



**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE



@lizzyjanejames  
@NUTechnicians

# Northumbria University – Technician Commitment ... our story so far ...

**Dr Lizzy James – Technical Manager (Engineering and  
Environment) and Technician Lead for the Technician Commitment**



## What have we achieved so far?

- ✓ Northumbria University signed the Technician Commitment Signatory Form
- ✓ We had an all technical staff meeting to update staff on becoming a signatory
- ✓ We have signed up for dual membership for the National Technician Development Centre and HEaTED
- ✓ We held engagement events for the themes of visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability – with hundreds of comments / ideas from technical staff for these themes. These fed directly into our action plan.
- ✓ Written 24 month action plan
- ✓ Mapped MI TALENT recommendations across our TC Action Plan
- ✓ TC Action plan sign off – we asked the university to **endorse** our plan and to become **champions for technical staff and technical skills**
  - ✓ RaKE (Research and Knowledge Exchange) Committee
  - ✓ Education Committee
  - ✓ University Executive



The Science Council is working with partners to ensure greater visibility and recognition for technicians in Higher Education. The Technician Commitment has been developed to address the key issues affecting the technical community in academia and research.

In becoming a signatory to the Science Council's Technician Commitment, Northumbria University hereby commits to take action across five key areas:

### 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

### Career Development

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

### Sustainability

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

### Evaluating Impact

Regularly assess the impact of actions taken in support of the commitment to ensure their effectiveness

Signed:



Professor Andrew Wathey, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive  
Northumbria University  
27 October 2021

### Nominated Institutional Lead

We hereby nominate Professor Louise Bracken as the lead contact for taking forward our commitment:

[louise.bracken@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:louise.bracken@northumbria.ac.uk)

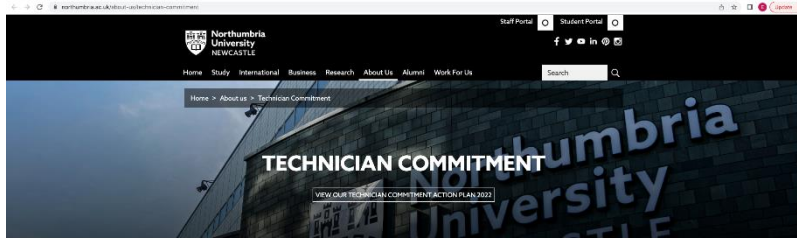
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)

0191 2437406

Technicians make it happen



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**What is the Technician Commitment?**

The Technician Commitment is a sector wide higher education initiative, led by a steering group of sector bodies, with support from the Science Council and the Galaxy Charitable Foundation's Technicians Make a Difference Campaign. The Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines.

Universities, research institutes, societies and funding bodies are invited to become signatories of the Technician Commitment where they pledge action against the key challenges affecting their technical staff (or technical staff that they support through funding). This is to help safeguard valuable and vital technical skills in the UK that support research and teaching.

Over 100 UK universities, research institutes and funders have signed up to the commitment and documented their pledges through their Technician Commitment action plans.

Northumbria University signed as a proud signatory to the commitment in November 2021 and have now co-created an institutional 24-month action plan with their technical staff. The action plan aims to address the four main pillars of the technician commitment (visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability).

The plan was endorsed by University Executive, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, in October 2022 and will now be brought to life over the next 24 months. Progress against our plan will be monitored by our Technician Commitment Steering Group, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Louise Bracken who states:

*I'm really excited that we have signed up to the Technician's Commitment and I'm looking forward to working with the full range of technical staff involved in education and research and to further evolve our research culture, of which technical staff are a key part. This*

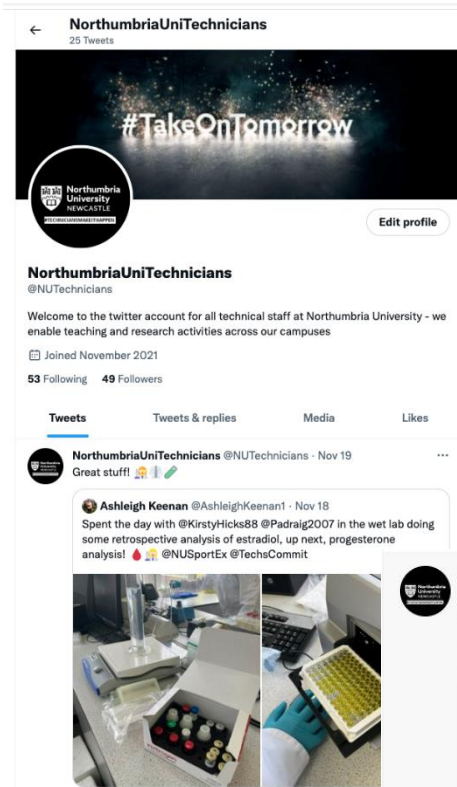
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**TECHNICAL STAFF UPDATE**

TERMLY NEWS AND EVENTS FOR TECHNICAL STAFF



Hello everyone. We're really pleased to send out our summer Technical Staff Newsletter, and what a bumper issue it is! It is absolutely jam packed with stories from you so thank you to everyone who has sent something in. From next academic year we will be sending one out each term as feedback has been that this is a great way for us to increase the visibility of staff, news, projects, facilities, and development opportunities across technical teams and Faculties. And you'll be pleased to know we've included this as one of our actions in our Technician Commitment Action plan.





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- Ask.... **(the right person)** ...
- We approached the university for research culture funding for HEaTED and NTDC membership. When the next round of funding was announced they came to us to ask what we wanted / needed for technical staff. They are now supporting –
  - A technical staff conference
  - The development of technician commitment promotional materials / digital material to raise technical staff profiles
  - Technical staff fund for collaborative professional development activities to enhance culture, either across the university / with local universities e.g., joint workshops, joint training, work shadowing
  - Series of events / showcase activities with Newcastle University to promote collaboration / culture
  - Funding to support professional registration
  - Continued HEaTED / NTDC funding

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## **Key priorities for the first year of our action plan**

- Great staff engagement with the action plan
- Working with research services / academics to establish guidelines for including technical staff and research technicians on grants
- A campaign to promote the importance of CPD and understand any barriers to participation
- Develop our apprenticeship network both at Northumbria and more widely in the North East
- Fully establish our Technician Commitment Steering / Working Groups





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**Always be on the look out for opportunities!**

Student Interns

Call to staff for applications – we submitted two ideas...

Technical Career Experience Intern (x3)

LEAF Implementation Intern (x9)

These opportunities will promote technical careers to our students and offer valuable work experience in our technical spaces

