

Technician Commitment

Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: University of Winchester

Comments on organisation of technical structures and the internal scope/reach established for the Technician Commitment at this institution:

The University of Winchester offers a portfolio of academic programmes which in the main focus on non-STEM subjects. As a consequence, technician staffing is limited to a small number of academic areas and central services (such as Information Technology Services). The total number of posts across the institution with Technician in the job title is just over twenty. We recognise that there are likely to be an additional small number of staff who do not have technician in their job title but who perceive themselves as following a technician career path. Overall, technician staff comprise only 2 to 3 per cent of the University's total salaried workforce.

By virtue of the above, technician staffing structures are of necessity flat (with the exception of IT Services), with little scope for identified promotion opportunities. Whilst clearly this represents a constraint on what the University can achieve in relation to the aims of the Technician Commitment, the University welcomes the opportunity the Commitment provides to raise greater awareness of the valuable contribution made by its technicians and the opportunity to develop stronger links between technicians working in different areas of the organisation.

Comments on level of initiatives/programmes/activities that were already in place for the technical community within this organisation prior to them becoming a signatory of the Technician Commitment:

Prior to our decision to sign up to the Technician Commitment it is fair to say that relatively little attention had been given to the specific issues relating to the University's small and dispersed technical community.

- Encourage technicians to identify the professional body which best aligns with their role and to seek support from the University to achieve professional accreditation.
- Ensure technicians are aware of and are encouraged to apply to progress through the double bar on their salary grade where they consider they are able to demonstrate exceptional performance.

Career Development

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

This is a challenging dimension for the University of Winchester because of its relatively small size, its portfolio of programmes where the majority are in non-STEM subject areas, and its flat technician staffing structures.

- Continue to be receptive to the possibilities for technicians to participate in teaching where appropriate. The University has a track record of enabling technicians who have the aspiration and aptitude to move onto an academic career path to achieve their ambition.
- Explore the scope for creating senior technician roles with identified supervisory and resource management responsibilities in areas where there are two or more technicians employed.
- Ensure all newly-appointed technicians are appointed a mentor and that the mentor-mentee relationship is active and supportive.

Sustainability

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

- Explore the scope for secondment and job shadowing opportunities to enable technicians to develop new skills.
- Explore the scope to create a technician apprenticeship via the Apprenticeship Levy.

Please evidence how the 'technician voice' was present in the development and formation of the institutional action plan:

Comments on initiatives this organisation has put in place to address the themes of the Technician Commitment since becoming a signatory:

Providing opportunities in individual cases for technicians to take on an academic role on a part-time basis, in conjunction with a reduction in the individual's technician FTE.

Hosting a first ever meeting of the technician community across the institution, which was open for all technicians to attend and those who perceive themselves as undertaking a technical role without having technician in their job title. This meeting was well attended and welcomed by the technician community.

Please provide a 24-month action plan, detailing future plans to ensure your organisations addresses the themes of the Technician Commitment and details of how impact will be evidenced: (this may be detailed here or attached to this document as an appendix):

Visibility

Ensure that technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution.

- All technicians have clear and comprehensive job descriptions
- Technician network to be formed. (There was support for this at the open meeting).
- Greater encouragement for technicians to sit on decision-making committees. (Technicians currently have representation on the University's Health & Safety Committee).
- Explore scope for technicians to feature in prospectuses and marketing materials.
- Organisation strategy documents to make reference to technicians where appropriate.
- Encourage technicians to contribute to departmental meetings.

Recognition

Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration

An open meeting was held to provide technicians with the opportunity to input their thoughts and ideas.

The first draft of the action plan was circulated to all technicians who attended the open meeting for their comments and suggestions.

Please confirm that your Technician Commitment status and action plan is published on your organisation website and provide the relevant URL here:

Signed (Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead)

Date: 21/01/2019

Signed (Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 21/01/2019.