



Technician Commitment Collaboration Fund 2022  
A Technician Action Plan for NI  
Co-Leads Heather Burgess and Gillian Riddell



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Technician **Commitment**



# Background

- Both Universities have well defined action plans in place that are targeted to the needs of our technical community within our institutions.
- Traditionally our universities have worked in isolation. We aim to change this with our collaboration.
- We submitted a proposal to create a Technician Action Plan for NI.
- We recognise the wider infrastructure within NI to support technicians is poor. With our joint initiative, we hope to address this issue.



# A two-day workshop

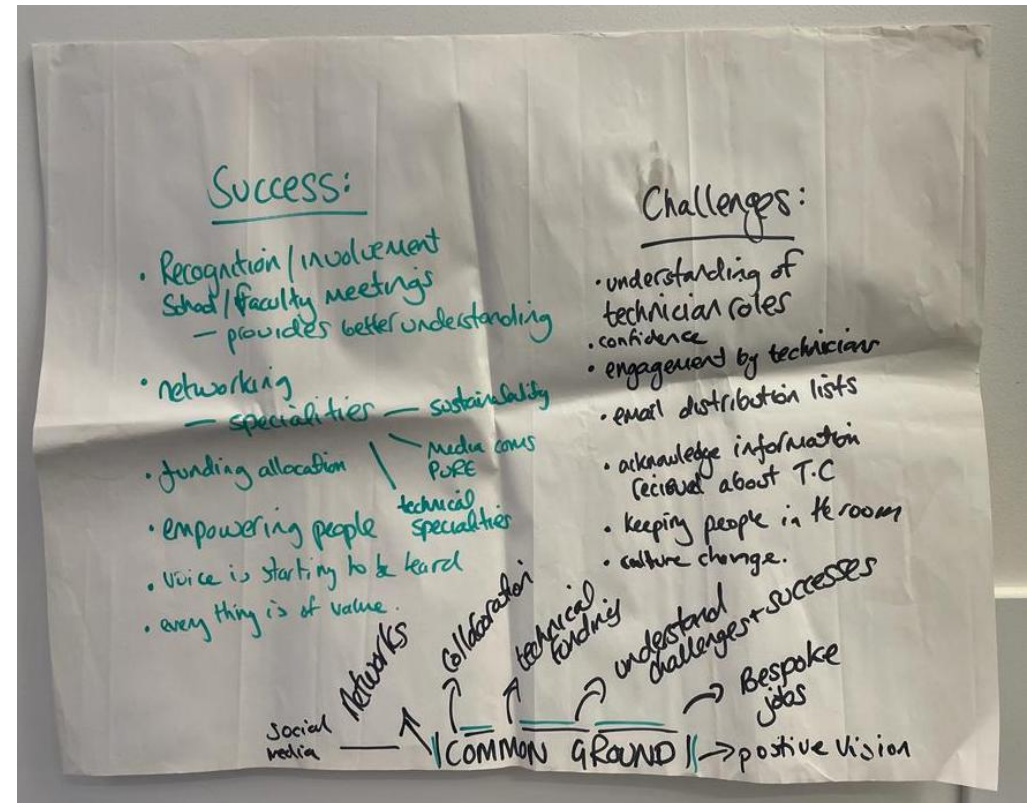
- We had a two-day residential in a local venue.
- Representation from the technical staff of both UU and QUB attended.
- The two days were facilitated by colleagues from UU's People and Culture.
- Focus was on Career Development and Sustainability.
- Our aim was to further develop technical relationships between the two universities.





# What did we do

- Looked at each institutions actions plans to find common ground.
- Identified development needs, training, CPD.
- Recognised successes and challenges for each institution.
- Discussed the benefits of professional registration.
- Highlighted challenges for staff engagement.
- Acknowledge the need to promote networking activities.





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# Priority actions

## Visibility

- Joint conferences, engagement with FE and schools.
- Outreach (schools and colleges) – roadshows, increase awareness of technical careers.

## Recognition

- Develop policy for recognition for both research and teaching.

## Career development

- Support professional registration and HEA.
- Introduce development days.
- CPD and soft skills training opportunities.

## Sustainability

- Knowledge exchange – work shadowing common areas.
- Tours of areas of interest – specialized workshops, kits etc., finding out what people do.



# Next steps

- The technical community of QUB and UU are best placed to take forward the agreed actions, discussing and reviewing the ideas developed during our two-day workshop.
- An inter University technician working group will be tasked with developing the Technician Commitment action plan for Northern Ireland.
- The plan will augment and support our own institutional action plans.



# Participant feedback

"I enjoyed the opportunity to meet other Technicians at UU and discuss ways of collaboration in the future. I am quite excited about having joint training workshops and tours of specialized areas in both Universities".

Kirsty McLaughlin, Senior Technician, PGJCCR, School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences. Queens University.



# Participant feedback

“ The away day was a great way to encourage and improve communication between UU and QUB as well as strengthen relationships. It provided an excellent platform to encourage creative and innovative initiatives to enhance technical staff development, recognition, visibility and sector sustainability”.

Patrick Porter, Business Development and Funding Manager. Technical Planning and Development Manager. Ulster University.





# Participant feedback

"I was glad to attend a residency involving technicians and senior managers from Queen's and Ulster Universities. It was a great opportunity to meet peers, learn about each other's roles and brainstorm ways to collaborate.

Each institution has developed an action plan as part of the Technician Commitment. We agreed that by collaborating and building links, we could shape policies and make improvements to accomplish these actions and improve the visibility and recognition of technicians.

Within Creative Arts, we have already hosted a UU technician visit where we did a tour and shared best practice tips and advice for equipment in our areas. Everyone found it very useful, and I look forward to continuing this collaboration with Ulster University in the future."

Craig Jackson, Technical Manager, School of Arts, English and Languages. Queens University.



# Participant feedback

"The 'Technicians Commitment Away Days' were an exceptional and rewarding experience. To be part of the conversation, that will promote forward thinking and eventually re-shape the current/future technician's role. This is the moment we have been waiting for...and I'm proud to be part of it".

Mo Morrow, Printed Textiles Technician, Belfast School of Art. Ulster University.



# Participant feedback

"I have been really inspired and encouraged by our joint away days. To see the energy in Queens and build a strong connection with likeminded technicians from another university is brilliant. It gives me more confidence as we move forward with the technician commitment in UU as there is momentum across our country to see valuable and lasting change".

Simon Hodge, MSc Technician, Composites, School of Engineering. Ulster University.



# Leadership endorsement

*"Both universities have a keen focus on the Technician Commitment foundations of visibility and recognition, but there is certainly merit in working together on the priorities of sustainability and career development – addressing the ever-evolving understanding of why and how technicians are central to the development of tertiary education and research in NI.*

*We can look forward to these shared outcomes every bit as much as our own institutional plans for our talented technician community across both Universities."*

**Damian McAlister, Chief People Officer and Co-Chair of Ulster's Technician Commitment Steering Group Ulster University**

*"We are delighted to enter into this important joint initiative with our partners in Ulster University. There will be clear benefits for our technical staff as we focus on delivering on our ambitious action plans. Building on the strong foundation we have already in place, both institutions will be delivering significant advances on all of the four Technician Commitment pillars relating to visibility, recognition, sustainability and career development. We anticipate that this will enhance our research and education and also enrich the opportunities for technical roles across multiple sectors in Northern Ireland".*

**Professor Alan Stitt, Dean of Innovation and Impact, School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences. Queens University.**

# THANK YOU



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