



Technician Commitment

36 Month Action Plan

Technical Services



Manchester
Metropolitan
University
Science and Engineering

Technician Commitment

Dr Kate Dixon

Director of Technical Services



At Manchester Metropolitan University we have a talented technical workforce of over 200 technicians operating across our campus. Technicians are key enablers of the [University's Research, Education and Internationalisation strategies](#). Our University has again demonstrated its strong commitment to technicians by signing the Technician Commitment for a further three years. Through delivery of the new three year plan, the University will enact all of [The Talent Commission's recommendations](#) to employers of technical staff as well as several pledges unique to Manchester Met. Via our new plan, we will reach out to and connect technical staff across our Professional Services Directorates, raising the Visibility and Recognition of staff and developing Career Pathways and Skills Sustainability for all colleagues engaged in technical roles.

“It is great that the University has signed up to a further three years of positive actions for technicians via our new Technician Commitment plan. I am grateful to senior colleagues for their investment in our plan and their championing and acknowledgement of the contribution technicians make to our University's success. I am looking forward to working with colleagues across our University and beyond to deliver our ambitious new three-year action plan.”

Joe Rennie

Academic Registrar

“Technicians are key in delivering our University strategies, so I am delighted that the University is committed to further delivering Technical Services support and development through another three year action plan. Our ongoing commitment will ensure that Technicians are supported to make an outstanding contribution to our two core goals of excellent education and research with impact.”



Nick Brook

Pro-Vice Chancellor Research



“Recognising and valuing the contributions of technicians is crucial for fostering a thriving research environment. Our University would not be able to deliver internationally leading research without their skills and experience. Technicians play a vital role in unlocking innovation and harnessing emerging technologies. Exploring how to build clear career pathways for technical colleagues is not only an important part of our commitment to supporting and valuing their contributions within the University but ensuring we retain this wealth of talent. It is essential that we value our technical community in order it thrives and contributes to delivering an environment of excellence.”

Action Plan



Summer 2024 – Summer 2027

	TALENT recommendation	Manchester Met Technical Services Action	Visibility	Recognition	Career Development	Sustainability of Skills
1.	<p>Work to address any equality, diversity, and inclusivity considerations for technical workforces through implementation of targeted technician specific initiatives, and/or ensuring inclusion within wider all-staff initiatives, such as those linked to Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter. Acknowledge that workforce characteristics of technical communities are often not uniform (e.g. reported differences by discipline area), with different approaches potentially needed for different communities.</p>	<p>All recruiting managers to have completed Intentional About Inclusion training and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) essential training.</p> <p>An internal programme of technical placements/ secondments will be designed to promote roles targeted at underrepresented areas within discipline areas.</p> <p>Develop and deliver a series of information workshops and application support for the STELLAR HE programme (similar to those already in place for the Aurora and Herschel programmes).</p> <p>Promote opportunities for involvement in University-wide staff forums, such as the Disability Staff Forum, Rainbow Network and Gender Forum.</p> <p>Ensure continued representation on the University Athena Swan Committee.</p> <p>Ensure continued representation and contribution via the University Race Equality Charter (REC) delivery action group.</p> <p>Ensure all hiring managers have attended hiring manager training delivered by the HR Recruitment Team and the Technical Services Development Manager (TSDM).</p> <p>Develop a plan to strategically increase the number of Disability Champions across Technical Services and evaluate the impact of this action.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓

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2.	<p>Review how staff contributions are recognised and rewarded at department, and institution level, and whether inclusivity exists across all job families.</p>	<p>Encourage technical staff across all areas and grades to be included as authors on relevant publications, exhibitions, productions and grant applications where appropriate.</p> <p>Continue to evolve and develop the Technical Services technician awards to be as inclusive as practically possible, across all job roles and grades.</p> <p>Develop and implement a plan ensuring submission across all areas and grades for relevant awards nationally e.g. Papin Prize and the Times Higher Education Outstanding Technician award.</p> <p>Develop a communications plan which ensures the contribution of all technicians to the University's Research and Education goals are highlighted, this should include Faculty Newsletters, Education and Research Spotlights.</p>	✓	✓	✓	
3.	<p>Encourage appropriate inclusion of technical staff as authors, co-authors, or contributors on published papers and presentations, including providing clear guidance for appropriate inclusion at relevant stages, and sharing examples of inclusion within newsletters etc.</p>	<p>Encourage Technical Staff to share when they have been included in research papers.</p> <p>Develop and deliver a programme of work to ensure technical staff outputs are recorded in the relevant system e.g. Symplectic.</p> <p>Develop guidance material for academics on when to include technical contributions to research publications.</p> <p>Review and further develop the existing Technical Services Fair Attribution Policy and develop processes to ensure this is adopted across the institution.</p>	✓	✓	✓	

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4.	Provide transparent guidelines for how technical staff can be costed on to grants, sharing examples of best practice.	<p>Work collaboratively with the Doctoral College to ensure training for early career research staff is inclusive of relevant information about technicians and Technical Services.</p> <p>Continue to work collaboratively with the Academy and Research & Innovation (R&I) Directorate to ensure technical staff are appropriately costed onto grants.</p>	✓	✓	✓	
5.	Enable opportunities for technical staff to be considered as co-investigators, co-supervisors, for grants or projects.	<p>Continue to share and promote opportunities for technical staff to be included as co-investigators and co-supervisors on research grants.</p> <p>Develop a mentoring and training programme which supports technical staff in understanding how to work effectively with funders and the professional writing of grant bids.</p>	✓	✓	✓	
6.	Encourage and support events for visibility, outreach, and public engagement specifically for and/or including technical staff. Including e.g. showcase events, conferences, public engagement, open days, visits to local schools and colleges, T-level placements (in England), and work experience placements.	<p>Develop a plan/strategy/process for these activities and ensure alignment with The University Widening Participation Action Plan.</p> <p>Accurately record outreach events attended using the University recording system.</p> <p>Proactively seek out internal/external funding opportunities which support outreach activities.</p> <p>Develop a robust process to support high school work experience placements which enables opportunities for staff across the service to support this work via a planned and strategic approach. A process which includes advertising such positions will enable a greater collaboration across the Manchester City region and forge links with the local community.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓

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6.		<p>Target non-teaching dates in Semester calendar for events to be sensitive to technician workload.</p> <p>Engage with Manchester Metropolitan Careers Service, local charities/voluntary sector e.g. Powerhouse, Zion Arts Centre to promote technical careers and opportunities to study at Manchester Met.</p> <p>Collaborate with the Community Development Team to identify thematic opportunities within local communities.</p> <p>Develop an annual plan to identify the most appropriate times of the year for internship placements, T-Level student placements, work experience placements, bridging the gap placements. The plan will enable resource planning and appropriate communications to make this important work visible and impactful.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
7.	<p>Support and/or deliver the collection, reporting, tracking and analysis of data on employer and sector-wide technical workforces. For HE institutions: we call on you to submit staff records to HESA for all of your contracted technical staff (even those in England and/or NI for whom this is no longer mandatory, as of 2018/19). For all institutions: we call on you to track the size and make-up of your technical workforces.</p>	<p>Continue to generate data for the Technical Services HESA report.</p>	✓			

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8.	Support the development and implementation of a new, simple, and fit-for purpose classification for technical roles in higher education, research, and innovation at all levels, such as by creating a new job family specifically for technical roles, separate from academic, administrative, or any other job family.	Manchester Metropolitan University Technical Services currently has a well-defined job family of technical roles.	✓	✓	✓	✓
9.	Take a strategic approach to the sustainability of technical skills and careers, and appropriate succession planning through horizon scanning and identifying current and potential future skills gaps.	Develop a process to ensure relevant HR data is reviewed by the Technical Services Senior Leadership Team at least three times each year, identifying potential skills gaps and aiding in workforce planning. This will include a more formal approach to succession planning and further planning for technical skills sustainability.			✓	✓
10.	Appoint an institutional strategic lead, e.g. Director of Technical Skills, to lead this agenda.	The service has a strategic leadership team as follows; Director and Deputy Director roles, underpinned by 5 functional Technical Head roles and Technical Services Development Manager.			✓	✓
11.	Expand entry routes to technical roles and careers by encouraging applicants from both vocational pathways and academic pathways.	Collaborate with other areas of the University e.g. Estates, Facilities and Capital Development (EFCD) to promote opportunities to move into Technical Services roles. Consider where vacancies can be advertised as Degree Apprenticeships. Ensure recruitment language and communication style is adapted to applications from a wider pool.	✓		✓	✓

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12.	Invest in apprentices and trainee technician positions, hosting placements for qualifications (e.g. T-Levels in England) and work experience placements for local schools and colleges.	<p>Develop and deliver training sessions and create guidance for technical staff in relation to best practice when hosting work experience students.</p> <p>Investigate the possibility of advertising placement opportunities at local schools and colleges.</p> <p>Investigate the use of inspiring the future to support work experience placements.</p> <p>Investigate the expansion of the current Technical Services apprenticeship programme potentially to include level 3-7 opportunities.</p>			✓	✓
13.	Utilise the Apprenticeship Levy for training and developing technical staff.	Develop and implement an apprentice plan to support succession planning; this should include a wide range of qualification levels to support skills development and lifelong learning across Technical Services.			✓	✓
14.	Consider piloting new opportunities for progression via Technical Specialist pathways, and/or provide opportunities and mechanisms for staff to move across career pathways and job families.	<p>Deliver a plan of work exploring further development of career pathways across Technical Services.</p> <p>Where possible, enable secondments and projects working to promote career progression.</p>	✓		✓	✓

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15.	Ensure provision and protected time for training and professional development, supporting technical staff to take advantage of development opportunities, such as technical training, placements, and/or professional registration. Define a minimum yearly allowance of days for technical staff to undertake professional development.	<p>Technical Services commits to operationalising the University's 'Great Place to Work Strategy', which includes a key objective 'to provide colleagues with the opportunity to reflect on their skills, knowledge and experience and to access development that helps them to take decisions about their careers and deliver at their best now and in the future.'</p> <p>Technical Services will develop a CPD plan for each Functional area supporting delivery of University Research and Education, metrics and based on the Professional Development Review (PDR) process.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
16.	Ensure inclusion of technical staff and/or technical expertise within end to-end recruitment processes when hiring for technical roles. This should include utilising technical expertise when compiling role profiles, advice on where to advertise, and technical input on recruitment panels.	<p>Continue to develop practices which are inclusive of technical expertise within the end-to-end recruitment process.</p> <p>Continue to ensure all panels recruiting to our technical roles are chaired by technical staff and at least one other technical staff member sits on the panel.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
17.	Ensure visibility of clearly defined career pathways and standardised job descriptions for technical roles and careers. Standardised job descriptions will likely have baseline commonalities, plus flexible opportunities for specialisation where needed. Ensure diverse inclusion of technical expertise during process and any reviews thereof.	Manchester Metropolitan University has standardised job descriptions for technical roles. A review will be undertaken as to how this is communicated to the wider technician community and appropriate actions undertaken.			✓	✓

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18.	Ensure representation of technical staff on department, faculty, and institution-level decision-making committees, boards, panels, and similar groups, through either a dedicated seat or designated technical advocates within senior leadership and/or existing members. This includes processes and committees to develop institution-wide strategies and long-term goals.	Continue to ensure correct technical representation at senior meetings, seeking to bring consistency across faculties.	✓	✓	✓	
19.	Ensure considered inclusion of technical staff within all relevant communication channels and initiatives.	Collaborate with colleagues in central Communications and Marketing team ensuring appropriate news and stories are promoted via all news channels e.g. Education and Research spotlights, faculty newsletters etc.	✓	✓		
20.	Encourage formation of partnerships with organisations and initiatives that can provide technical training and wider technical networks. These partnerships can help to facilitate delivery of more technician-specific training across or within disciplines, and provide further opportunities for placements, secondments, equipment and knowledge exchange, and sharing of best practice.	<p>Develop relationships with industry to cement a process for enabling technical staff to access industry placements.</p> <p>Lead and participate in the North West England Technician Network to deliver an active local network of technical colleagues across the North West region and wider UK.</p> <p>Work with the National Technician Development Centre, Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy, Council for Higher Education in Art and Design, and other relevant sector organisations to identify training and collaboration opportunities.</p> <p>Promote membership of external networks and opportunities e.g. Technical Specialists Network and Technical Managers at Universities, Council for Higher Education in Art and Design to technical staff.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓

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21.	Sign the Technician Commitment and engage with its initiatives and network of signatories.	Continue to promote the Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy and Technician Commitment across the University.	✓	✓	✓	✓
22.	Be inclusive of technical staff and their considerations in conversations on sector-policy developments.	<p>Ensure representation of technical roles are present when funders, DfE and Industry partners visit the University.</p> <p>Seek opportunities and encourage technical staff to join external committees (e.g. UKRI Strategic advisory panels).</p>	✓		✓	
23.	Support technical staff to contribute to and/or attend government events and initiatives to develop policy.	Look for opportunities and continue to support this work.	✓	✓	✓	

	Manchester Met Institutional goal	Manchester Met Technical Services Action	Visibility	Recognition	Career Development	Sustainability of Skills
1.	Pan institution collaboration.	To deliver a programme of work which reaches out to technical staff across Manchester Met who are working in technician job roles outside of Technical Services e.g. Library and Cultural Services Department, Information Technology and Digital Services Directorate and Estates Facilities and Capital Development Directorate to support their inclusion in Technical Commitment activities.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Internationalisation.	To further support the University agenda on Internationalisation, explore the potential for virtual technician exchanges with our international partners e.g. Hubei University, China.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Professional networking.	Further develop the TechNet Technician networking initiative. Promote membership of external networks and opportunities (e.g. TSN and TMU) to technical staff.	✓	✓	✓	✓



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