways.

[APPLY TO JOIN THE GROUP](#)

Our Technical Career Pathway Lab priorities

Explore and understand

We are consulting with UK higher education and research institutes to understand existing career pathways for technical professionals and identify areas of excellent practice. We will create a Technical Pathways Lab working group consisting of senior technical leaders, senior technicians and HR professionals who are interested in exploring the career pathways discipline with us.

Inform

We will create valuable communities where best practice, insights and ideas can be shared. We shall create and deliver opportunities to communicate and discuss good practice within the sector. A national symposium is taking place to share ideas and initiatives UK wide. There will be an opportunity to join focussed events and masterclasses to support learning.

Implement

We shall co-design and help to implement effective initiatives that improve career pathways and enhance entry routes into careers. The Technical Career Pathways Lab will select best practice and gather intelligence from the sector to design innovative interventions.

“We are leading nationally on this agenda to help standardise and improve career progression and entry routes into technical careers.

Our national Technical Careers Pathways Lab is building on the recommendations in the TALENT Commission.”



Sarah Allen

T Level Industry Placements

Become a T Level industry placement host and kick-start the next generation of technical careers

[Home](#) » [Support for Organisations](#) » T Level Industry Placements



We're helping more universities and research institutes across the UK to host technical T Level industry placements in health and science, engineering and manufacturing and digital.

Hosting T Level science placements within technical teams boosts technical skills, increasing capacity and capability in the higher education and research sector.

GET YOUR FREE T LEVEL TOOLKIT

Quick Links

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- [Complete our T Level Placement survey \(for universities\)](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Email us](#)

Case study: The University of Liverpool

Benefits for the technical professionals



Benefits for the university



Jo Hartley-Metcalf

Universities T Levels Support Manager



ITSS Consulting

Offering strategic guidance and tailored support to organisations seeking to optimise their technical workforce



ITSS Consulting is a not-for-profit professional development partner for the technical community in higher education and research.

We work with the technical community and professionals to provide tangible and cost-effective practical solutions to your technical workforce challenges.

Learning and
Development

Organisational
Change

People, Diversity
and Wellbeing

Technical Working
Environments



Community & Practice Hub

Cultivating a thriving, interconnected technical community, facilitating knowledge sharing and collaboration

ITSS Capabilities Sharing Showcase

Putting technical expertise at the forefront of the UK equipment sharing agenda

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 - ☐ Research Technology Platform (15)
 - ☐ Royal Microscopy Society



Waters Xevo TQ-S Micro

Configuration: Acquity H-Class UPLC system coupled to triple quadrupole mass spectrometer. Ionisation: ESI, API ...

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Waters Cyclic IMS

Configuration: Acquity H-Class UPLC system coupled to a QToF cyclic Ion Mobility (IMS) mass spectrometer Ionisation: API Travelling Wave Ion ...

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Waters Synapt G2-Si

Configuration: Acquity M-Class UPLC system coupled to an Q-ToF Ion Mobility Spectrometry (IMS) mass spectrometer Ionisation: ESI, APCI, ASAP, DESI, ...

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Waters Xevo G2-XS

Configuration: Acquity I-Class UPLC system coupled to QToF mass spectrometer Ionisation: ESI, APCI ...

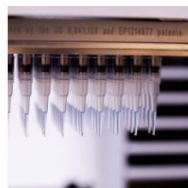
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Raman spectroscopy is a label-free technique that is used to identify and quantify chemical composition in samples including cells and ...

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The High-Performance Sequencing Platform is an open-access facility embedded within the Earham Institute's data-intensive environment, which specialises in the provision ...

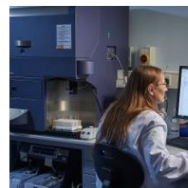
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Equipment Sharing Fund

Accelerate your research, realise your research ambitions

[Home » What We Do » Equipment Sharing and Technology Expertise » Equipment Sharing Fund](#)

What is the fund?

The Equipment Sharing Fund allows researchers, PhD students and Research Technical Professionals (RTPs) to access cutting-edge research equipment, not available in their home institution.

People who access the equipment, will benefit from the expertise and knowledge of the technical experts who are central to managing the equipment and training others.

How does it work?

Funds cover the cost of initial analysis, helping to strengthen collaboration opportunities and ensure value for money within the UK's research and innovation ecosystem.

The fund opens for four rounds and will provide the full economic cost (fEC) or TRAC rate directly to the facility. [Find out when the fund opens and more about the criteria.](#)

[APPLY HERE](#)

ITSS TECHNOLOGY
CAPABILITIES
SHOWCASE



“The programme has been invaluable in providing access to equipment we would ordinarily not be able to access, and in generating preliminary data to support onward grant applications.”

Daniel Tonge, Keele University, used University of Nottingham's Next Generation Sequencing Facility

Benefits for researchers, PhD students

- Increase your understanding of technology and research practices
- Generate preliminary data for grant applications
- Unlock new research opportunities
- Network with technical professionals in your discipline
- Collaboration strengthens the research and innovation ecosystem, ensuring value for money



Knowledge Exchange Placement Programme

[Home](#) » Knowledge Exchange Placements



UK technical staff who want to expand their skills and knowledge in a specialist area through a placement, can now apply to the Technical Skills Knowledge Exchange Placement Programme.

Learn new specialist skills from leading experts, share and consolidate best practice across institutes, and network with fellow technicians.

[APPLY HERE FOR A
PLACEMENT](#)

[SUBMIT LINE
MANAGER APPROVAL](#)

**“The placement has
been a rewarding
learning experience, one
that has contributed to**

Morgan Shaw

University of Dundee to the University of Alberta

“Collaborating in person is essential to fully understand complex techniques and learn the small details that make a huge impact in reproducibility and standardisation.

Funding opportunities are often limited for technical staff, so this placement scheme is an invaluable resource that should be taken by any technician seeking to learn or develop a specialist skill!”



Kersti Karu

University College London to the University of Swansea

“I observed the innovative methods for spatial localisation of sterols in brain tissues at the mass spectrometry labs led by Professor William J. Griffiths and Dr. Yuqin Wang.

Integrating this technology into our workflow promises to significantly enhance our research capabilities in UCL Chemistry mass spectrometry facility.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity. The programme has been immensely beneficial in keeping my professional knowledge up-to-date.”



The UK Higher Education Technicians Summit

The largest event dedicated to UK technical professional development

[Home](#) » Higher Education Technicians Summit

The UK Higher Education Technicians Summit (HETS) is one of the largest conferences for technical professionals in higher education and research.

HETS is dedicated to the professional development of the technician community and celebrates the achievements of technicians through the Papin Prizes.

The one-day event offers a range of workshops, speakers and networking opportunities for the technical community in UK and Ireland.



UK Higher Education
Technicians Summit

Quick Links

- [2025 HETS Programme](#)
- [Papin Prize categories](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)

HETS 2025

The 2025 event will take place on Wednesday 9 July 2025 in Leicestershire at the Leonardo Conference Centre, Hinckley, LE10 3JA.

It is delivered by the UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy. Thanks to a grant from [UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#) and [Midlands Innovation](#), the higher education and research technical community can attend at no charge.

HETS supports the professional development of technical professionals in higher education and research, by sharing best practice, sector insights and opportunities.



UK Research
and Innovation



Papin Prizes

The Papin Prizes are dedicated to celebrating the very best technical staff and teams in academia and research.

The national awards recognise and honour the work of technicians in higher education and research; applications are encouraged from individuals who work with technical professionals.

There are ten categories for the 2025 Papin Prizes.

[LEARN MORE](#)



New national technical networks



ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY
NETWORK



STRATEGIC
TECHNICAL
LEADERS
NETWORK



TECHNOLOGY
SPECIALISTS
NETWORK



EQUALITY
DIVERSITY
INCLUSION
NETWORK

Technician Commitment

Leading a cultural shift at over 130 organisations that advocates for the technical profession and fosters positive working environments.

New Signatories and Supporters

- Bath Spa University
- The Association of Technical Staff in Psychology (ATSiP)
- University Bioscience Managers Association (UBMA)
- University of Cumbria
- University of Worcester
- Chartered Association of Sport & Exercise Sciences (CASES)
- The Society for the Environment (SocEnv)
- University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC)
- Now at over 130 Signatory/Supporter Organisations



14th May 2025

Technician Commitment Engagement Opportunities

- **Peer Reviewed Feedback:** Institutional Self-Assessments and Action Plans
- **Technician Commitment Collaboration Fund:** small grants scheme open to all signatory institutions to collaborate with external partners
- **Quarterly newsletter:** sent to all TC leads and open to public subscribers, valuable outlet to share any news or upcoming events
- **Signatory events:** biannual events to collaborate, share best practice and network with other signatory and supporter institutions

Peer Review

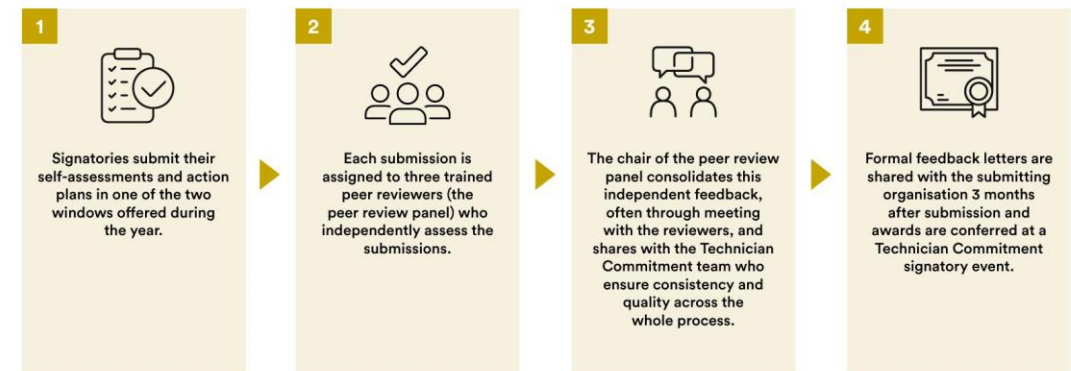
- Process thoroughly reviewed and refined in 2024
 - Two submission windows in January and July each year
 - Now ~50 submissions per year
- Peer Review Community now stands at over 100!
 - How we drive culture change: huge thanks to all volunteers
- Reviewing International Signatories and Supporters
 - For the first time of asking to ensure progress is made by all Signatories and Supporters
- Will now remain 'as is' until the launch of the TC Index

The Peer Review Process

What is it?

The Technician Commitment supports continuous improvement and the sharing of sector best practice through a peer review process. This consists of peer review from the wider Technician Commitment community, who assess signatory self-assessment and action plan submissions. Peer reviewers undertake thorough training to ensure consistency and quality of feedback.

The Process



The TC Index: Signatory Event November 2024

**PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION**



UK INSTITUTE FOR
TECHNICAL
SKILLS & STRATEGY

13th Signatory Event
Welcome to London



**Proceed with
Caution**

TC Index: The Revised 2025 Proposal

The TALENT
Commission
Technical skills, roles and careers in
UK higher education and research

- This will be a supportive development indexing progress through a **Maturity Framework**
- Progress indicators (the Es) will be based on the four pillars of the Technician Commitment aligned with the recommendations of the TALENT Policy Commission
- Signatory institution progress will be provided via a classification framework comprising of ‘E’ progress markers aligned to each individual Technician Commitment pillar as:
 - **Excluded:** No action has been taken; the organisation has not yet considered or initiated any activities in this area
 - **Embryonic:** Initial stages of action have begun; the organisation is in the very early phases of development, planning, or exploration in this area
 - **Emerging:** Noticeable progress has been made; the organisation has started to implement actions and is beginning to see initial outcomes and development in this area
 - **Embedded:** Actions are fully integrated and established; the organisation has successfully incorporated practices and activities in this area as a core part of its operations and culture
- **There will not be a single overall Technician Commitment classification**

Technician Commitment Index: The Revised Output

The University of Nowhere Whatsoever would be:

Embedded in Visibility

Embryonic in Recognition

Embryonic in Career Development

Emerging in Sustainability

Confidential to the submitting organisation

TC Index: The Revised Proposal

The TALENT
Commission

Technical skills, roles and careers in
UK higher education and research

- Classifications will only be shared with the submitting institution
- Classifications will be valid for three years
- This process has evolved from, and thus will replace, in time, the existing peer review process
- All organisations will use this process from January 2027 onwards (not before)
- The assessment will be carried out by the appropriately trained peer review community

Self-help tool to support individual institutions' progress on their Technician Commitment journey

The draft questions shared in November have been thoroughly reviewed and revised based on your feedback to ensure they are fair to the broad range of signatories

TC Index: The Revised Timelines

- The extended timeline for delivery is:
 - Pre-pilot (workshop using existing submissions and scoring criteria) Spring 2025
 - Identification of pilot institutions (~5 representing broad TC community) Summer 2025
 - Iteration of criteria/process with pilot institutions Autumn 2025
 - Training of peer reviewers for pilot institutions Winter 2025
 - Pilot scheme run Winter 2025-26
 - Criteria and process refined Spring 2026
 - Socialisation of final TC Index with the community Summer/Autumn 2026
 - Full training of peer review community Autumn/Winter2026
 - First formal run of TC Index January 2027
- The timeline has been extended to allow further community consultation to get this right



2022 – Hong Ling
University of Reading



2021 – Andrew Filby
Newcastle University

THE AWARDS

Outstanding Technician of the Year



2023 – Jason Daff
University of York



2024 – Jodie Chatfield
University of Nottingham



2020 – John Waters
University of Liverpool



2019 - Barbara Kunz
Open University

Technician **Commitment**



Awards
2025

Official Sponsor

Outstanding Technician of the Year

Technician Commitment

Technician Commitment



10 APR 2025 | 7:00 AM
ANNOUNCEMENT

Nominations open for THE's Outstanding Technician of the Year 2025

The Technician Commitment is thrilled to once again sponsor the Outstanding Technician of the Year category at this year's Times Higher Education Awards.

KEY DATES

10.04.2025: Entries open

09.06.2025: Entries close

04.09.2025: Shortlist announced

13.11.2025: Awards ceremony

Round Table Introductions

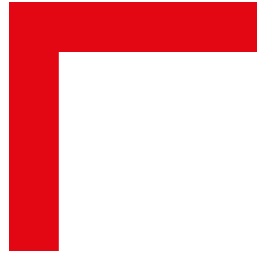
10:50-11:05

Round Table Introductions

10:50-11:05



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST TECHNICIAN COMMITMENT

Alan Stitt
McCauley Chair of Ophthalmology
Dean of Innovation & Impact
Faculty of Medicine, Health & Life Sciences



**SHAPING A
BETTER
WORLD
SINCE 1845**



Welcome to QUB and Northern Ireland!

The importance of technical staff to QUB and beyond

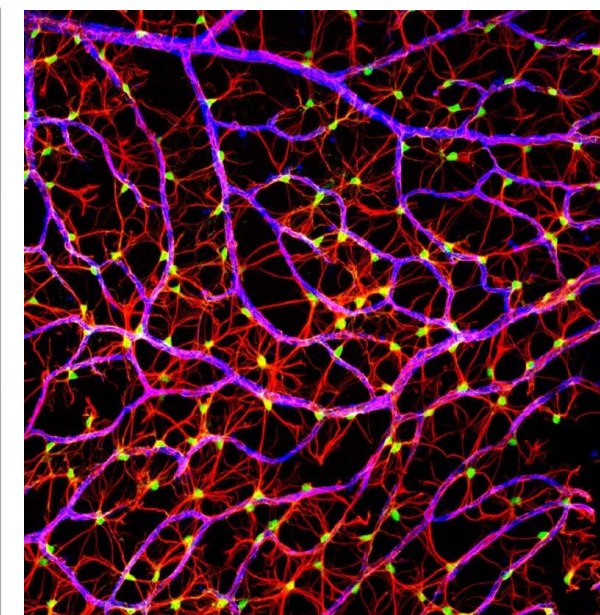
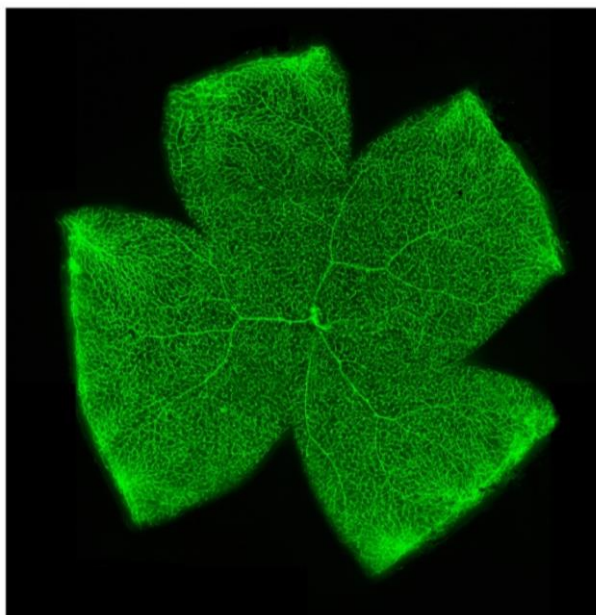
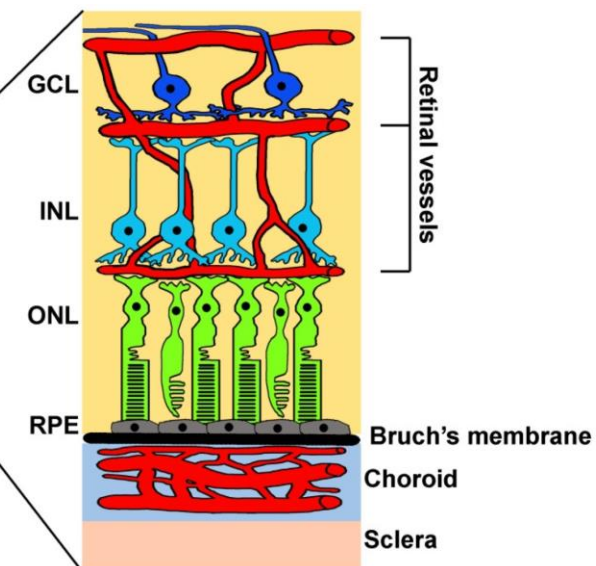
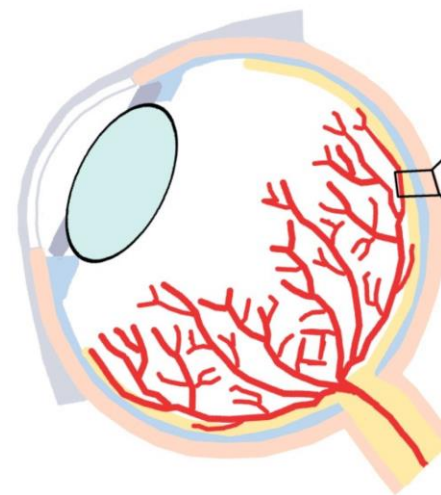
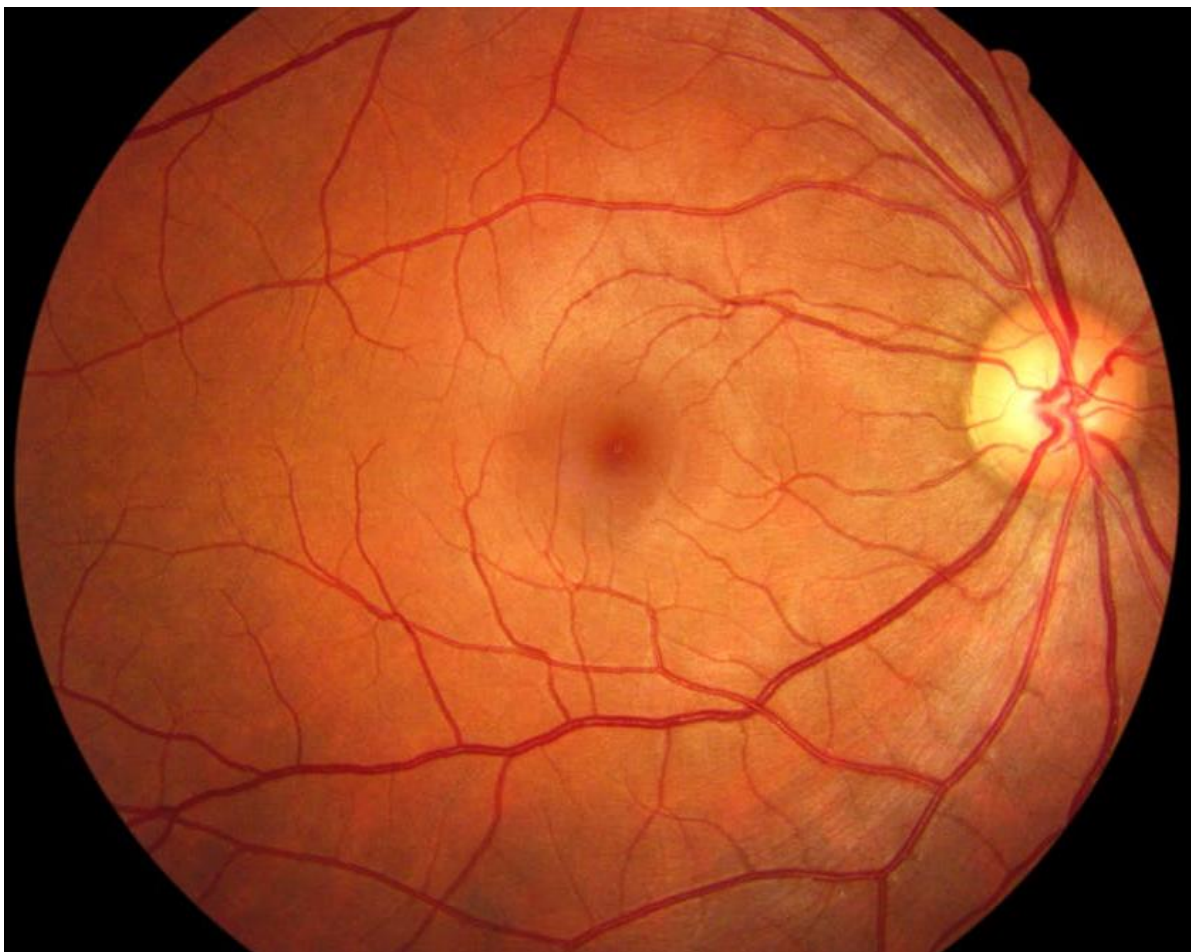
QUB's Technician Commitment journey

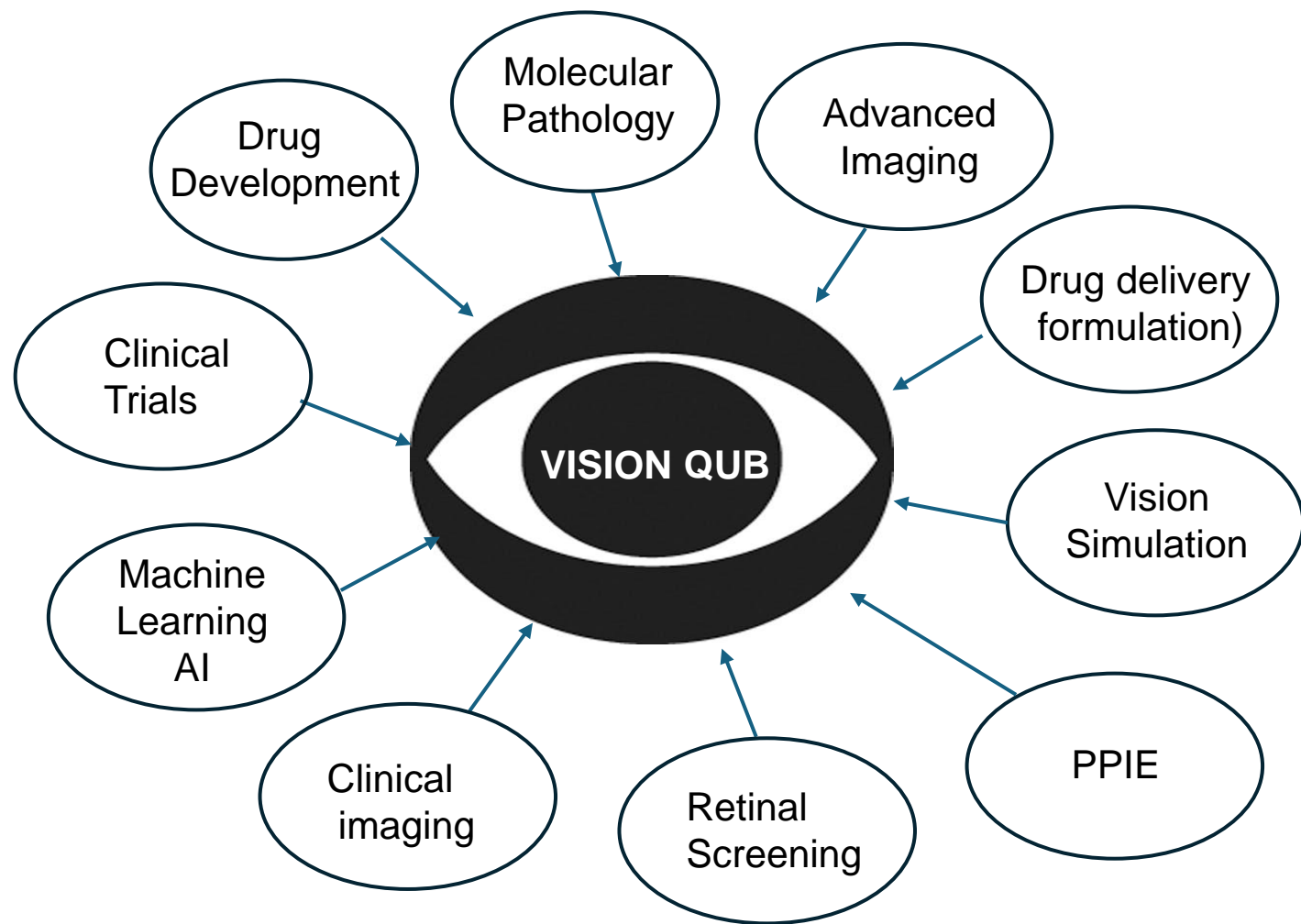
Reflections on the future - wider sector developments



- Annual turnover of £330m,
- 24,000 students and 5,000 staff,
- 270 Technical Staff across 3 Faculties
- Education, Research & Innovation contribute over £1 billion to the local economy and support 9,250 full-time jobs across Northern Ireland.
- QUB is ranked number two in the UK for entrepreneurial impact (Octopus Ventures, 2022) with 4500 people employed in 50 active spin out companies.
- Ranked number one in the UK for its participation in Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)
- MHLS – Innovation & Impact is high on the agenda: 23 spinout companies in last

The importance of technical staff to QUB and beyond....





- Uniquely trained and highly skilled
- Valuedread dependency!
- Delivering impact (locally, nationally & internationally)

BUT.....



QUB's Technician Commitment journey

- Established in 2017 and led by the Science Council and funded by the Gatsby Foundation
- Launched with 36 founding signatory institutions, including Queen's University Belfast.
- Signed by over 120 universities and research institutions to date
- Ulster University (2021) and Munster Technological University (2024) are now signatories.
- Now positioned in the new UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy (UK-ITSS).



VISIBILITY

Ensure that all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution

RECOGNITION

Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration and external awards schemes

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented pathways

SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised

Technician **Commitment**



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

Technician **Commitment**

June 2017 – Technician forum



The QUB Technician Commitment journey...



TECHNICAL LEAD
Gillian Riddell
Technician Commitment
Manager

Technician led

Face unpleasant truths

Convince management

Devise an institution-wide action plan

Sceptics into optimists!





VISIBILITY

Social Media



QUBTechnicians
@QUBTechnicians
Queen's University Belfast technicians connecting with each other and across UK and Ireland. Sharing expertise and best practice.



qubtechnicians

Following

Message

...

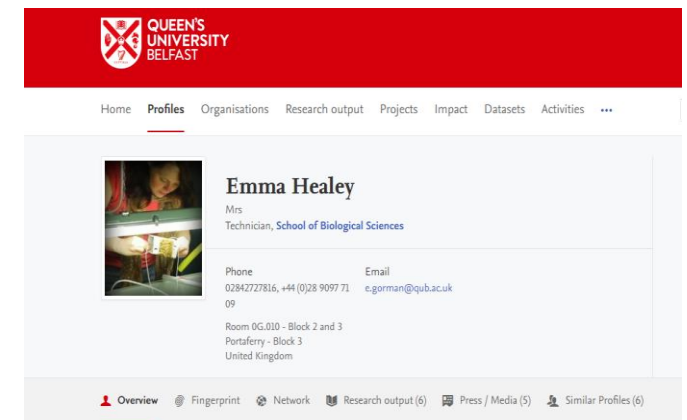
23 posts 54 followers 2 following

QUB Technicians
Technical Staff @ Queen's University Belfast
www.qub.ac.uk/sites/technicians

Queen's Technician Showcase 2024



Outward Facing PURE Profiles



Queen's Technicians webpage



Queen's Technician Lab Tours



www.qub.ac.uk/sites/technicians/

RECOGNITION

LEAF Laboratory Efficiency Assessment



Queen's Technician Awards



National Awards



QUBTechnicians
@QUBTechnicians

Professional Development

AdvanceHE

Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy

Mary Tumelty	AHSS
Rachael Hagan	EPS
Kate McComiskey	MHLS
Christopher Farnan	EPS
Craig Jackson	AHSS
Paula Johnston	AHSS
Gail Carson	MHLS
Áine McGuckin	MHLS
Tony Furnell	IS

IST
Supporting the technical workforce in the creative, digital, engineering and science technologies

Professional Registration

Kirsty McLaughlin	CSci 2020	MHLS
Anne Jordan	CSci 2021	MHLS
Judit Barabas	RSci 2019	MHLS
David Nicholl	2019	MHLS
Rebecca Delaney	RSci 2019	MHLS

Staff Excellence Awards



Congratulations to Chris Preshaw, Chief Technician in Biological Sciences, for being awarded the Order of the British Empire (BEM) for Services to Higher Education. So well deserved 🌟🎉 @QUBbioscience @QUBIGFS @QUBstaff



George Burton

Winner: 2024 Technical Excellence Prize

Queen's University Belfast

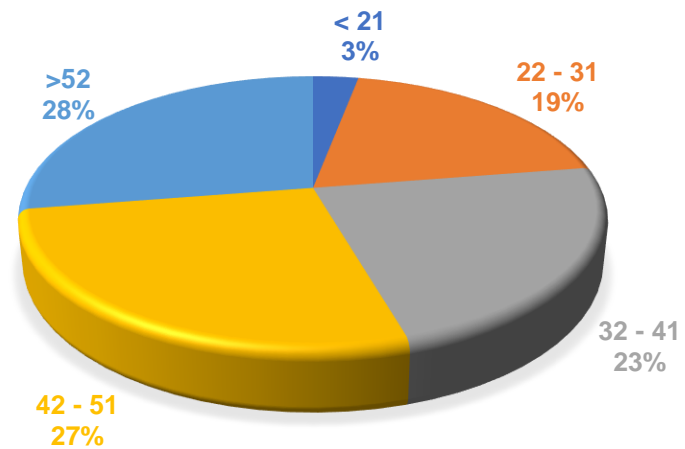
For the development of outstanding glass-blowing expertise supporting research and teaching nationally and internationally over nearly four decades.

Celebrate George Burton



SUSTAINABILITY

AGE DEMOGRAPHIC OF QUEEN'S
TECHNICIANS



SUSTAINABILITY



- Skills shortage / future skills needs identified
- Succession planning for an aging workforce
- Talent management
- Professional recognition
- Recognised standards and qualifications
- Home grown talent
- Civic duty



Queen's apprentices are working within four Level 3 (Advanced) frameworks; Scientific Technologies, Engineering, Creative Media (Film) and Information Technology, with 21 apprentices currently employed QUB with Belfast Metropolitan College, shortlisted for Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Awards 2025 Large Employer Award

Harry Watson, Simulation Technician Apprentice, shortlisted for 2025 Papin Prize in Apprentice category



Reflections on the future - wider sector developments and QUB technicians

- **Collaboration & Networking:** Joint NI University Action Plan with UU, All-Ireland Technical Staff Network Engage with UK & Ireland Networks, Conferences and Workshops
- **Recognition of technical leadership:** decision making related to recruitment, management, QUB policy development (e.g. EDI, Wellbeing, Mental Health)
- **REF:** Technical consultation for institutional and unit level REF submission, particularly relating to the People, Culture & Environment statement
- **Technical Services:** Introduction of technical oversight at University and Faculty level to ensure that the appropriate structures, processes and practices
- **Apprenticeships:** Further develop Advanced Level and Higher Level Apprenticeships

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Develop clear career pathways that provide clear guidance for development and progression for technical staff

Ensure visibility of clearly defined career pathways and standardised job description for technical roles and careers.

Explore and develop the expansion of the technical grade profiles beyond the “glass ceiling” Grade 7 to align with progression possibilities available to Professional Services, Research and Academic groups.

Investigate the possibility of a promotional Technical Specialist Pathway.

Review the profiles in the Technical Job family and reduce the number of job descriptions for technical staff.

Introduce higher grade technical job profiles to enable progression beyond Grade 7

Review best practice in Liverpool, Warwick, Nottingham Universities to propose a promotional Technical Specialist Pathway.

Queen's Technician Development Fund



The Technical Development Fund is available to all technical staff at Queen's. This annual fund will enable staff to attend appropriate activities/events, that will support their continuing professional and personal development. This initiative has been brought about by the Technician Commitment at Queen's.

Technician Mentoring Programme – launched January 2023



The Herschel Programme for Women in Technical Leadership.
2023 x6 technician successfully completed the programme
(4 IN 2024, 1 2025)

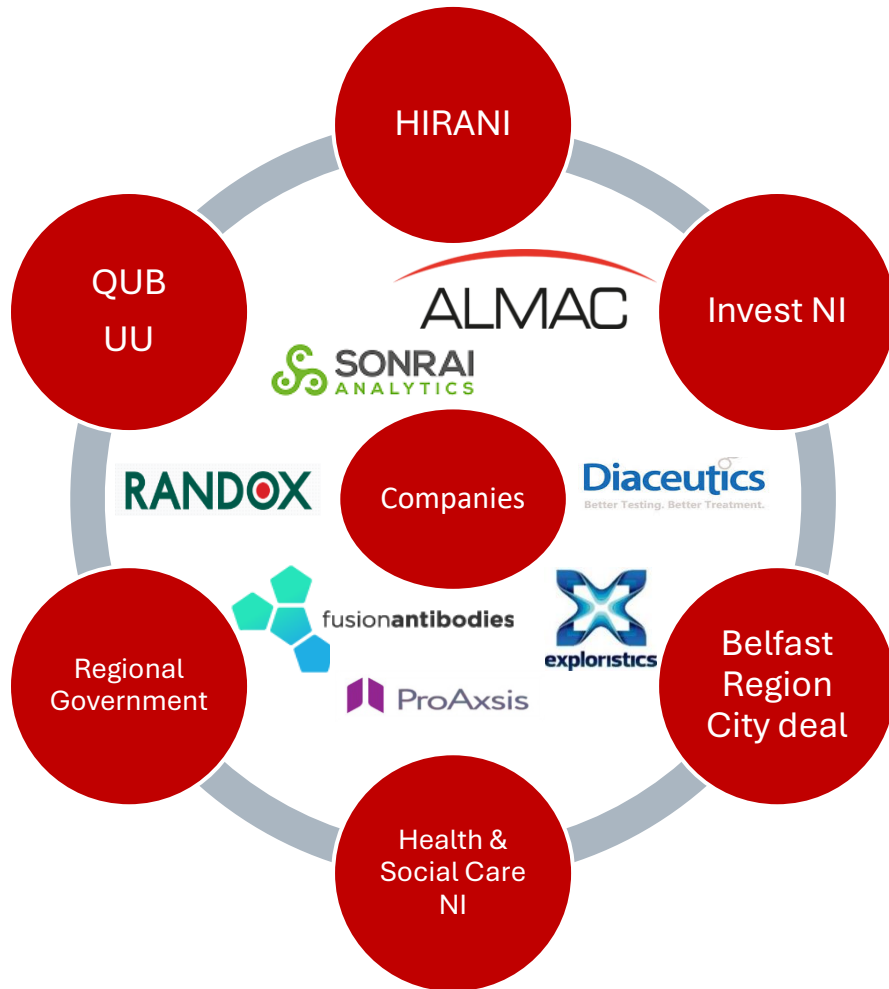


Belfast
City Council



Project	Global Innovation Institute	Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre	Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare	Digital Healthcare Technology Hub and Living Labs	Screen and Media Innovation Lab
Sector	Information Technology (Digital)	Manufacturing (Advanced)	Lifesciences	Medical Technology	Creative Industries
What does it hope to achieve by 2030?	Support 600 jobs £305m additional GVA £600m research grants and contracts Increase of 300-600 in regional hi-tech business cluster.	Support 4000 AMME jobs £295m additional GVA £203m research grants and contracts.	Supports 400 jobs £43m additional GVA Reduction of economic inactivity by 2,500-8,000 Gross long term economic benefits of £110m-£265m GVA	Technology Adoption Impacts £201m Spin outs – 10/ £64m FDI – 7 companies/ £80m UU Benefit £33m Sector skills impact £13.3m	Supports 2900 jobs £340m additional GVA 7 start-ups Attract 7 FDI partners Engaging 2000 disenfranchised young people
What is the cost?	£60.3m	£93.6m	£54.7m	£54.9m	£47.8m

Future Medicines Institute (FMI)



INTEGRATION

Life & Health Sciences R&D Hub that fosters collaboration , synergies & innovation

SUSTAINABILITY

Address gaps in technology/expertise leading to foreign investment

CAPACITY BUILDING

Deliver focused skills and career development commensurate with growth of the LHS sector

*A £50M centralized hub in Northern Ireland, located at QUB providing infrastructure, and **expertise in core areas** for local companies.*

Reflections on the future - wider sector developments and QUB technicians

- *Collaboration & Networking, Recognition*
- **Career pathways:** Technical Management and Technical Specialists
- **Reskilling or upskilling for current and future needs:** Development days, work shadowing, exchange programmes, mentoring, improved PDR experience, etc
- **Knowledge Exchange:** Develop ways technicians can contribute to KE activities: Identify and develop innovation/invention, public engagement, outreach, L&D, working with business, KTPs
- **Apprenticeships:** Further develop Advanced Level and Higher Level Apprenticeships

Coffee and Refreshments

11:35-12:05

REF 2029 and the People, Culture and Environment Pilot

12:05 – 12:35

Duncan Shermer

Head of REF Evaluation and Development

Professor Hugh McKenna

Ulster University and REF 2029 Research
Diversity Advisory Panel Member

REF 2029 and PCE

Duncan Shermer

Head of REF Evaluation and Development

REF2029

Research Excellence Framework

Overview of the REF

What is the Research Excellence Framework?

REF is owned and led by the four UK higher education funding bodies



- It:
 - informs allocation of around £2bn of block-grant funding each year
 - provides accountability for public investment in research
 - continually evolves, alongside our research base
 - (given the connection to allocation of funds) inevitably drives behaviour and therefore is a significant policy instrument across the UK

Key developments for REF 2029

People, Culture and Environment

- **Incorporating assessment of research people and culture is:**
 - Crucial in supporting high-quality research with impact
 - A key component of excellence
 - Linked with long-termism, stability, sustainability and productivity

Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding

- **Breaking link between individual staff members and unit submissions:**
 - HESA data on staff primarily employed to undertake research (no REF census)
 - Exploring the removal of minimum and maximum outputs per staff member

Engagement and Impact

- **Impact Case studies:**
 - Reducing the minimum requirement for small submissions to one case study
 - Broadening to include engagement in the assessment element
 - Exploring rigour as a new assessment criterion

REF2029 timetable

AW 2024-5

Policy releases:

- Open access
- Volume measure; Codes of practice guidance (VM)

2025

Spring – panel recruitment

Summer –

Contribution to knowledge and understanding; engagement and impact

Summer – Expert panels begin guidance development

Winter – PCE criteria and definitions

2026

- Final full guidance is set

2027

- Submission intentions deadline

2028

- Submission deadline
- Assessment phase begins

2029

- Results published

Criteria
setting



Submissions



Assessment

Principles and functions for this exercise:

1. REF should fulfil the following purposes:

- **Inform the allocation** of block-grant research funding to HEIs based on research quality
- Provide **accountability for public investment** in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment
- Provide **insight into the health of research** in HEIs in the UK.

2. REF should underpin:

- A research system that produces **high-quality, rigorous** research that is **open** to all;
- An **inclusive and collaborative** research system that supports a diversity of people, ideas, institutions, methodologies, outputs, and activities; and
- An **engaged and impactful** research system that connects research with wider society to bring about positive socio-economic change.

3. REF decision making should be driven by:

- **Robustness** of assessment outcomes
- Impact of the system on **research culture**
- Ensuring that the **bureaucratic burden** of the system is proportionate.

From Initial Decisions published in June 2023.

REF2029

Research Excellence Framework

People Culture and Environment

Why People, Culture & Environment Matter in REF 2029



- Creating the conditions for research excellence
- Driving equity, diversity & inclusion (EDI)
- Encouraging sustainable & ethical research practices
- Incentivising support for researchers

Developing PCE for REF 2029

PCE Indicators Project

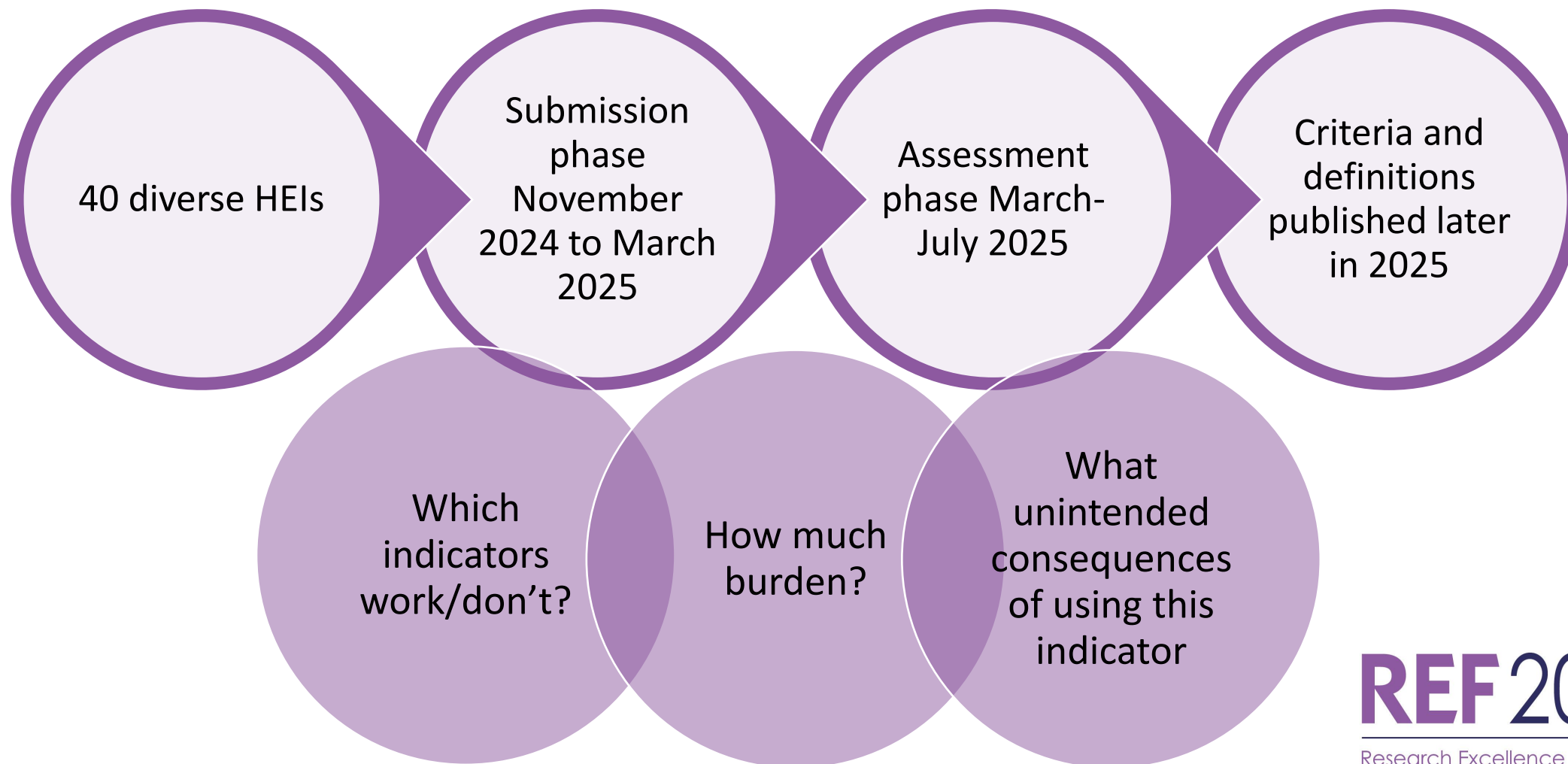
- Led by Technopolis and CRAC-Vitae, in collaboration with several sector organisations
- Developed indicators for assessing PCE through extensive engagement

PCE Pilot

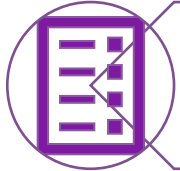
- Trialling PCE assessment for REF 2029.
- Broad sample of HEIs are taking part in the Pilot
- Pilot HEIs are preparing submissions drawing on the indicators developed by the PCE Indicators Project

People, Culture and Environment (PCE)

- Pilot exercise



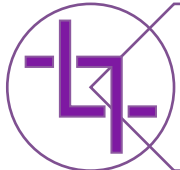
The Pilot is an experiment



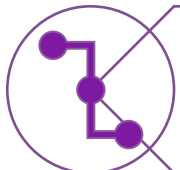
We're starting with a long list of indicators.



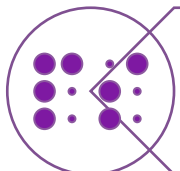
HEIs in the Pilot may approach their submissions differently and panels may vary their assessment approaches.



The templates may change.



PCE needs to be situated in the broader REF assessment.



Focussing on the newer elements of PCE.

Key questions for the Pilot

Which indicators do the participating institutions feel best reflect their research culture and which sources of evidence do they find most important?

Which metrics and evidence are difficult to provide and where is there scope for automation or provision of data from existing sources?

Where do participating institutions and assessment panels lack confidence in the robustness of the data and evidence?

Which quantitative and qualitative evidence is most helpful to the panels in reaching their conclusions?

REF2029

Research Excellence Framework

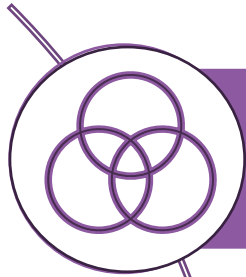
Volume measure

What is the Volume Measure for?

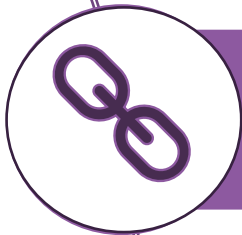
The volume measure

- allows REF to calculate **how many outputs and impact case studies** an HEI should submit for each UoA, proportionate to its research capacity
- gives a **proxy** for research capacity
- provides information on size and shape of the sector
- the funding bodies **may** also use the volume measure to inform the allocation of block grant funding.
- **does not** determine whose outputs are “REF eligible”
 - outputs are not tied to the volume measure, encouraging the submission of a wider range of outputs

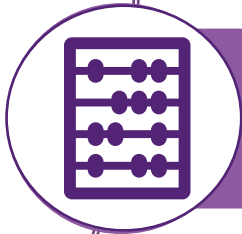
Key changes in REF 2029



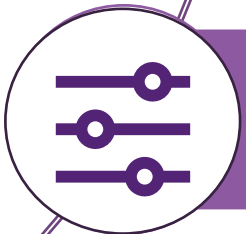
The Volume Measure will be gathered directly from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Staff Record



Breaking the link between individuals and the REF submission and focussing on assessment in each disciplinary area



The inclusion of a specific contract in the calculation does not dictate whether an output or impact case study can be included in the submission, or which Unit of Assessment it should be assigned to



Individual Staff Circumstances are not a feature of REF 2029, significantly reducing the burden of the exercise.

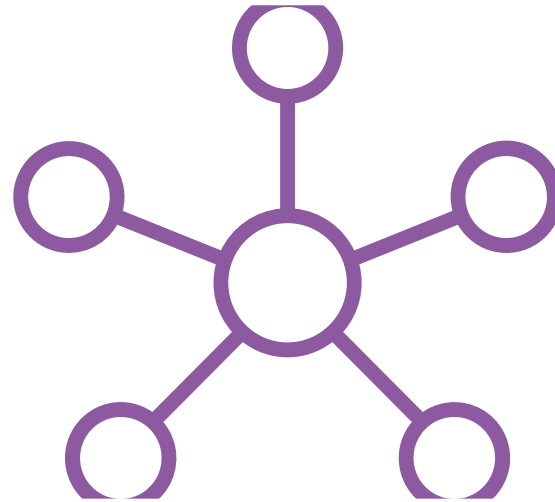
Principles of CoP

CoP built on three core principles:



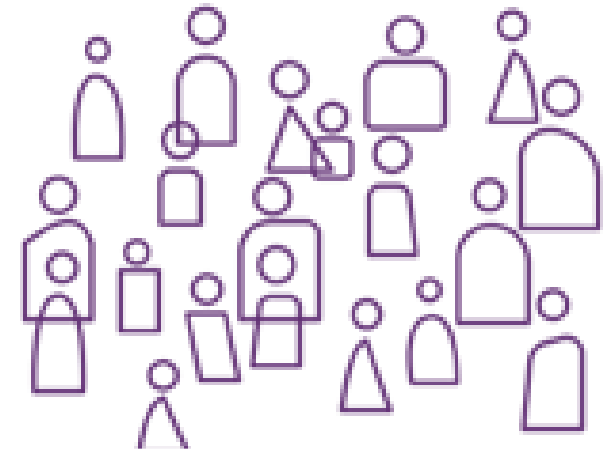
Robustness

Accurate reflection
of the sector



Transparency

Clear decision-
making processes




Equity and inclusivity

Fair and impartial
decisions, promoting
diversity


Thank you and stay in touch

- Use QR code to sign up for **REF updates** straight to your inbox.
- Please visit **get involved** on our website to view current opportunities.
- Email us at **info@ref.ac.uk** if you have any suggestions about how we can improve our guidance for you.



 @ref2029.bsky.social

 Research Excellence Framework



Hugh McKenna CBE, PhD, BSc(Hons), RN, FRCN, FAAN, FRCSI, FEANS, MAE, MEASA
Expert Panel Chair RAE2008, REF2014, REF2021
Member of REF2029 RDAP
14th May 2025

Technician Commitment Signatory Event

- Research Enabling Staff
- Engagement & Impact

•





The REF is changing, with less emphasis being placed on individual academic staff and their outputs, such as publications, and more emphasis on teams, disciplines and institutions and inclusive research ecosystems.

In REF2029 there will be no limitations to the diversity of research, and there should be no limitations to the diversity of roles involved in its creation.

Research Enabling Staff

- Technicians
- Librarians
- Curators,
- Data and software engineers,
- IT experts,
- Project managers,
- technology transfer staff,
- Research Administrators
- Imaging scientists
- Data stewards,
- Medical statisticians
- Research Office Clerical staff
- Animal welfare staff

‘Third-space professionals’

(Celia Whitchurch, 2008)

- Visibility,
- Recognition
- Sustainability
- Development

(Dixon & Murphy, 2025)

Research Enabling Staff

The Higher Education Funding Council of England considered [how to define a skilled technician](#). “One suggested rule of thumb,” it said, is “whether or not research comes to a halt when they are absent or on leave.”

Ask researchers about the role of technicians in research, and you will hear that they are “vital”, “- from the Latin *vitae* – essential for life



REF & Research Enabling Staff

REF 2029 encourages universities to be more inclusive of research enabling staff. This ensures a more level playing field for all who contribute to research. Moving from being perceived as a costly overhead to a crucial asset.

Outputs:

- Previous research assessments focused on publications as the metric of research excellence with many essential research enablers not given authorship of papers.
- But, technicians are increasingly being named as authors on research papers, reflecting their integral involvement in research

People, Culture & Environment

- Aims to give fairer attribution and recognition to research enabling staff

Engagement & Impact

- Research that leads to impactful new software, drugs, technologies, spins outs, interventions is the result of technical staff input.



RAE 2029 What Will Be Assessed?

Panels assess the **Overall Quality** of each submission

**Contribution to
knowledge and
understanding**

50%

**Engagement
and Impact**

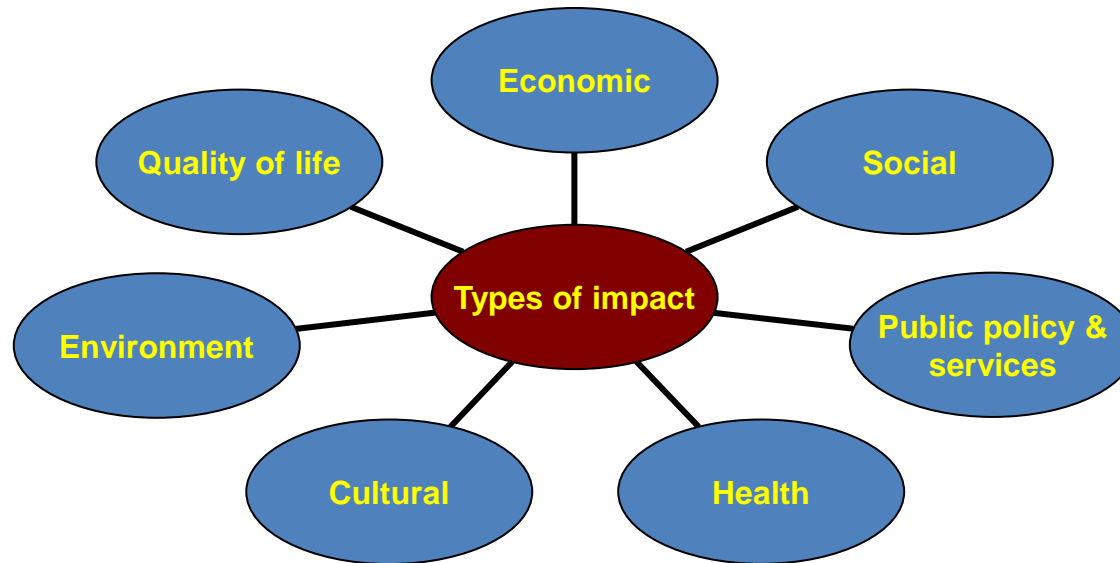
25%

**People, Culture
and
Environment**

25%

Research Impact: Definition

An identifiable benefit to, change or effect on:



Could be an effect, change or benefit on:

- **Processes:** attitude, awareness, behaviour, performance, practice, or understanding;
- **People:** patients, families, communities, clients or individuals;
- **Places:** any organisation or geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

McKenna, H.P. (2015) Research assessment: The Impact of impact *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. **52** (1) pp. 1-3.

Research Impact – Criteria

Reach: the extent and/or breadth of the beneficiaries of the impact, as relevant to the nature of the impact.

Significance: is the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the products, services, performance, practices, policies or understanding of commerce, industry or other organisations, governments, communities or individuals.



IMPACT!

Summary - Engagement and impact

Engagement and impact

- Impact case study/ies
- Disciplinary-level evidence statement

25%

Impact case studies:

- Number related to volume measure
- Only one case study required where volume less than 9.99 FTE
- Contributes 50-80% of EI score
- No quality threshold for underpinning research

Disciplinary-level statement:

- Contributes 20-50% of EI score (sliding scale depending on number of case studies)
- Contribution of unit to impact not reflected in case studies
- Engagement activity underpinning impact

ATTRIBUTION

**Must be no
disjoint
between
impact and its
underpinning
research**



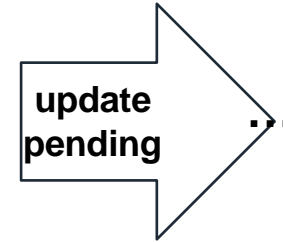


Diverse Research Impacts and Engagements

- **Impact diversity** refers to the breadth of ways in which research can reach and make a significant difference to a wide range of communities and actors.
- **Diverse engagement** practices encompass different types of meaningful interaction with a wide range of audiences and partners, across multiple settings and through various channels.
- REF2029 will enable institutions to submit a wider suite of impacts. The assessment judges highly varied cases (e.g., interdisciplinary and trans-sectoral impacts, civic, and regional impacts, preventative impacts, creative and participatory impacts etc.).

Diverse Impacts: Annex A (REF2021)

- Health, Wellbeing & Animal welfare
- Commerce & the Economy
- Technology
- Environment
- Quality of Life
- Understanding, Learning & Participation
- Legal
- Creativity, Culture & Society
- Social Welfare
- Public Policy, Law & Services
- Production
- Practitioners & Professional Services
- Politics and Policy



Already ~4 years into next REF



Clock has started ticking for REF2029

How can Technician Commitment Leads/Technicians engage with REF 2029 and drive positive research culture change?

12:35-13:30

Roundtable Provocations

1. **Representativeness:** how should technicians be represented in REF 2029?
2. **Research Diversity:** how can technicians improve research diversity in REF 2029?
3. **Practicalities:** How can I, as a Technician Commitment Lead/Technician, engage institutionally to ensure visibility and recognition for the technical community in REF 2029?

Lunch

13:30-14:30

Career Pathways Lab

14:30-15:10

ITSS

Career Pathways Lab

Sarah Allen – ITSS Career Pathways Lead

Lizzy James - Northumbria

Phill Dodd-Chandler - Salford





**Research
& Policy
Group**



**Community
& Practice
Hub**



**Technician
Commitment**



**Learning &
Development
Academy**



**Education
& Pathways
Lab**



CONSULTING



**ITSS
International**

What did our UKRI funding bid say?

Technical Pathways Lab:

ITSS will address the need for visibility of clearly defined career pathways and progression routes within HE and research. ITSS will establish the “Technical Pathways Lab” and work with a pilot group of employers, partners and technicians to reimagine technical career pathways and develop, trial and evaluate new progression routes.

Career Pathways Lab

Explore

What is happening at the moment?

Inform

Facilitate collaboration, sharing of ideas and support

Implement

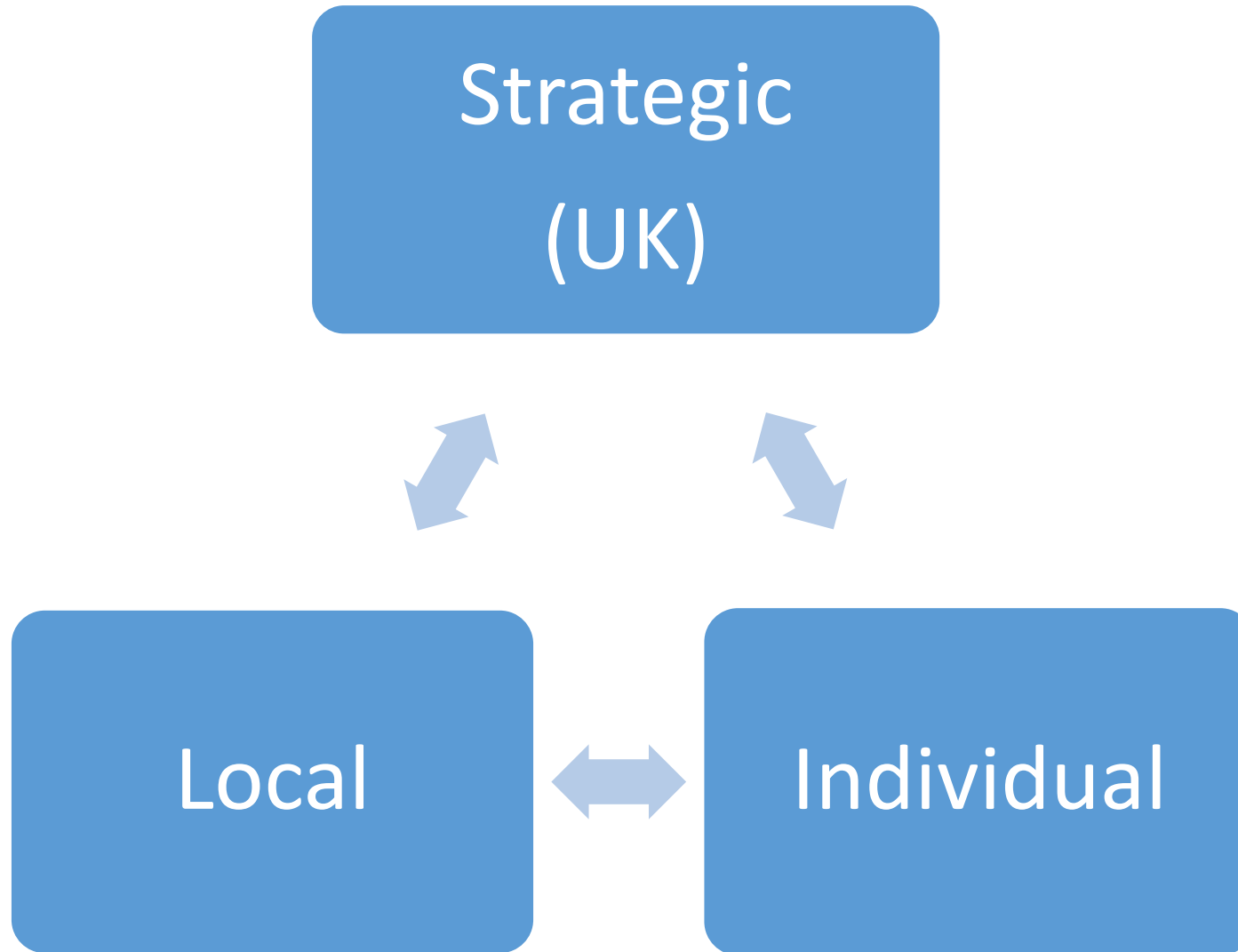
What can we change and pilot?







Career Pathways Lab



Career Pathways - Definitions

Career Pathway

Career pathway is about mapping available roles within an institution, creating competencies for different levels of role and showing how a technician could move through the levels – via applying for a new role or a regrade.

Promotional Pathway

Promotional pathway is about promotion based on what you have achieved, where you can apply for a promotion (as academics can) without changing role or there being a need for a business case regrade. Universities of Liverpool and Warwick have introduced this.

BUT

The work in the Career Pathways Lab is broader than this and includes recruitment, career development and succession planning.

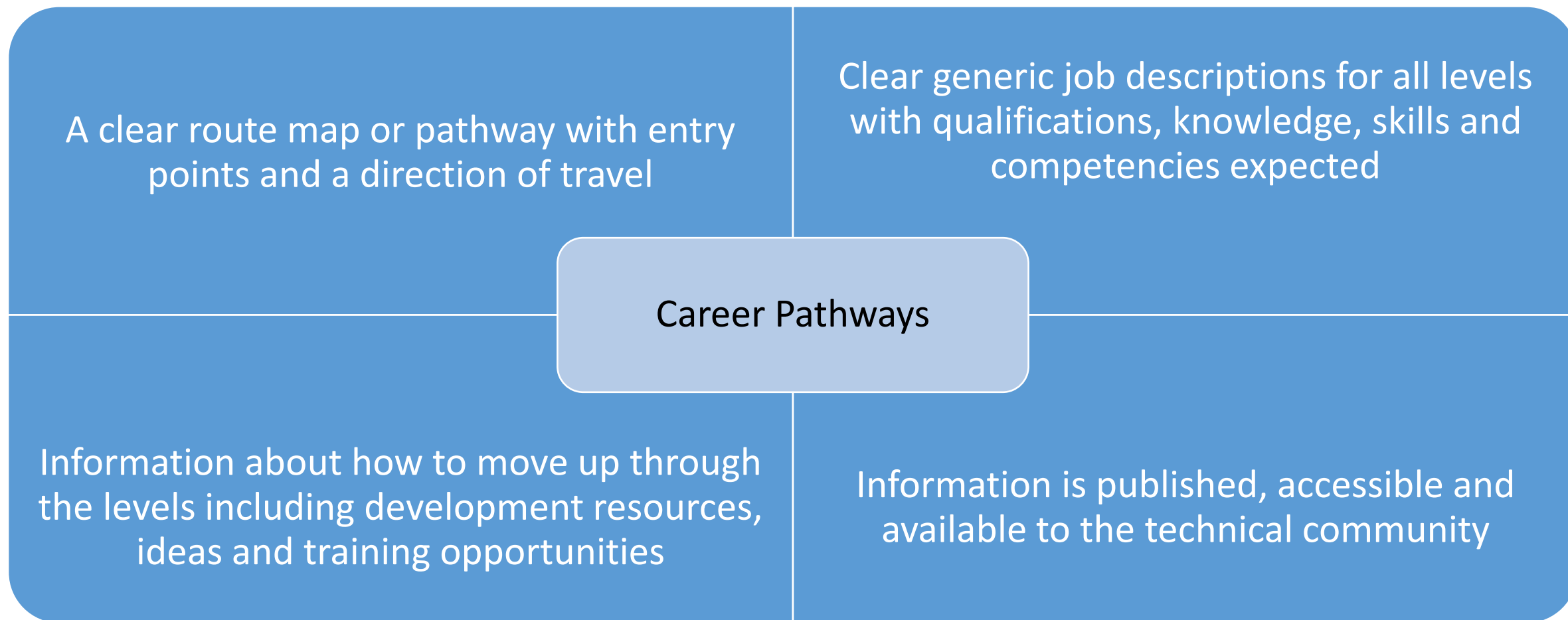
Career Pathways - Explore

Many organisations feels like
they are behind the curve

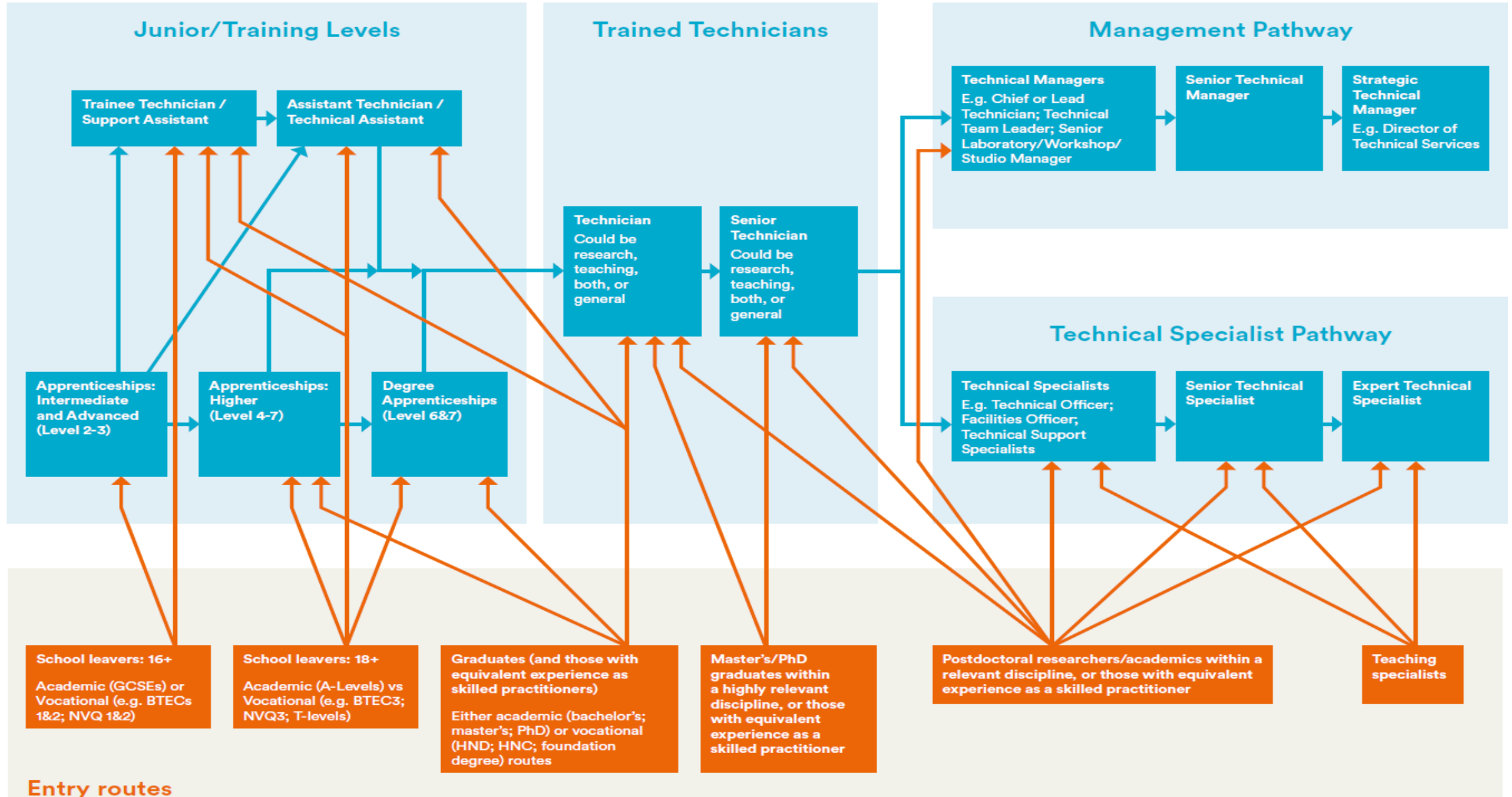
There is lots of good practice,
good will and support



What is a technician career pathway?



Talent Commission career route map.



How do institutions implement an effective career pathway?

Involve your stakeholders - senior management, HR and technicians at an early stage. Does your institution understand the *strategic* need for CP work?

Understand your community: Map out what you have currently in terms of pathways and JDs. What would you *like* this to look like? Who is in scope?

Map and describe each desired job level. Include qualifications, knowledge and skills required

Set up steering and delivery groups including senior leaders, HR, academics and technicians

**How and where will you share this resource?
What learning support will be available?**

Test and consult with your community and stakeholders

Career Pathways - Inform

- Online webinars
- Managing Career Pathways in person event
- Conference presentations
- Teams site to share ideas and resources
- Website



Implement –

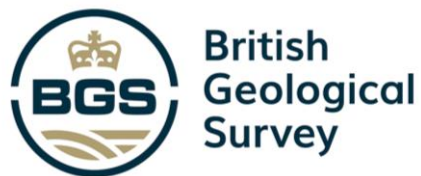
Career Pathways Action Group (CPAG)

- Innovate and reimagine
- Build on good practice
- Communicate to the sector





Career Pathways Action Group members



IMPERIAL

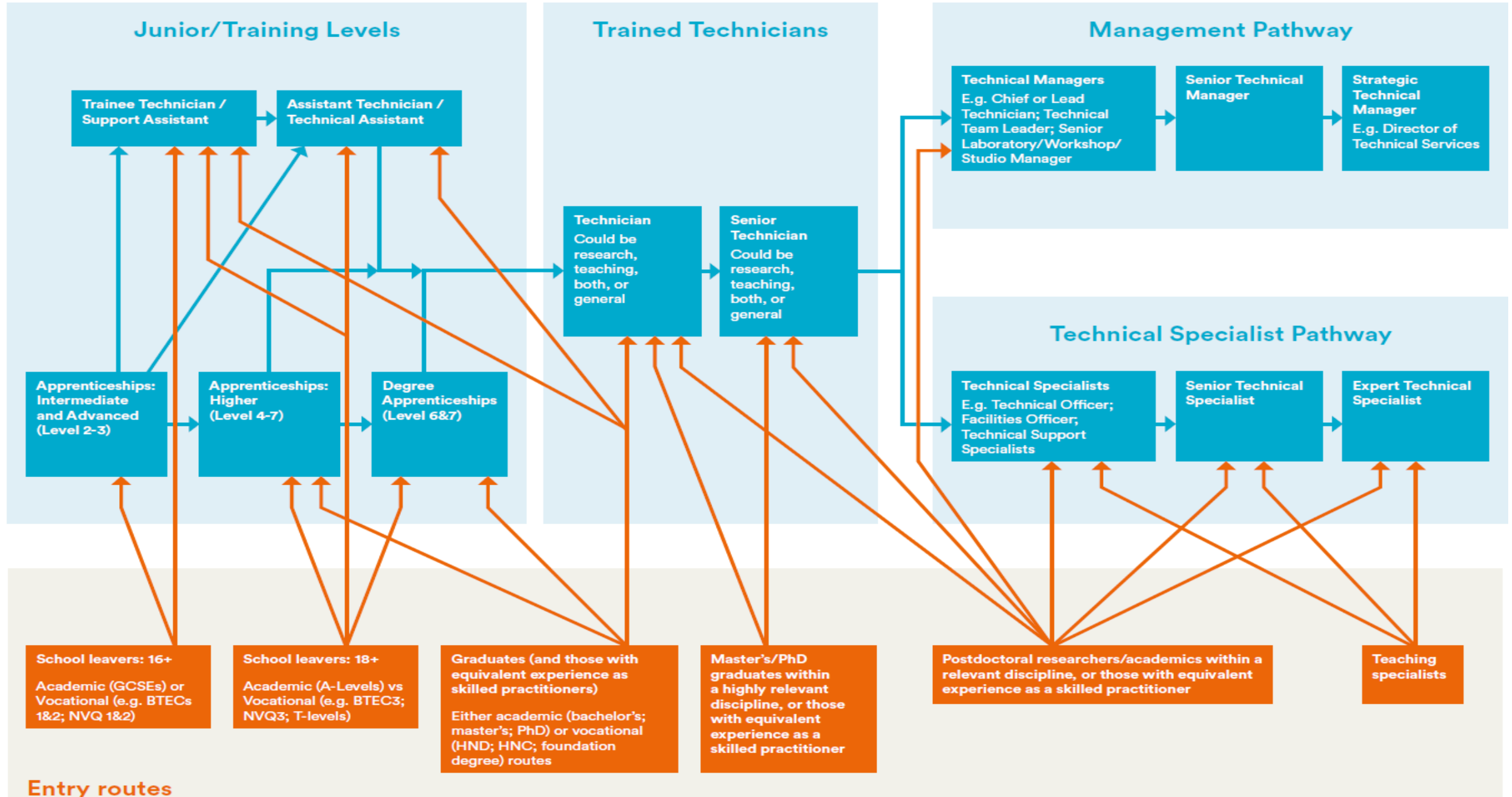


What are the problems?

These are well documented (eg Talent Commission report 2022 Ch9)

- Recruitment: talent pool and process
- Lack of career development opportunities
- Unclear career pathway
- Retention
- Succession Planning
- Lack of recognition about roles – internally and externally
- EDI

Talent Commission career route map.



Career Pathways Action Group

Project Areas

1. Apprenticeships: mid-career
2. Succession planning
3. Defining and mapping the technical workforce
4. Creating a toolkit for career pathways / promotional pathways
5. Technician Career development
6. Changing the organisational culture around training and development
7. Recognition for technicians
8. Changing the culture around how technical staff work with academics (NEW)

Project	Lead Institution	Group members
Apprenticeships	University College London	De Montfort University King's College London
Succession Planning	University of Warwick	University of Cambridge University of Essex Birmingham City University
Understand, map define, technical workforce	King's College London	Ulster University University of Cambridge Imperial College London University of Edinburgh
Toolkit for Career and Promotional Pathways	Northumbria University	The University of Leeds University of Liverpool Manchester Metropolitan University
Technicians own career development	Science & Technology Facilities Council	Liverpool John Moores University Cranfield University
Changing the culture around career development	Durham University & University of Salford	King's College London BGS
Recognition	Nottingham Trent University	Newcastle University Queens University
Changing the culture around how Technical staff work with academics	Institute of Cancer Research	University of Oxford Queen Mary University of London London South Bank University

Case studies

Career Pathways Action Group



Changing the Culture Around Career Development

'I know you didn't get the role, but
'I can't progress as they say I
can you train the new starter,
haven't the experience.
please.'



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER



Durham
University



British
Geological
Survey

Changing the Culture Around Career Development



Secondment



Job Shadow



Specialist Networks



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER



Durham
University



British
Geological
Survey

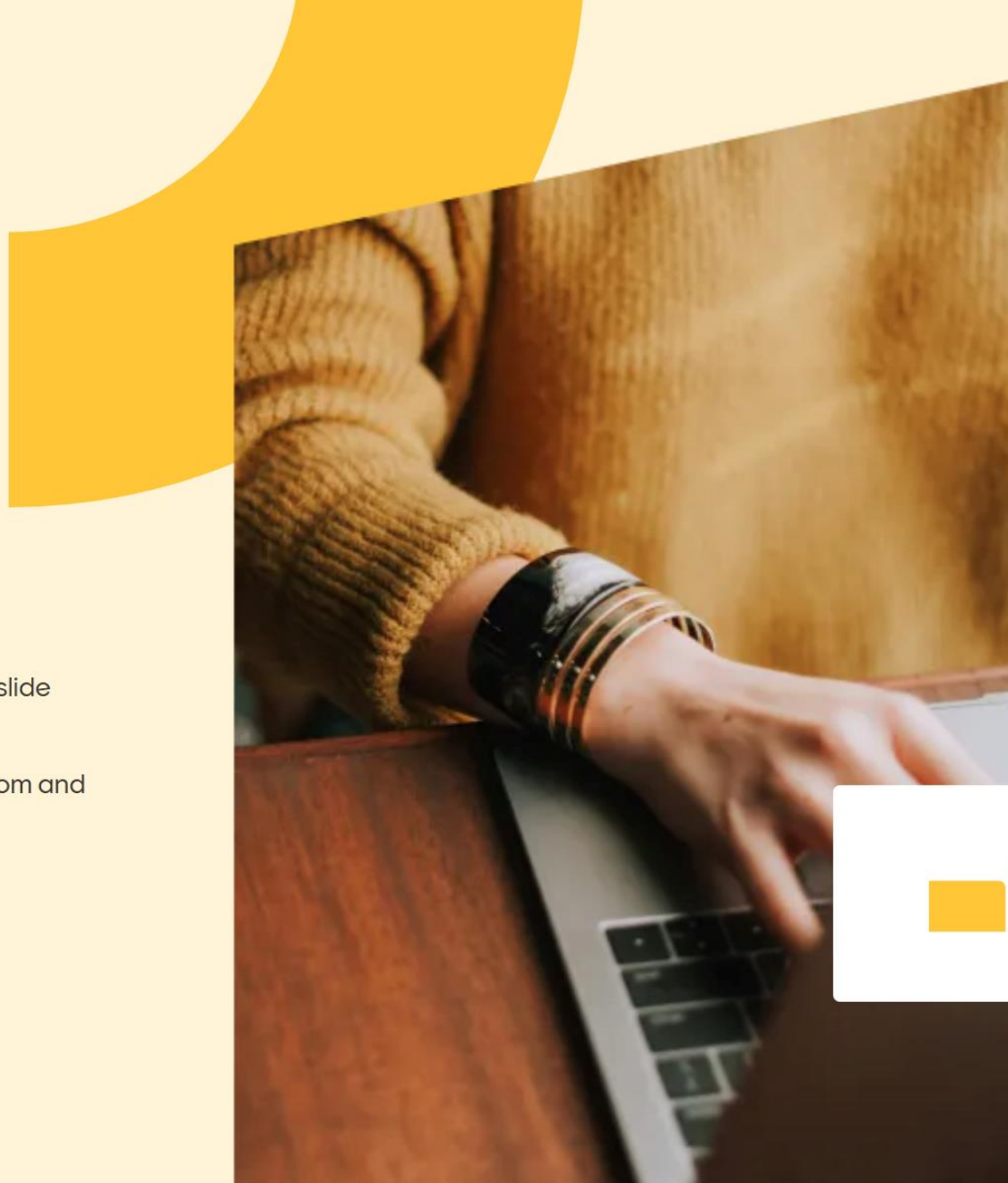
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Recent Mentis

Q Search Mentis



April SEE tech meeting
Created by Phillip Dodd-Ch...



Tech signatory event
Created by Phillip Dodd-Ch...



Tech Sept meeting
Created by Phillip Dodd-Ch...

Changing the Culture Around Career Development



Secondment



Specialist Networks



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER



Durham
University



British
Geological
Survey

Case study – Tools (4)

Overview of project: showcasing and sharing best practice in career pathways and promotional pathways for technical careers

What is the problem the project is trying to solve?

Career pathways for technical staff vary widely. Clear options will help technical staff visualise career progression, while unclear ones may hinder it, cause job description inconsistencies, and impede planning for training and development.

How are we trying to solve it:

We will develop a toolkit for the sector, showcasing best practices in technical career pathways to support transparency, standardization, and guide technical staff in planning their careers.

What has happened so far with the project?

Group defined SMART objectives and have been planning the format for the toolkit

What will the outcomes be for the sector?

A set of tools, case studies and guidance hosted on the ITSS website that helps institutions plan and implement career pathways and promotional pathways



Questions or comments

Career Pathways Action Group



Discussion questions

How should we share this work with the sector?

Thoughts and feedback

Career Pathways Survey



Thank you

Sarah.allen@itss.org.uk

Technician **Commitment**

Sharing Best Practice

- UKRI – Nik Ogryzko
- All Ireland Network – Dermot Barry and Gillian Riddell
- The Chartered Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (CASES)
- Amelia Dingley
- RELAX – Natalie Homer

15:10-15:40

UKRI Technician Commitment update

Nik Ogryzko

May 2025



UK Research
and Innovation

UK Research and Innovation

UKRI convenes, catalyses and invests to build a thriving, inclusive research and innovation system.

We support people and teams through:

- Our role as a **funder**, direct and indirect investments in the people doing the work
- Our role as a **policy organisation**, working with the community to drive positive changes in research culture
- Our role as an **employer** of people working in research and innovation at the institutes and facilities that we manage.



**UK Research
and Innovation**

People directly supported by UKRI grants, 2023-2024

- Individuals on person centred awards
- } Full Time Equivalents (FTE) on project-based awards

This does not include:

- Facility staff (where unit costs on grants)
- Institute and off-Siebel awards
- Staff supported through indirect and estate costs
- Staff supported by QR
- IUK investments

Doctoral Students
27,040

Fellows 2,390
(1636 FTE)

Project leads
1,370

Co-leads
2240

Technicians
2010

Other
2240

Researchers and
Researcher co-Is
16,090



People and teams action plan

Developed by UKRI talent and culture teams, including the community of talent experts from across our councils

1. UKRI as an employer
2. **Assessment: what we reward**
3. **Expectations and assurance: being clear about what we're investing in**
4. **Engagement: how we support the sector**

Further reading:

[UKRI people and teams action plan](#)

[Voices: It takes a village to deliver research](#)

People and teams incentives

Assessment: what we reward

- R4RI, grant roles; indirect and estates costs; core questions; UKRI visa schemes; [individual eligibility](#); [peer review colleges and guidance](#); [ORCID integration](#); [REF People, Culture and Environment](#)

Expectations and assurance: being clear about what we're investing in

- Open access; Good research conduct; Preventing harm; PGR core offer and training grant conditions; [harmonising our existing T&C's and people expectations](#); [Funding Assurance](#)

Engagement: how we support the sector

- 101 jobs; ITSS funding and support for technical leadership programmes; comms channels; relationship building with our communities; [HETS 2025](#)

Evidence and analysis

- evidence reports and synthesis (Review of peer review, concordats and agreements, EDI evidence synthesis); [UKRI grants/TFS](#); [HESA staff consultation](#)

Investments

- ITSS; TALENT; Prosper; C-DICE; Thrive; EPSRC & DRI Strategic Technical Platforms etc. [SR planning and allocations](#)



UK Research
and Innovation

Things for this year (Apr 2025 – Mar 2026)

- Single UKRI assessor database - more opportunity to make use of technical and specialist expertise in how UKRI makes funding decisions.
- Harmonised, cross UKRI eligibility policy: more open eligibility for UKRI funding, beyond equipment calls.
- A programme of people and teams pilots, embedding consideration of the need for technical and specialist expertise, and capability in delivering on our investments.
- A programme of comms and engagement on technical and specialist capability as essential for a high performing research system – REF PCE adjacent.
- Investment in technical capability – Spending Review dependent.



**UK Research
and Innovation**

Thank you

Please get in touch!

Nikolay.ogryzko@ukri.org

Bluesky: @ukri.org
Twitter: @UKRI_News

LinkedIn: UK Research
and Innovation

YouTube: UK Research
and Innovation

The All-Ireland Technical Staff Network

Engage | Support | Celebrate | Connect

Gillian Riddell (Queen's University Belfast)
Dermot Barry (Munster Technological University)

NETWORKING EVENTS

Regular informal meetings or online gatherings where technical staff can connect, share experiences, and build relationships.

CPD OPPORTUNITIES

Workshops, webinars, conferences, and access to online resources.

A TECHNICAL VOICE

Highlight collective technical staff contributions to higher education and research.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Potential for collaboration between technical staff and academic researchers within the network, leading to joint research projects and publications.

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Provide a platform for technical staff to seek assistance, share challenges, and collaboratively find solutions to technical issues.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SHARING

Facilitate the sharing of information, resources, tools, and documentation relevant to technical work in higher education

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Facilitate technical staff with similar interests or expertise to collaborate, share knowledge, and address discipline-specific challenges.

RECOGNITION AND AWARD CEREMONIES

Celebrate the achievements and contributions of technical staff through recognition programs or award ceremonies.



The All-Ireland Technical Staff Network

All-Ireland Technical Staff Steering Group



Dermot Barr
Munster Technological
University



Edel Durack
University of Limerick



Gillian Riddell
Queen's University
Belfast



James Cotter
Maynooth University



Una Prendergast
Dublin City University



DJ Collins
University of Limerick



Peter Owens
University of Galway



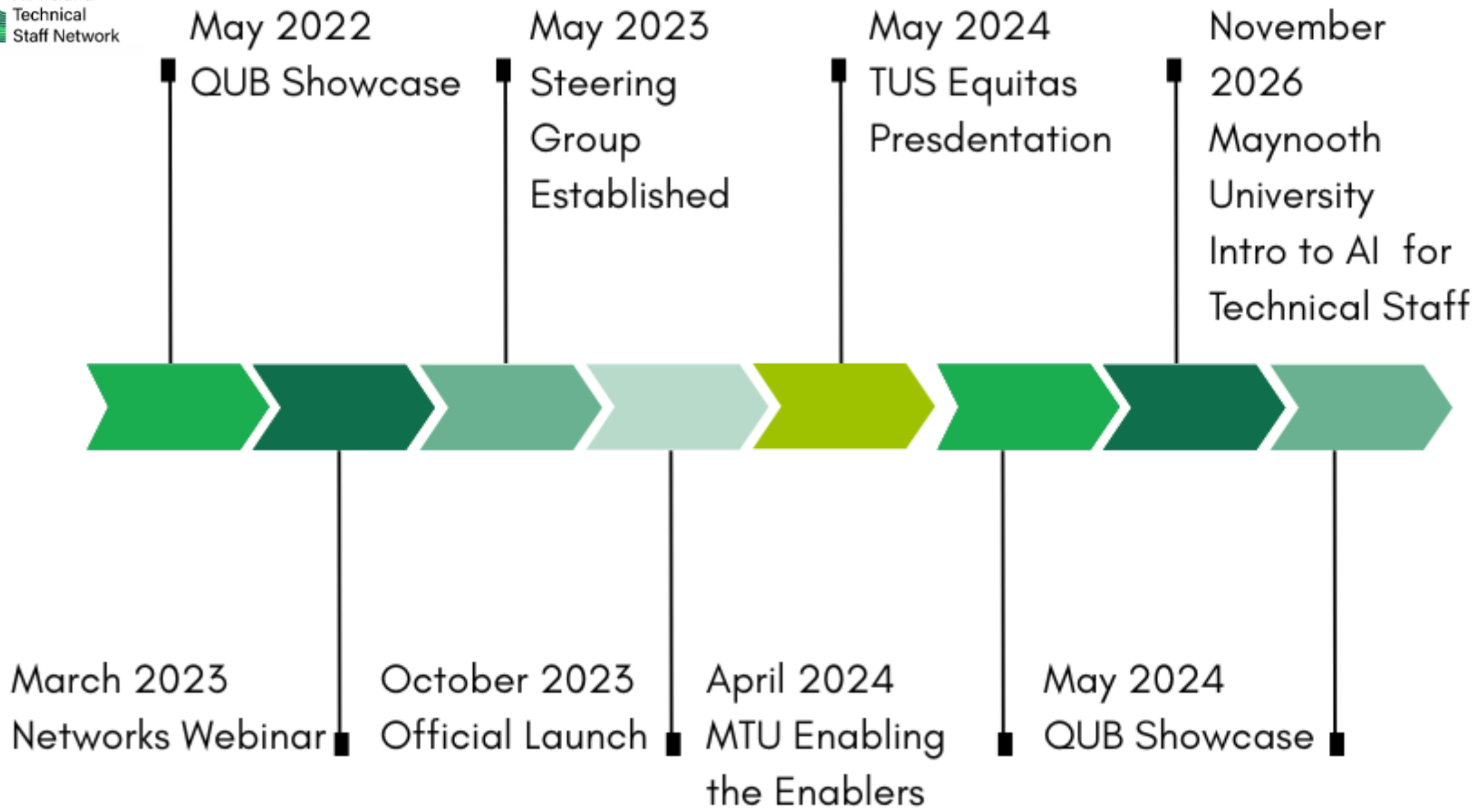
Barry Murray
Munster Technological
University



Heather Burgess
Ulster University



Gwyneth MacMaster
University College Dublin



AITSN Events

MTU Technical Staff Event

All-Ireland Technical Staff Virtual Launch 2023

Online Launch
4TH OCT 12:30PM

Introduction to AITSN

 Dermot Barry
MTU

 Gillian Riddell
QUB

 The wife, the scanner girl, and the technician
Andy Connelly
Northumbria University

Register here:
<https://qrco.de/beK4QH>

Watch on  YouTube



  @allirelandTSN
www.allirelandtsn.com

ENABLING THE ENABLERS

A SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNICAL STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION

HYBRID SEMINAR

Thursday 28th March

Seminar Room, Rubicon Centre, MTU, Bishopstown, Cork.

EQUITAS

EDI IN PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

23 & 24 MAY 2024

Queen's Technician Showcase 2024



An Introduction to AI for Technical Staff

INTRODUCTION TO AI FOR TECHNICAL STAFF

 **MARK MCCORMACK**
MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

DATE 27TH NOVEMBER 2024
TIME 11AM
ONLINE MICROSOFT TEAMS

Mark McCormack is a Postgraduate Ph.D. Student at Maynooth University and formerly a Software Engineer of SAP Ireland. He is actively working as a tutor and demonstrator and lecturer of Computer Science. His research is in the areas of Edutech, Augmented Reality and Genetic Algorithms/Neuroevolution.

His talk will focus on how new AI technologies work, how they can be used responsibly by technicians, what the future possibilities are with these technologies and how we can use them in our own activities. This presentation is inclusive to all levels of knowledge, and it will take a ground up approach to looking at these systems.

 **REGISTER HERE**
<https://forms.office/MjTQ2gM4-4m3h200>

 Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

 The All-Ireland Technical Staff Network

November 13, 2024

Maynooth Connecting Technical Minds Conference

 **May Univ**
National University of Ireland

 Nuaidiversity

CONNECTING TECHNICAL MINDS



All-Ireland Technical Staff Network Launch October 2023

“
”
As President of Munster Technological University (MTU) I am proud to support the **All-Ireland Technical Staff Network**, an exciting new initiative for technical staff in higher education and research across the island of Ireland.

At MTU, we recognise the important role our technical staff play in enabling our vision for academic and research excellence. As part of our Strategic Plan, Our Shared Vision, we are committed to providing our technical staff with opportunities for professional development and growth. Investing in our staff will not only help us achieve our strategic goals but also provide the best experience for our students and empower the southwest region and beyond.

As part of the All-Ireland Technical Staff Network, we are committed to helping foster a sense of community and collaboration among technical staff, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact that this will have in higher education, research, and the wider community.



President Maggie Cusack



“

”

I am delighted to support the launch of the All-Ireland Technical Staff Network. Since Queen's University joined the Technician Commitment in 2017, we have recognised the importance of working with our neighbours on the island of Ireland to promote visibility and recognition of the work of our Higher Education technicians.

Our technicians are vital in order for us to achieve our Vision as a world class international University supporting outstanding students and staff, working in world class facilities, conducting leading-edge education and research, focused on the needs of society.

Our technicians have the practical skills and expertise to turn research into reality and to put theory into practice for our students through classes and workshops, helping them develop the technical skills they will need for future employment. These technical skills allow us to continue to achieve our strategic priorities in education, research and innovation and impact, allowing us to further strengthen and widen our local partnerships and global collaborations and, ultimately, our positive contribution to society.

I support an All-Ireland Technical Staff Network to further encourage visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability of technical staff by sharing best practice and encouraging knowledge exchange.



Vice Chancellor Sir Ian Greer



STRUCTURE

The network is officially constituted as a Learning Community in Munster Technological University



Proudly facilitated and supported by the Teaching & Learning Unit & AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office



The
All-Ireland
Technical
Staff Network

Conference
June 2025

Hosted by
Queen's University Belfast

Date: Tuesday 10th June 2025

Venue: Riddel Hall
Stranmillis Road
Belfast

Time: 09:00- 16:00

Contact: Gillian Riddell
g.riddell@qub.ac.uk



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

TECHNICIAN COMMITMENT SIGNATORY EVENT | WEDNESDAY 14 MAY

The Chartered Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (CASES)

Amelia Dingley MSc FHEA BASES CSci

Technical Manager (Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences)
Brunel University of London

Co-Chair CASES Technical Special Interest Group
Co-Chair BUL TechNet



@Amelia.Dingley



Amelia.Dingley@brunel.ac.uk



Amelia Dingley

@CASESTechnical

CASES.Technica@gmail.com

Technical CASES Special Interest group

THE STARTING POINT....

**CASES
CONFERENCE
NOV 2023**



Dr John Fernandes



Dr Tori Sprung



Dr Sanjoy Deb

**CASES PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT MENTORING
PROGRAMME**

**SUBMIT PROPOSALS
TO CASES
SEP 2024**

**Special Interest Group
Required First***

**CASES CONFERENCE
Nov 2024**



**ACCREDITATION PATHWAY FOR
TECHNICIANS (RSCITECH)** 

**DEDICATED TECHNICAL
RESOURCES FOR BUES
ACCREDITED COURSES**

**LONG TERM PLANNING /
FUTURE PROOFING**

**SPECIFIC TECHNICIAN AWARDS
AT THE BASES CONFERENCE** 

 **CPD OPPORTUNITIES FOR
TECHNICIANS E.G. DELIVER
WORKSHOPS ON MAINTENANCE OF
EQUIPMENT BETWEEN SERVICES**

**HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE
TECHNICIANS PLAY IN
LABORATORY
ACCREDITATION** 

FRAMEWORK TO CHANGE OUR PRACTICE

**INCLUDE TECHNICIANS ON KEY
BOARDS WITHIN BASES** 

**ATtribution POLICY TO
ACKNOWLEDGE
TECHNICIANS ROLE IN
RESEARCH** 


RECOGNITION

SUSTAINABILITY

CAREER STUCTURE / SUPPORT

**CREATION OF A
TECHNICIANS SPECIAL
INTEREST GROUP** 

**ACCREDITATION
PATHWAY FOR
TECHNICIANS (RSCITECH)** 

**A TECHNICIAN'S CHAMPION
ON THE BASES BOARD** 

VISIBILTY

**CAREER
DEVELOPMENT**

**TECHNICIAN'S TO BE
INCLUDED ON GRANT
PROPOSALS**

**INCREASE FUNDING FOR
TECHNICIANS TO ATTEND
CONFERENCES**

**CPD OPPORTUNITIES FOR
TECHNICIANS E.G. DELIVER
WORKSHOPS ON
MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT
BETWEEN SERVICES** 

**TECHNICIAN SPOT
LIGHT IN THE SPORT
SCIENTIST MAGAZINE**

**SPECIFIC CALL FOR TECHNICIAN'S
PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES**

CASES CONFERENCE

Nov 2024

CREATE CPD OPPORTUNITIES
SPECIFICALLY FOR TECHNICIANS

RECOGNITION THROUGH
CASES E.G. AWARDS AT NEXT
CASES CONFERENCE

CASES TO BECOME
A SUPPORTER OF
THE TECHNICIANS
COMMITMENT

CREATION OF A
TECHNICIANS
SPECIAL
INTEREST
GROUP

AN EMPOWERED
AND SUSTAINABLE
CASES TECHNICAL
SPECIAL INTEREST
GROUP

START

REPRESENTATION ON
CASES COMMITTEES /
TECHNICIANS
CHAMPION ON THE
CASES BOARD

THE NEXT
12 MONTHS...

THE JOURNEY....

NOV 2024
CREATION OF A
TECHNICIANS
SPECIAL INTEREST
GROUP

30+ MEMBERS
70+ MAILING LIST

START

JAN 2025
CASES AGM
REQUEST OF
SUPPORT FROM
CHAIR / DIRECTOR

MARCH 2025
TSIG ADVISORY
GROUP FORMED /
ROLES

CREATION OF RESOURCES+
E.G. CPD APPLICATION
EXAMPLES / SOLUTION
ORIENTATED SUPPORT

MAY 2025 +
BI-MONTHLY
WORKSHOPS
ORGANISED

APRIL 2025
CASES SUPPORTER
OF TECHNICIANS
COMMITMENT

SEP 2025
TECHNICAL
LAUNCH EVENT
FUNDS RAISED

APRIL 2025
TECHNICIANS
INCLUDED ON
EXPERCT
STATMENT
PROPOSALS

**CASES STRATEGIC
PLANS**

**TECHNICAL
AWARDS
APPLICATION IN
PROGRESS**

DEC 2025
TECHNICAL SKILLS
WORKSHOPS

FUNDING REQUIRED

**AN EMPOWERED
AND SUSTAINABLE
CASES TECHNICAL
SPECIAL INTREST
GROUP**

TECHNICAL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

- Support and be a voice to influence the board / policy
- Networking opportunities
- Continuing professional development
- Visibility for technicians within BASES
- Work on projects proposed earlier within presentation

**SCAN
ME!**

**TO SIGN
UP**



THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP IS OPEN TO TECHNICAL STAFF AS WELL AS THOSE WHO SUPPORT TECHNICIANS, SUCH AS SUPERVISORS, ACADEMICS, AND LABORATORY MANAGERS

Research Technical Professionals: Recognising Leadership & Expertise (RELAX) in technical specialists

Natalie Homer, Lee Murphy, Susie Cook (UoE)

Phil Whitfield, Claire Wilson (UoG)

Sally Shirran (UoStA)



Background

- Regional networks, e.g. Midlands Innovate, GW4, N8
- Sustainability Concordat
- SULSA – Scottish University Life Sciences Alliance
- Executive Programme for Strategic Technical Leadership (EPSTL)

Wellcome - InFrame Culture Catalyst Fund

- Wellcome Trust funded project
- Brings three Universities together to study research culture
- University of Glasgow, Edinburgh and St.Andrews
- Team brought together with core facilities at the fore and equipment sharing for sustainability at the heart.
- An unusual fund, providing leadership training to the co-applicants, supported by community knowledge analysts
- A social science emphasis

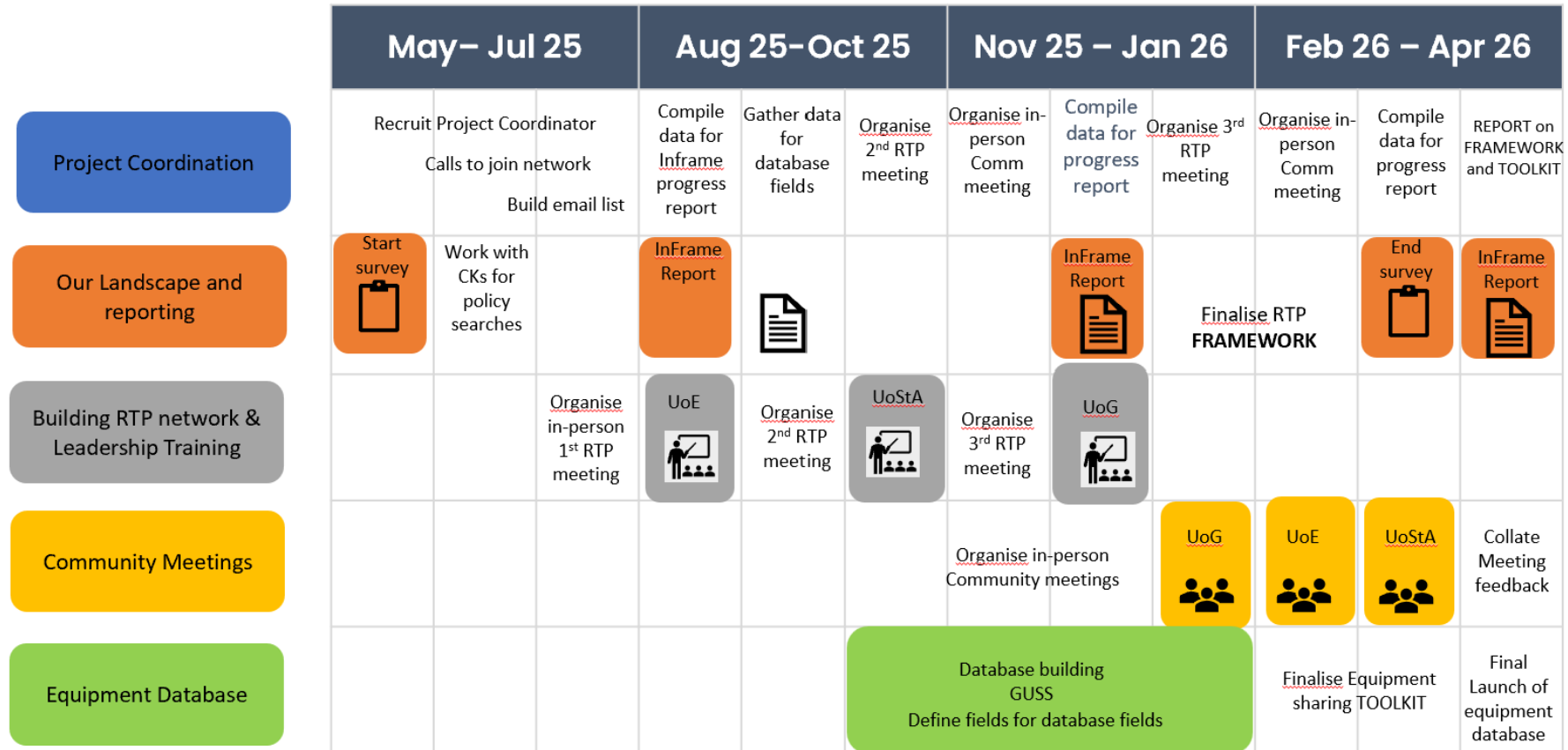
AIM of RTP RELAX project

- **establish an RTP-led network in Scotland**, beginning with a network of RTPs who are technical specialists leading core facilities between the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews (approx. 10 per institute – applications invited by end June)
- **develop a leadership programme for Core Facility Leads** to advance research leadership in this cohort of staff through face-to-face meetings, which will explore the opportunities and barriers that exist in the three institutions focussing on equipment investment, specific expertise developed and sharing.
- Give opportunities for the **research community** (incl scientific researchers and senior management) to engage with the RTP-network of core facilities to understand what each need and establish realistic policies and practices that meet the needs of the research community
- **Develop a more granular findable database of equipment** - detailed in terms of technical support and expertise, applications and geographically relevant is essential.
- To **influence change research culture** in UoE, UoG and UoStA to integrate RTPs into key decision-making committees, positioning technical expertise at the heart of strategic planning and operational management in research settings

OUTPUTS we are hoping for

- Framework of guidelines and policy for RTP leadership
- Start/end survey
- Scottish context core facility leadership
- **Equipment Sharing Database**
- Toolkit of guidelines for equipment sharing
- A literature review on equipment sharing, institutional policies and RTP roles in decision-making
- A network of RTPs that run core facilities
- A contactable group of researchers that engage with core facilities

GANNT chart



Coffee and refreshments

15:40-16:05

Future-proofing our universities: the role of technical professionals

16:05-16:35

Future-proofing our universities: the role of technical professionals

Universities and research institutions are facing significant financial pressures, which are already having an impact on the technical workforce. As institutions make difficult decisions about priorities, structures, and services, it is essential to consider how technical professionals can be supported and empowered to thrive.

This interactive workshop will explore:

How technical staff can navigate these challenges and continue to play a vital role in shaping the future of research, teaching, and innovation.

How Technician Commitment and UK-ITSS can advocate for technicians during the challenging time.

Future-proofing our universities: the role of technical professionals

Opportunities	Advocation
What changes can we make to our practice in response to the restricted financial position?	How can the UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy and the Technician Commitment advocate most effectively for the technical community during this time?



Research Technical Professionals: Recognising Leadership & Expertise (RELAX) in technical specialists

Natalie Homer, Lee Murphy, Susie Cook (UoE)

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- **influence change research culture in UoE, UoG and UoStA** to integrate RTPs into key decision making committees, positioning technical expertise at the heart of strategic planning and
- **Give opportunities for the research community** (incl scientific researchers and senior management) to engage with the RTP-network of core facilities to understand what each need and establish realistic policies and practices that meet the needs of the research community
- **Develop a more granular findable database of equipment** - detailed in terms of technical support and expertise, applications and geographically relevant is essential.

OBJECTIVE 1 – setting the scene

- Landscape report of policy searches across the 3 Universities that support and enable RTP core facility leadership
- Relate this to national initiatives already in place (TC, Talent Commission report, Researcher concordat)
- REPORTs on Scottish context of Core Facility connectivity – leadership, challenges and opportunities

Start survey and end survey to same group to see if impact made

OBJECTIVE 2 – RTP network (q1,q2)



- Build RTP network (30 RTPs across 3 unis) for leadership training
- At least 3 sessions – G, E, StA – in person.
- In-between hybrid ‘masterclasses’ from national subject experts

OBJECTIVE 3 - Researchers & RTPs together (Community building) – q3,q4



- 3 community meetings at each of the 3 units
- Showcase of the facilities and expertise with presentation by RTPs to research community
- Identifying uniqueness of each institute. Demonstrating (valid) duplication of core facilities. Highlighting lack of findability prior to RELAX RTPs
- Surveys on Researcher experience collaborating with facilities (publication policy, inter-institutional costing, collaboration agreements)

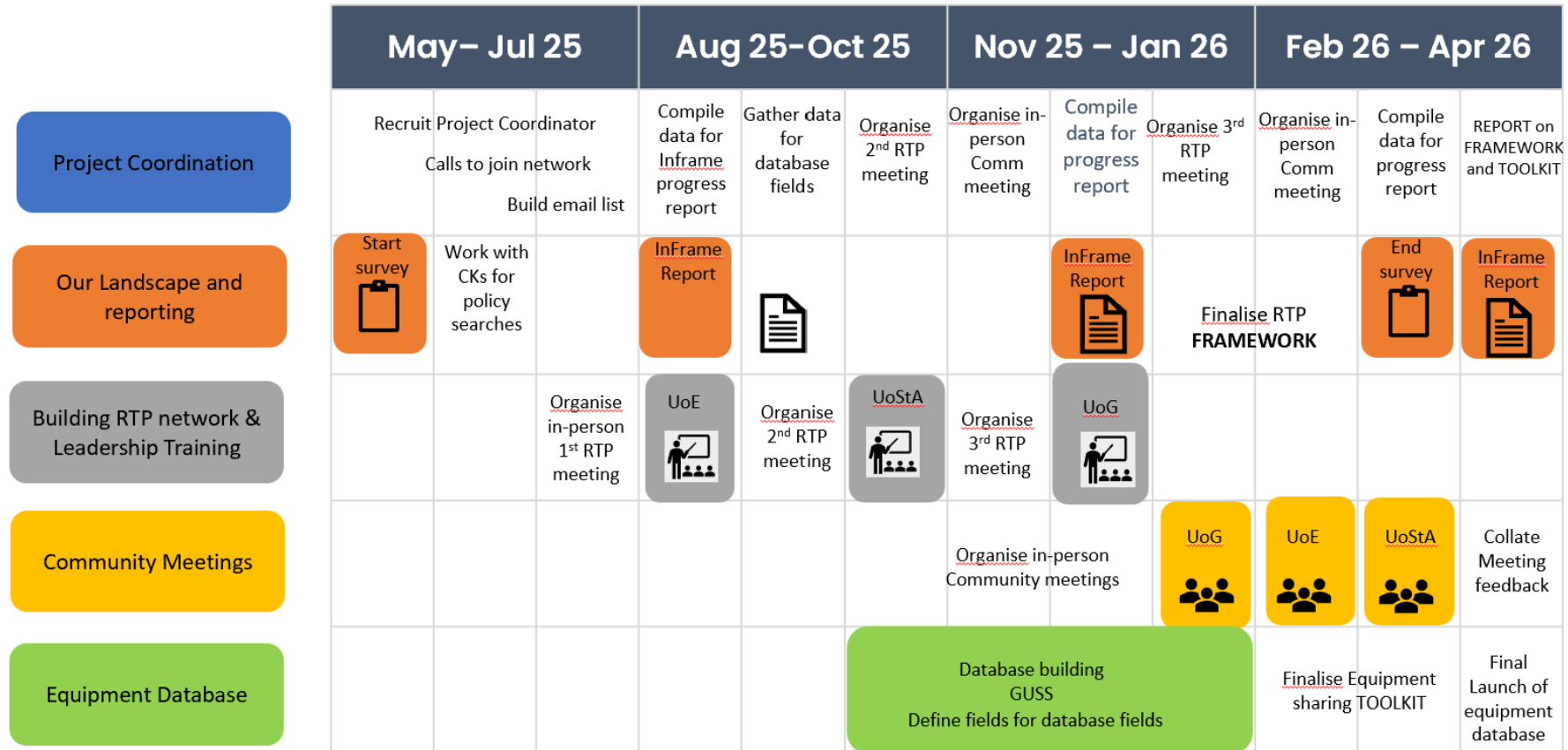
OBJECTIVE 4 – Equipment database

- Plan the database structure for equipment with fields that the facility managers identify along with procurement and finance staff and in consultation with project partners SULSA
- Build an online equipment database that can be readily updated
- **Co-create a charter** committing to updating this as part of sustainable concordat/silver award

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- Scottish context core facility leadership
- **Equipment Sharing Database**
- Toolkit of guidelines for equipment sharing
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GANNT chart



Mapping interactions

16:35-16:50

Mapping interactions

At signatory event we have presentations from our individual signatories and supporters.

Also, increasingly groups of signatories working together to:

- Share best practice and challenges
- Increase impact of initiatives
- Create more opportunities locally
- Create external opportunities for technicians

At November signatory event we heard from: Scottish Network, South-East Network, Welsh Network, Northern Ireland Network and the RITG.

Increasingly, we have seen that the Collaboration Fund is used to support these network activities

Technician Commitment is a supportive community

Mapping interactions

In November we asked people to list regional and specialist networks they were part of



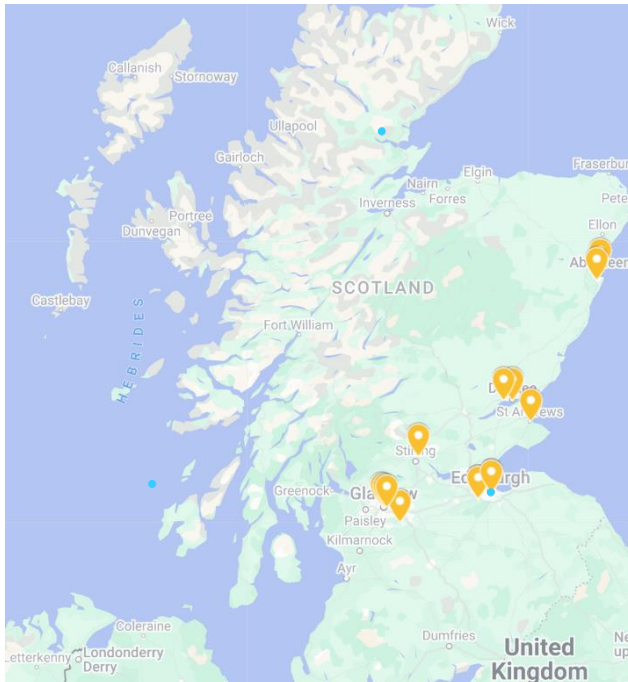
108 signatories in total

- Map signatories into 8 Regions
- Inclusive
- Recruit new signatories
- Support each other
- Regional Champions
- Working together

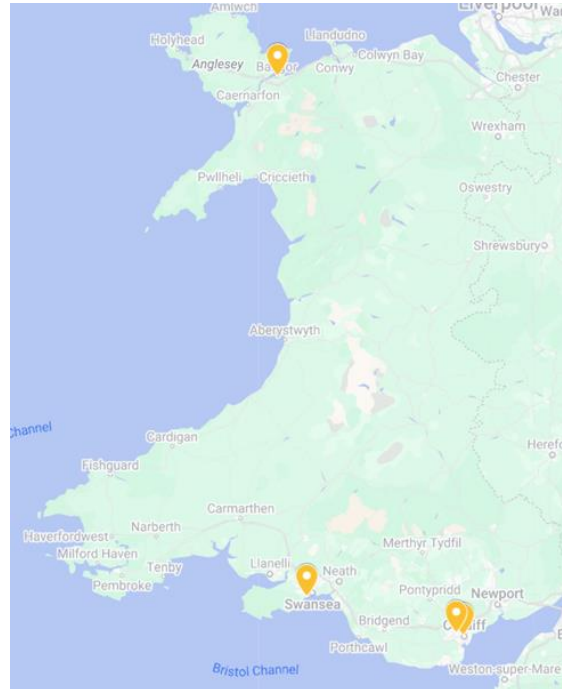
Technician Commitment is a supportive community

Mapping interactions

Scotland - 12



Wales - 4



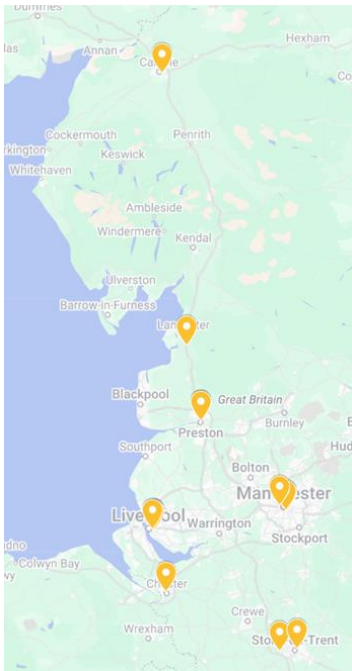
All Ireland - 4



Mapping interactions - Regional

In November we asked people to list regional and specialist networks they were part of

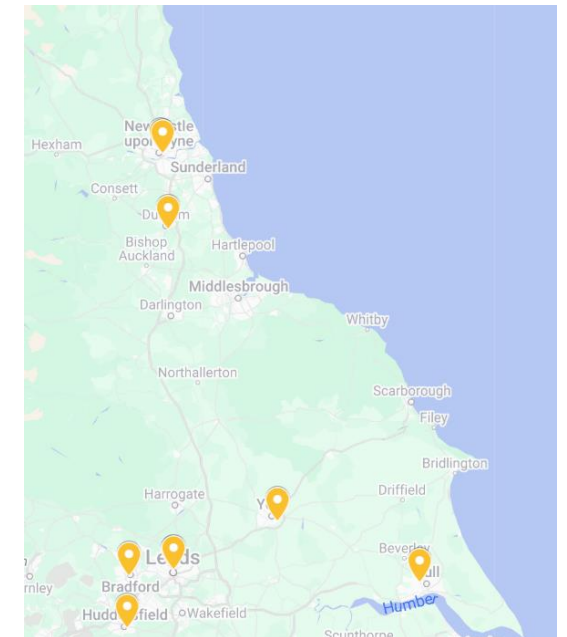
Northwest - 11



Central - 21



Northeast - 9



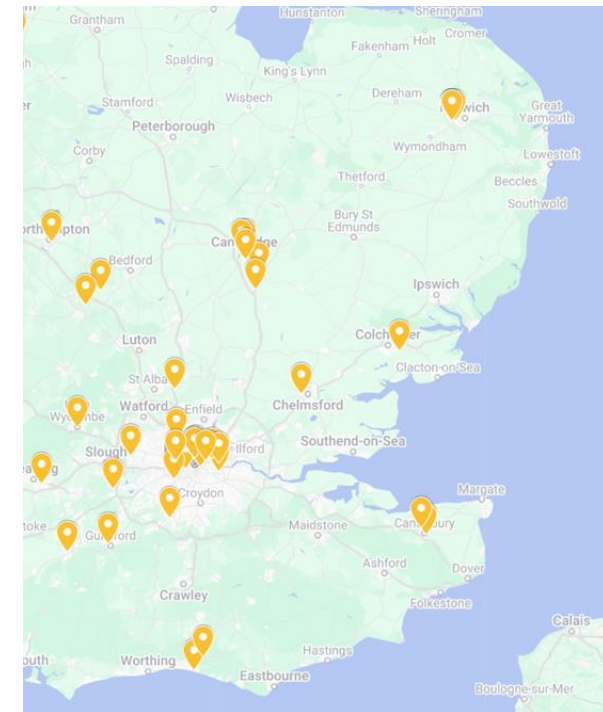
Mapping interactions - Regional

In November we asked people to list regional and specialist networks they were part of

Southwest - 12



Southeast - 35



Mapping interactions - Regional

Region	Current Networks
Scotland	Scotland
Wales	Welsh, WIN
All-Ireland	All Ireland
Northwest	NW
Central	MI
Northeast	N8, UNEE, Yorkshire
Southwest	GW4, SW
Southeast	London and SE network , Eastern Arc, RITG East of England

Mapping interactions - Regional

- There are a lot of regional networks
- Requests for support
- Not all signatories are in a network
- Some signatories part of multiple networks
- Networks have members that are not signatories

Questions

- **Should we more actively signpost the 8 regional networks?**
- **What should TC/ITSS be doing to support regional networks?**

Technician Commitment is a supportive community

Closing Remarks

Evening drinks, presentation of awards and networking reception



Speaker:

Professor Archie Clements

PVC for Research & Enterprise, QUB

Awards

INITIAL (Submission)

Ulster University

University of Portsmouth

University of Northampton

Birmingham City University

James Hutton Institute

RENEWAL (Impact)

University of Southampton

London South Bank University

Harper Adams University

University of Aberdeen

University of Manchester

Imperial College London

Durham University

Swansea University

Science and Technology

Facilities Council (STFC)

University College London (UCL)

Wellcome Sanger Institute

University of Kent

University of Salford

University of Oxford

University of Surrey

University of Staffordshire

Cardiff Metropolitan University

Thank you and safe onward journey

Event close