

## NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY TECHNICIAN COMMITMENT ACTION PLAN



**WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO FOR OUR TECHNICAL STAFF TO ENSURE WE ARE SUPPORTING THE PILLARS OF THE TECHNICIAN COMMITMENT AND EMBEDDING THE MI TALENT RECOMMENDATIONS?**

Timeline

### VISIBILITY, RECOGNITION, CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

We will ensure that technical staff are <b>visible</b> at the university by –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a regular technical staff newsletter, to celebrate success and share information, that will feed stories into Northumbria University News and Faculty newsletters for university wide visibility</li> <li>• promoting and celebrating our technical staff through our social media platforms (Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube etc.)</li> <li>• a dedicated corporate webpage outlining how the university is supporting its technical staff through the technician commitment including a copy of our action plan</li> <li>• reviewing technical staff representation to ensure technical staff are present at each level of planning and decision making at the university (R12)</li> <li>• having a university staff profile for every member of technical staff</li> <li>• reviewing the inclusion of technical staff in prospectus materials, graduation and open days to ensure their roles are visible (R11)</li> <li>• the creation of digital content (photography / web profiles / videos) to showcase our technical talent, teams and facilities (R11)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• April 2023</li> <li>• July 2023</li> <li>• July 2023</li> <li>• April 2024</li> </ul>
We will ensure the contribution our technical staff make towards our academic endeavor is <b>valued and recognised</b> by –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• actively supporting opportunities for research technical professionals to be considered as co-investigators or co-supervisors on research grants or projects through awareness raising with Research Innovation Services (RIS) and academics (R5)</li> <li>• ensuring, when relevant, technicians have a PURE profile to record and track their research outputs, in parity with academic colleagues (R11)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• April 2023</li> </ul>

Appendix One – Northumbria University Technician Commitment 24 month action plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working with RIS to develop transparent and consistent guidelines for how technical staff can be costed into grants, providing examples of best practice (R5)</li> <li>• working with RIS to develop a suite of management information that will be provided to technical managers (e.g., cost recovery, TRAC) to ensure technical resource is being appropriately included, recorded and planned for (R5)</li> <li>• working with academic colleagues and RIS to actively promote the inclusion of research technician roles in grant applications (R5)</li> <li>• closer partnership working with academic colleagues in the planning of and delivery of teaching (e.g., including technical staff on the blackboard modules for the activities they are supporting, including technical staff in module reviews and module development (technical elements), making sure technical staff are introduced in teaching sessions and open days)</li> <li>• nominating our outstanding technical staff for awards (GEM, student led teaching awards, national awards e.g., THE Outstanding Technician of the Year award)</li> <li>• supporting the Research Culture group (PVC Research) to influence and embed cultural change in relation to technical support at the university (R5)</li> <li>• the development and implementation of a fair attribution policy for the contributions from technical staff and technical facilities (R11)</li> <li>• working to fully understand the support technical staff are giving to teaching activities to ensure we have appropriate job roles that reflect their work (R3)</li> <li>• encouraging and supporting staff to complete associate / fellowship / senior fellowship / fellowship / principal fellowship with HEA (Advance HE) whilst working with the NUPRS team to ensure training events are relevant and inclusive for technical staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 2023</li> <li>• July 2023</li> <li>• July 2023</li> <li>• July 2023</li> <li>• December 2023</li> <li>• July 2024</li> <li>• July 2024</li> <li>• July 2024</li> <li>• July 2024</li> </ul>
<p>We will attract, retain and develop the best technical talent and support <b>career development</b> by –</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementing a central training budget for technical staff to apply to for CPD with transparent reporting on what has been supported</li> <li>• actively promoting internal recruitment and secondment opportunities to technical staff</li> <li>• having membership to, and engaging with, the technical training provider HEaTED, and by being an affiliate partner of the National Technician Development Centre, so our staff have access to sector leading training, networking opportunities and development resources (R10)</li> <li>• actively promoting and supporting external training opportunities to our technical staff (e.g., The Herschel Programme for Women in Technical Leadership) (R4)</li> <li>• setting a specific number of days for CPD per technician per year with technical managers facilitating staff time to complete the activities, and reviewing participation at PDA to understand and address any barriers to this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• July 2023</li> <li>• October 2023</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting and promoting professional registration of technical staff through the development of a local support scheme (financial support and mentorship) (R10)</li> <li>• the development of a technical staff HR toolkit to include - clear and consistent job descriptions and advert templates (with examples of best practice), documented career pathways for technical staff from apprentice to technical manager / pathway for research technical professionals, guidance on recruiting a diverse workforce (e.g., EDI resources from MI Talent), and the development of a technical staff specific induction outlining initiatives and resources available for technical staff (R4, R9)</li> <li>• Develop relationships and cross-training opportunities with our local industry partners to encourage movement and collaboration of technical staff (e.g., ORE Catapult) (R2, R13)</li> <li>• ensuring all members of technical staff have a meaningful PDA experience that reflects on the pillars of the Technician Commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2023</li> <li>• April 2024</li> <li>• July 2024</li> <li>• July 2024</li> </ul>
<p>We will embed <b>sustainability</b> at the heart of our thinking by –</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• including technical staff in end-to-end recruitment for all technical roles so we recruit the very best people for roles from a variety of backgrounds (R7, R8)</li> <li>• fostering a vibrant technical apprenticeship culture across the university making sure we consider apprentices for roles when we recruit, working with HR to ensure our apprentices have excellent support and resources to thrive, working in partnership with local universities to establish a north east university apprenticeship network for wider support, and celebration events for our apprentices as they reach key milestones in their careers (R7)</li> <li>• developing guidance and training for technical managers to address single points of failure / succession planning for teams (R1)</li> <li>• working with local schools and colleges and university graduates to raise the profile of technical roles as a career to encourage a pipeline of talent through supporting the ‘Technician’s Make it Happen Campaign’ (R6)</li> <li>• hosting regular technician showcase events across our campuses to raise awareness of our skills and to promote skills / facilities sharing / technical careers (R13)</li> <li>• supporting staff in the development of mentorship systems and skills sharing locally, regionally and nationally through staff exchange programmes and showcasing events</li> <li>• creating innovation champions and collaboration opportunities to encourage and reward innovation in the way we work and the way we do things to ensure ongoing sustainability of our workforce and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• April 2023</li> <li>• April 2023</li> <li>• April 2023</li> <li>• July 2024</li> <li>• July 2024</li> <li>• July 2024</li> </ul>
<p>We will create a <b>vibrant technical community</b> from team level, university level, regional level to national level by –</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• embedding inclusion at the heart of our thinking for technical staff. We will do this by carrying out an equality analysis for our projects, policies and practices, as well as during our decision making (R4)</li> <li>• having clear governance and championing of the Technician Commitment through a Technician Commitment Steering group (responsible for the delivery of the action plan) and supporting working groups to bring the action plan to life (R15)</li> <li>• a collaborative intranet site for technical staff to use where information and best practice is shared, including a technician directory that highlights our skills to each other</li> <li>• encouraging and supporting our staff to engage with local, regional and national initiatives and events for technical staff (e.g., Technician Commitment, Technician Partnership conference, The David Sainsbury Gallery at the Science Museum, London) (R6, R15)</li> <li>• hosting a yearly technician conference, culminating with a set of awards highlighting the outstanding work by our technical staff that supports the pillars of the technician commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• January 2023</li> <li>• January 2023</li> <li>• July 2023</li> </ul>
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**MI TALENT Report Recommendations**

R1	Employers of technical staff, funders, and government departments (e.g. BEIS, DfE) should employ a strategic approach to ensure the sustainability and appropriateness of technical skills and careers, at both a local and national level
R2	Funders and employers of technical staff in higher education and research should recognise the blurring of boundaries between technical and academic roles. They should provide opportunities and mechanisms to move between career pathways and across sectors
R3	Employers of technical staff should collect, report and analyse data on their technical workforce, with careful consideration of those roles at the interface with academic roles. To enable sector level understanding, a new, simple, and fit-for-purpose classification for technical roles should be developed
R4	Employers of technical staff, funding bodies, and learned societies should undertake targeted and specific action to address the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) challenges facing the technical community
R5	Funders and employers of technical staff should provide clear and consistent guidance to ensure technical contributions are costed appropriately and eligibility requirements for existing funding opportunities should be reviewed to ensure inclusion of technical staff where appropriate
R6	Employers of technical staff, funders, and sector bodies (e.g. professional associations and learned societies) should support outreach and public engagement activities regarding technical careers in local schools and colleges to increase visibility of technical career opportunities to young people
R7	Employers of technical staff should broaden access to technical careers in the sector by utilising and expanding entry routes to include both vocational and academic pathways
R8	Employers of technical staff should ensure inclusion of technical expertise within end to-end recruitment processes when hiring for technical roles
R9	Employers of technical staff should ensure visibility of clearly defined career pathways and progression routes, with accurate and standardised job descriptions for technical roles
R10	Employers of technical staff, funders, and sector bodies (e.g. professional associations and learned societies) should ensure provision and access to a range of professional development opportunities tailored to technical roles and careers

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R11	Employers of technical staff, publishers and other sector bodies (e.g., professional associations and learned societies) should ensure the contributions of technical staff are visible and recognised
R12	Employers of technical staff, funders and sector bodies (e.g., professional associations and learned societies) should ensure technical staff sit on appropriate institution- and sector level decision-making committees and boards to ensure these groups reflect the community they represent and to provide diversity of views and expertise
R13	Employers of technical staff should form partnerships with organisations and initiatives that provide technical and vocational training (e.g., Catapult Centres in the UK and Institutes of Technology in England) to ensure sharing of knowledge and skills, to facilitate the identification of skills needed to deploy emerging technologies, and to inform the development of suitable future training syllabi
R14	Government policymakers should ensure the inclusion of technical staff in consultations on sector-level policy, for example through invitations to roundtables and consultations
R15	Technical staff should engage positively with current and future opportunities that are available to them
R16	The TALENT Commission advises the creation of a new collaborative entity, provisionally to be called the UK Institute for Technical Skills & Strategy [working title] that builds on the multi-stakeholder approach of the Technician Commitment, to represent and provide a conduit to the technical community, advising government, sector initiatives, funding bodies and other organisations