

Swansea University

Technician Commitment Action Plan

January 2023 - December 2024



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Technician **Commitment**

Pillar	Key Themes	Actions	Measures
Visibility	Deploy dedicated time and resources to deliver and enable the Technician Commitment (TC) action plan.	Identification and grading of the role(s).	Release of time/FTE equivalent to facilitate and allow an individual, individuals, the capability to work specifically on the TC. Identification of a person, or persons, to act as the points of contact for the development and management of the overarching project/ programme plan (alongside the TC Chair and Co-Chair), and act as the point of contact for all TC enquiries - managing the comms and engagement planning and delivery.
		Costing of agreed FTE (Full Time Equivalent)/ resource (resource requirements in column G utilising the 12 month costings for a 1.0 FTE Gr7 as a handrail).	
		Development of a job description (JD) for the roles.	
		Agreement and delivery of a recruitment process - expression of interest internally.	
	Establish an agreed institutional definition of "Technician" within Swansea University that is understood by all staff communities and stakeholders.	Find out institutional definitions used elsewhere.	Institutional approval and endorsement of the definition agreed by the technician community.
		Draft Swansea definition.	
		Agree definition and propose to appropriate governance structure for sign off.	
		Definition sign off.	
		Communicate definition.	
	Consider resource-appropriate ways to identify technicians (including via internal review of 'job families').	Establish draft list of technician roles to be assessed/ scrutinised.	Establishment of a single document which provides a current overview of the technical staff within the institute; providing key information/data to dashboard, analyse and act upon operationally and strategically.
		Sanity check draft list - engage with staff members identified.	
		Establish a process for updating and checking document/ list. Potential for a survey to facilitate.	
	Creation and/or amendment to the University's website and pages to deliver dedicated areas that improve the visibility and the engagement of the technical community.	Assessment and gap analysis of current processes and procedures.	Development and delivery of an institutionally recognised and agreed process for identifying technical staff (new role or current). Key to enabling the document that outlined the whole of the technical community.
		Sandbox/ session to develop and improve the process (multi-stakeholder).	
		Recommendation report/ draft process.	
		Creation of a role profile template.	
		Comms and engagement to key stakeholders i.e. technical line managers.	
	Create external network of partners and peers.	Development of a recognised network of external stakeholders, aligned to different technical areas/roles that we engage with on a regular basis to maintain and further develop the visibility of our technical community.	Increase of technician representation on committees, connect to external networks, across the University.
	Ensure presence of the technician voice at University committees.	Identification of relevant committees.	Number of technicians on committees across the University.
		Skills audit of technicians (cross TC WG's action).	
		Some method of choosing technicians for a committee should there be more than one suitable for the role.	
		Assessment of current technician representation on a select number of committees in order to benchmark going forward.	
	Promote positive stakeholder/ student and staff perception.	Development of induction/onboarding plans that include content or activity which highlight the role of the technician.	Technical staff reporting/ feeding back on positive interactions, where they feel their contribution and/ or role is clearly understood by staff and students. Inclusion of introductory activity during staff and student onboarding. Technician award/ acknowledgement - voted by students and wider staff rather than within the technical community.
		Creation or procurement of marketing collateral that provides information on the role of the technical community, technical staff, and key information which the community feel is important for stakeholders to understand or be aware of.	
		Scoping of the awards and recognition activity to identify a mechanism to acknowledge technical staff to continue the cultural change activity.	

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Recognition	Support professional recognition.	Conduct a baseline survey of current state and barriers. Explore funding opportunities.	Survey designed and results analysed. Identification of funding opportunities, both internal and external.
		Hold workshops to support registrations.	Workshop content developed and dates scheduled.
	Technicians internal award scheme.	Develop Faculty and/or University Award Scheme.	Identified award scheme and relevant categories (Teaching & Research) and funding to host event - date set.
		Discuss potential financial awards - contribution to registration fees/ cash. Discuss potential time of event - separate or during symposium.	Approach discussed and approved or rejected.
		Nomination/ application process. Judging process. External Sponsorship.	Discussed through the TC Working Group (WG) and approach adopted. Nomination/ application process defined. Judging process defined.
			Number of sponsors and amount of sponsorship raised.
	External awards for excellence.	Identify external opportunities. Ensure the Technician community is aware of opportunities.	Collate a list of awards. Opportunities identified and proposed on TC website and via other 'push' mechanisms - emails, Yammer (online University discussion form), etc. and via Professional Development Review (PDR).
		Provide support for such applications. Collaborate with Welsh Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to establish awards.	Worked examples and/or named 'expert' to assist in applications. Engagement with fellow HEI's.
	Continue Annual conference/ symposium.	Review feedback from Symposium held in July 2022. Schedule next conference/ symposium. Encourage poster campaign to highlight contribution. Invite professional bodies to attend, to promote value of registrations.	Feedback collated. Date and location set for next year. Criteria set and encouragement email sent. Exhibition established for conference/ symposium.
	Establish sector partnerships - i.e. HEaTED.	Identify relevant partnerships covering the technical community. Discuss the potential merits and costs associated.	Contacts made based on survey results and external research. Discussions held at the TC Steering Group.
	Recognise and promote the work and contribution of technicians.	Dedicated webpages to promote the work and contribution of technicians. Include technicians in the University's Teaching and Research Awards. Encourage academics to acknowledge the contribution of technicians in publications. Consider publishing regular newsletters - to promote the work of teaching technicians.	Content provided and made available via TC, Faculty and School websites. Discussions held with central University on the feasibility. Academics contacted to promote this action. Faculty and/ or University newsletters/ emails established.

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Career Development	Technician specific career pathway development.	Investigate potential career frameworks for technical staff as detailed in HETT (https://nationaltechnicianscentre.ac.uk/hett-framework/).	Complete a review of technician pathways.
		Consider whether succession planning for appropriate technician roles could be achieved.	Complete a review of potential for succession planning.
		Consider the possibilities to implement apprentice schemes across Faculties/ Departments.	Complete a review of potential apprenticeship scheme.
	Develop technicians' skills and role profiles across all departments / faculties through improved training, CPD & PDRs.	Explore a dedicated ring-fenced budget for technical staff personal development.	Yearly budget for technician training.
		Investigate funding opportunities for training (internal and external providers).	Regular communication of free/ discounted training courses via HEaTED and local training providers (e.g., Gower College). Technicians and line managers informed about relevant SU (Swansea University) memberships.
		Allocated time within the role for technician commitment roles/ Continued Professional Development (CPD)/ training/ champions etc.	Provision of time dedicated to CPD/ training for technicians. %age FTE for additional roles (e.g. Training champions/ trainers, etc.).
		Consider developing a skills audit to help identify gaps/ strengths/ weaknesses.	Technician Skills Audit completed (to be considered as part of internal career pathways development).
		Greater technician presence on University committees.	SU committee Terms of Reference (TOR) changed to include technician members.
		Review effectiveness of Professional Development Reviews (PDRs) for technicians and their line managers. Encourage technicians and their line managers to attend PDR training.	Positive feedback from technicians and line-managers on PDR processes.
		Consider developing a Technician Training Hub & appointing Technician Training Champions.	Technician Training Hub established with links to technician webpages. Technician Training Champions appointed (and promoted) for each Faculty/ Department.
		Investigate the need for tailored technician courses and CPDs listed in ABW.	Improved training opportunities for technicians (potentially via bespoke courses).
		Explore how experienced technicians can have opportunities to run in-house training	Experienced technicians delivering in-house training.
		Identify external accredited courses that could become 'essential' training for certain JDs e.g., IOSH.	Optional and essential accredited training courses made available to relevant technicians.
		Encourage online and local seminars with technicians at other higher education (HE)/ research facilities/ industries.	Internal and external networking for technician training opportunities established.
	Develop internal mentoring, secondment and shadowing processes.	Investigate the feasibility of a mentoring scheme for technical staff with bespoke mentoring course on ABW.	Improved mentoring scheme/services.
		Allow for secondment opportunities within/ across faculties.	There will be greater use and availability of Secondment Opportunities across the organisation and a clear mechanism in place for financing and approving.
		Consider potential work shadowing opportunities with a view on succession planning for higher grade technicians.	Job shadowing and coaching schemes will be in place for technical staff.
	Develop and promote technician reward mechanisms.	Development of reward scheme mechanisms/ discretionary pay awards/ bonuses for individuals and/ or teams.	Policy and procedure created. PDR training updated to include reward procedure.
		Technicians are rewarded/ recognised for their impact on research/ teaching in any area.	Understand the difference between academics/ journals on the requirements for co-authorship, ensure that technical help is acknowledged.
		Identify and publish technician achievements.	Profile pages for all technicians, a technicians page with news items. Updated PDR system to allow the capture of any achievements i.e., publications etc.
	Promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI).	Survey and discuss diversity in technician community.	(i) Identify and understand the diverse technical community pool and based on this agree actions that fulfil the outcome of attracting and recruiting diverse and quality technical workforce, (ii) 100% of interview panel membership must have been trained on the equality and diversity in the workplace and unconscious bias training.
		Make use of Aurora initiative for women in HE for technical community.	(i) Technician Training Champions raise awareness of the leadership development initiative within the Technical community, (ii) at least 1 technician applies for a place per annum.
		Encourage technician representation within Athena Swan.	Establish a systematised method of collating and reporting representation from the technician community on University working groups and self-assessment teams in relation to gender equality.

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Sustainability	Improved Professional Development Reviews (PDRs).	Enhance quality and engagement in PDRs.	Number of technical staff and line-managers engaged fully resulting in a more positive experience and increased uptake in CPD. Number of technical staff appointed a minimum of 5 days for dedicated CPD time annually. PDR/ CPD/ TC engagement emphasised in JDs and adverts.
	Explore apprenticeship programmes.	Task (Discussion) Group set-up to explore areas (Departments/ Faculties) that will benefit from apprenticeships, including financial and local (Swansea) incentives, and link to succession planning. Examine outcomes of historical SU apprenticeships.	Number of apprenticeships across technical areas and their subsequent uptake into career pathways internally/ externally.
	Succession/ business planning.	Consider implementing work shadowing/ secondments if possible. Task Group to identify areas where we can improve succession/ business planning with a view to encourage positive changes across all Departments/ Faculties.	Succession mentioned in job adverts and JDs.
	Review fixed-term technician contracts.	Identify where and how many technicians we have on fixed term contracts, and if changes need to be made.	Knowledge of number of fixed-term contracts and location.
	Celebration and promotion of the diversity of our technician community.	Appoint/ encourage technicians to engage with Athena Swan/ Aurora. Identify underrepresented groups in technician workforce.	Technicians attending and engaging in meetings and any work associated to promoting these to technician community. Increased diversity in technician workforce.
	Rewarding technicians.	Task group to explore areas where technicians can be made inclusive in all reward mechanisms (research papers/ Departmental and Faculty, etc.).	Technicians recognised for their contribution to teaching/ research/ outreach. Enhanced technician experience and SU culture, technicians having motivation to stay.
	Appropriate technician workforce numbers and skill-sets.	Consider developing a workload model/ skills audit.	Enhanced working environment and wellbeing for technicians, appropriately skilled numbers of technicians employed.
	External engagement planning/ networking.	Technical staff to promote technical careers externally.	Technical staff attending HEaTED outreach courses as a collaborative force to schools/ colleges/ symposiums/ fairs. SU fully supporting this process.