



OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY PARTNER

## **Technician Commitment**

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

Organisation: University of Hull

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

The University of Hull was founded in 1927, originally as a University College with 39 students and 14 “one-man” departments. The university now welcomes 16,500 students from more than 100 countries, supported by 1,900 employees, including more than 900 academic staff. In 2018 we were awarded a Silver in the Teaching Excellence Framework which recognises excellence in teaching and learning in UK universities and colleges.

From slavery and emancipation to health and medicine, logistics and supply chain, and energy and environment; our research is making a real difference by addressing global challenges. The University ranked in the top 50 UK institutions based on research power in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, and areas such as Geography and Computer Science achieving a top five ranking, based on research impact. The location of the University of Hull has led to high impact research projects around flood resilience, climate change and environmental issues as well as green energy, including solar and wind power.

The university is a major contributor to the region’s healthcare workforce and carries out world-leading research to help address critical health issues. In July 2020 more than 400 nurses, medicine and other allied health students such as midwives, operating department practitioners and associate practitioners graduated, the majority of whom have already been taken on by local health services, making a real difference to their communities.

Founded in 2003 as a partnership between the University of Hull and the University of York, Hull York Medical School is responding to the growing shortage of doctors in the UK by training 220 medics per year, a 69% increase from 2017.

The university recently undertook a £300-million investment programme in high-quality teaching and learning facilities, IT infrastructure, research laboratories, social spaces and sporting facilities has seen the campus transformed; offering significant benefits to students, staff and the wider community.

The university also recently became the Official University Partner for Team GB.

## **Self-Assessment**

*Please tell us how your organisation defines its technicians:*

Technicians are defined broadly across a wide range of disciplines supporting both academic teaching and research activities along with supporting professional services through Information, Communication and Technology and Estates. They do not necessarily have the title 'Technician' within their job description, however, for the purpose of this initiative Technicians are defined as:

"A technician is a person whose job or training involves a specific technical process, or is someone skilled or trained in a specific art, discipline or craft".

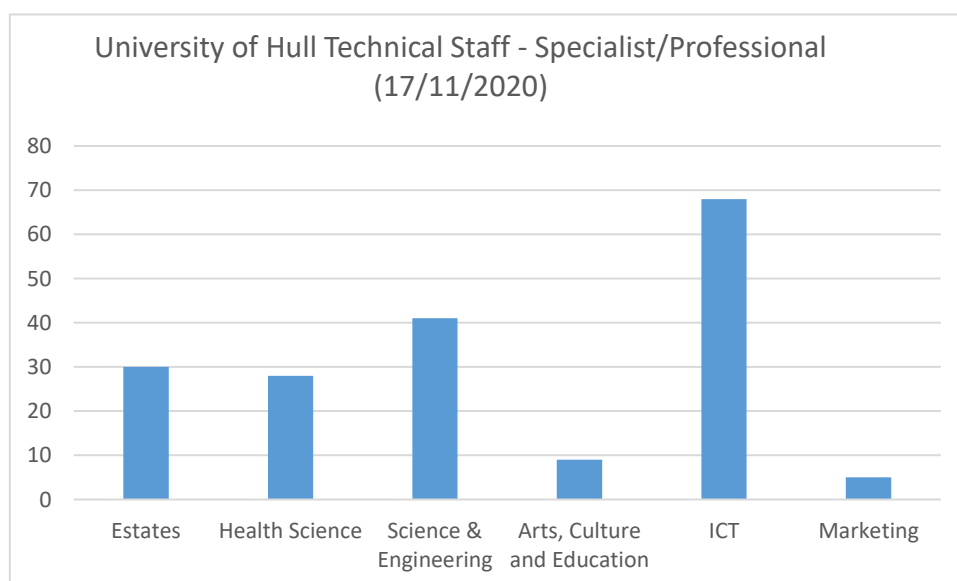
1. A person skilled in a defined discipline and the application of the technical knowledge of that subject area.
2. An artist, writer, musician, etc. who has great technical skill or knowledge
3. A person providing technological or technical assistance, knowledge or support

This includes the following defined job families:

- Craft – Maintenance
- Specialist – Laboratory
- Specialist – Information Technology
- Specialist – Workshop
- Specialist – Craft

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

Technicians are employed in University of Hull across 3 Faculties, Research Institutes (captured within FoSE figures), Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), Estates and Marketing and categorised as the HESA Occupational Coding for Higher Education Staff (Laboratory, engineering, building, IT and medical technicians etc.).



Within each faculty and facility, the technical staff support a wide range of disciplines:

**Faculty of Arts, Culture and Education** – Drama, Music, Digital and Game Design, Film and Media, Education.

**Faculty of Health Sciences** – Biomedical Sciences, Psychology, Sport Health & Exercise Science, Allied Health Professionals (Nursing, Midwifery and Child Care, Paramedical, Health & Social Work).

**Faculty of Science and Engineering** – Physics & Mathematics, Chemistry & Biochemistry, Biology & Marine Science, Geography, Geology & Environment, Engineering (Electronic, Electrical, Mechanical & Medical), Chemical Engineering, Computer Science and Technology,

**Research Institutes** - Energy and Environment Institute, Hull and Marine Institute, Aura Innovation Centre and Hull International Fisheries Institute.

**ICT** – Infrastructure, End User Devices, Network & Communications Equipment, Research Systems, Enterprise Systems & Data Services, ICT Procurement, Service Assurance, Project Management, Audio Visual, IT Service Management, Hardware, Software, Internal and Externally Hosted Systems.

**Maintenance/Estates Staff** – Electrical Services, Plumbers Services, Joiners Services, Decorating Services, Heating/Gas Services.

**Marketing** – Graphics Team.

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

### **Visibility**

The Faculty of Science and Engineering (FoSE) formed Tech Talk in June 2017 as a platform for raising the profile of technical staff within the faculty as well as providing opportunities for technical staff to meet, exchange knowledge and experiences. This was further supported by a quarterly newsletter that highlighted achievements and profiled individuals or areas.

This platform has developed over the years to include technical staff from the Faculty of Health Science and Faculty of Arts, Culture and Education.

Technicians in Faculty of Arts, Culture and Education (FACE) are encouraged to actively promote and strengthen their links with Industry to help FACE outreach into arts organisations on a National level and bring those benefits back into the University. This then allows events, shows, screenings or concerts to happen that are usually run by a member of technical staff who holds the original industry link.

In 2018 work started on creating a Technical Services SharePoint site that highlighted the different areas we supported, the equipment available and the skills/expertise of our staff. This is ongoing and currently only includes FoSE facilities.

## **Recognition**

The University of Hull recognises and celebrates excellence through our Employee Excellence Awards both at individual levels as well as including group awards. The categories for nominations are:

- Excellence in Research
- Excellence in Scholarship
- Excellence in Teamwork
- Excellence in Customer Service
- Excellence in External Engagement
- Excellence in Professional Services
- Excellence in Enterprise and Innovation
- Excellence in Teaching
- Excellent Contribution to the Student Experience
- Rising Star
- Outstanding Leader
- Outstanding Contribution

The Excellence in Professional Services award aims to recognise individuals and teams in professional, technical and operational service areas (e.g. staff providing support to students, staff providing essential services or those providing specialist support and manual staff) who have delivered high quality administrative, operational, technical or specialist services which support the strategic ambitions of the University.

In an exciting partnership with Hull University Students Union we are developing the joint 'Inspired in Hull' employee awards which will be celebrated in 2021.

University recognises and rewards long service and commitment of all staff who reach 25 years 'continuous service'. Qualifying employees are invited to an event at which their long service is recognised and celebrated. Employees received a voucher/gift card and a certificate, presented by the VC or member of the senior management team. The initiative is a core strand in recognising and valuing the contribution and commitment that staff makes to the University.

Faculties have a good relationship with a number of professional bodies for technical staff including Institute of Science and Technology (IST), HEaTED and are encouraged to apply for professional registration.

Achievements are published in the University Achievement Bulletin, with many staff undertaking part-time MSc/PhD studies.

Technicians have a voice on departmental teaching activities as their teaching input is recognised as a vital part of the courses being delivered.

## Career Development

The University of Hull has an extensive staff development programme:

- **Career pathway guidance** has been developed for professional service staff, to include IT/Audio Visual and Laboratory Specialist. The guidance helps individuals and managers see all bands and job competencies in a given job family together, to help identify where they can develop in their career at the University.
- **Management review of job grading** – Roles change and skills develop over time and Technical staff, supported by their line manager, can make a case for re-grading of their post through the HERA process. Over the last 2 years there have been 8 technical staff who have had their roles regraded. The number may have been even greater but it this should be taken in context of a number of restructuring initiatives that have also recently been carried out within the University, including technical staff.
- **Learning and Development Programme** – All staff, to include technical colleagues have access to the full portfolio of central learning and development events, online courses, and resources. Programme themes focus on Personal and Professional Development, Leadership and Management, Academic and Research, Coaching and Mentoring, Induction, Staff and Student Wellbeing, Mental Health Wellbeing, Health and Safety (both general and specialist). Details are circulated widely on Sharepoint, eBulletin, monthly newsletter and in events flyers.
- **Progressive Roles** – A number of new roles within ICT have been established and individually tailored to offer developmental opportunity in several key areas of the department. They will allow the successful post holders to develop their skills and knowledge in their specialist field, and once they have achieved all associated progressive role milestones, they can then apply and advance onto a higher job banding. A separate staff development programme has already been developed for each of these roles and a number of staff are already actively advancing through their career development role.
- **Organisational membership of HEaTED** (Higher Education and Technician Educational Development)- To support the skills and roles of technical staff, the University has maintained organisational membership of HEaTED since 2014. Membership enables technical staff to access a range of member benefits specifically aimed at meeting their specialist training and development needs. Ranging from online tools and resources, regional networking opportunities, and discounted rates on specialist and soft skills events and courses.

Technicians also have access to professional registration and there are plans to promote this option further as part of this commitment.

Details are promoted on dedicated sharepoint pages, advertised in the University eBulletin and learning and development newsletter.

- Three regional networking events have been hosted at the University to date enabling technical staff to showcase their roles and the important part they play

in the University. The network promotes training events, professional recognition through the HEaTED partners (eg Institute of Science and Technology), the sharing of knowledge, skills and best practice amongst technical staff and increase awareness of the opportunities and facilities provided by HEaTED and all member institutions.

- The University was pleased to host the HEaTED northern regional networking on 23 July 2019, when over 25 technical colleagues came together to share knowledge, skills and best practice. This was a fantastic opportunity to make connections with other technical staff from around the region and to share experiences and celebrate the diversity of technical roles in HE. We had a great turn out and it was good to see colleagues represented from the Universities of Hull, York, Sheffield and Newcastle. The Vice-Chancellor opened the event, and emphasised the importance and diversity of technical roles in academia and acknowledged the technician commitment initiative. Participants listened to an inspiring series of short talks by fellow technicians, and were invited to discuss the importance of soft skills in Higher Education and building your brand. This was followed by a lively demonstration and engaging tour of the Allam Medical Building, presented by colleagues from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Engagement through HEaTED:

Year	Registrations to access HEaTED services	CPD course/event attendance	Participation in regional network events
2018	161	3	20
2019	262	4	22
2020 (to April)	200		

- **Coaching and Mentoring Scheme**

Colleagues (including technical staff) can access the **Yorkshire Accord Mentoring Scheme** to which the University of Hull is a corporate member. Yorkshire Accord is a partnership between 13 organisations across Yorkshire, providing cross organizational mentoring coaching and networking opportunities to staff. The focus is on providing support to individuals with the aims of responding to a broad range of professional learning and development agendas with the aim of bringing positive benefits to those involved. This opportunity enables colleagues to face current and future work challenges more confidently and more effectively.

- The scheme seeks to develop a pool of coaches and mentors and provides high quality learning and development support through training, regular ongoing professional development events, and access to coaching supervision to support confident and ethical practice.

- There are two annual intakes (Autumn and Spring) which are widely promoted to all staff. Applications are now open for the Spring intake and two applications from technical staff have already been received. This personal development activity is for those in academic and professional service areas.

The Clinical Skills team within the Faculty of Health Sciences have partnered with The Hull Institute of Learning and Simulation (**HILS**) based at the local Hull University Teaching Hospitals Trust. HILS is an internationally recognised, award winning simulation centre of excellence, providing clinical skills and simulation training for our healthcare professionals locally, regionally, nationally and across the globe. Clinical Skills staff at the University are sharing knowledge and best practice with staff at HILS and vice versa through training days at each other's facilities.

- **Developing Leadership Programme**

- As a commitment to enhance the University's leadership capabilities, colleagues in academic and professional service areas have participated in a year-long Developing Leadership Programme, established in 2002.
- Features of the programme include participation in: 6 action learning sets, coaching and mentoring over a period of 4-6 months, a study day at another organisation, management training workshops, MBTI and 360 degree feedback, personal development planning.
- Engagement:

Year	Registrations	Area
2018-19	1	ICT - End User Service Analyst
2019-20	2	ICT - Business Systems Analyst Health Sciences - Technical Manager

Although funding is no longer available to support the programme beyond 2020, development of a new interactive online management course is planned and will be launched in 2021.

- **Disciplinary Approaches to Research and Teaching Excellence (DARTE) training**  
Technician, especially those who deliver / convene modules are encouraged to undergo DARTE training. Especially those who are employed on a professional industry background rather than a teaching qualification.
- **Professional Registration**  
Professional registration is actively encouraged through groups such as the ABTT (Association of British Theatre Technicians), Institute of Science and Technology (IST), Science Council and other appropriate bodies.

## **Sustainability**

The University of Hull, via its TechTalk/HEaTED events programmes has aimed to provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and the sharing of experiences across the faculties and other outreach opportunities.

Like many Higher Education Institutions (HEI) the technical team has an aging workforce with a high proportion being over 60. It is recognised that their skills may well be lost as they leave the organisation and therefore succession planning and career progression via appointment of apprentices and trainees and providing career development opportunities have been discussed.

However it must be recognised that in the current financial climate making best use of our existing resources by sharing of skills, knowledge and equipment across the university, as well as developing external collaborations with other institutions will strengthen our sustainability.

## **Action Plan**

The steering group will be responsible for coordinating the delivery of a two year, phased, action plan to meet the Technician Commitment

## **Visibility**

- We have established a Technician Commitment Steering Group to review and implement future activities with regard to technicians' development and recognition. The Steering Group comprises of technical managers from the four main areas where technical staff provide support within the University and meet monthly to agree actions and review progress. The Steering Group reports to ULT via the Dean of FoSE.
- We aim to expand the existing SharePoint site for all Technical Services within the University, raising the profile of its staff as well as advertising equipment and facilities that staff can use. Equipment will have specialist technical staff supporting it and available to give advice on suitability and/or alternative options.
- Create a Technician directory on SharePoint for points of contact, specialist knowledge.
- We aim to relaunch TechTalk – a technician Network Newsletter across all areas quarterly providing a source of information on training, development, events and career opportunities. Publicise contributions towards research papers.
- To hold an annual network event to promote technicians within the organisation.
- To undertake and publicise the results of the Technicians Skill Survey.

To work with our TU colleagues to access their knowledge and resources as a valued partner of the Technician Commitment.



## **Recognition**

- To obtain financial support from the University to provide budgets for all CPD initiatives.
- Propose the addition of a technician category in any university or faculty staff award settings.
- Publicising any achievements in the University Bulletin.

## **Career Development**

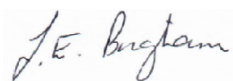
- Provide tailored mentoring, shadowing and skills coaching schemes for technical staff to support career development
- Through the use of appraisals, identifying areas where skills can be enhanced and training provided.
- Create and promote training and development opportunities, both internal and external.
- Support attendance to relevant conferences
- Work toward developing visible career pathways for technicians by working with National Technician Development Modernisation (NTDM) and their toolbox approach to identifying levels of competencies and skill gaps.

## **Sustainability**

- Identify key personnel who will be responsible for implementing, coordinating and managing activities outlined above
- To investigate and implement as appropriate a laboratory technician apprenticeship scheme and/or trainee scheme to assist with succession planning
- To develop opportunities for sharing of skills, resources and equipment across the university
- Actions monitored and analysed by surveys and health checks and results published
- Work with Organisational Development team to provide suitable training activities for the technical workforce

## **Signatures**

**Institutional Lead:**



**Mrs Jennie Brigham**

**University of Hull Leadership Team:**



**Prof Andrew Heyes**

**Date: .....15/12/20.....**