Technician Commitment

Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: University of Salford

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

At the University of Salford industry is embedded in everything we do. Our industry collaboration enhances the student experience and gives our graduates the edge by providing real work opportunities. Salford have supported the needs of business since 1896, when we began as the Salford Royal Technical Institute and have been a university for over 50 years. Our vision is by pioneering exceptional industry partnerships we will lead the way in real world experiences preparing students for life.

Our connection to industry is stronger than ever – we are in the UK top ten for consultancy with small and medium-sized enterprises. We champion diversity and are proud of our talented industrious alumni – over 165,000 real people making a difference in their communities around the world.

Our world-leading research advances industry knowledge and insight, in areas such as acoustics, dementia and prosthetics and as a university we're committed to addressing global challenges, in particular sustainable energy, healthy ageing and community resilience. We are the only university with a MediaCityUK campus, sitting right next to neighbours ITV and the BBC and at the heart of the largest revolution in digital arts and technology in the UK.
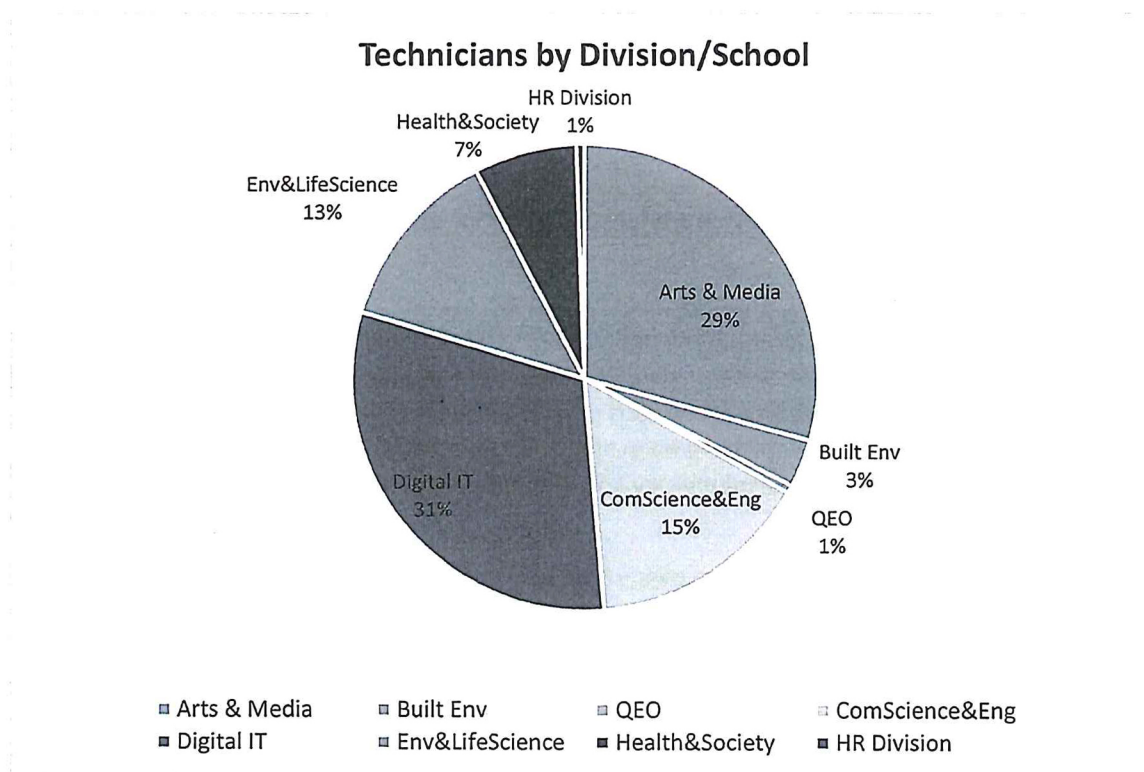
Our forward-thinking approach has built a thriving education, research, digital and technology community in Salford, and beyond. The University currently has c. 21,000 students supported by c.2,500 staff of which c.160 are technical staff who are directly engaged in supporting learning, research activities and industry partnerships.

Please tell us how your organisation defines its technicians:

Our technicians are trained and or skilled in the techniques, tools, and technology of their subject. They provide both the practical application of knowledge, including hands-on support in directly contributing to teaching and learning, research, enterprise activities and industry partnerships, and are responsible for operating, servicing and maintaining university facilities.

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):

There are c.160 technicians at the University of Salford. The chart below shows the distribution by division and school. Technical staff are based across all of our three sites: Peel Park, Fredrick Road and our MediaCityUK campus. The technical roles of our staff reflect the academic delivery of schools and divisional objectives and include both embedded research, teaching and demonstrator technicians and technical support only roles.

Technicians by Division/School

- Arts & Media 29%
- Built Env 3%
- QEO 1%
- ComScience&Eng 15%
- Digital IT 31%
- Env&LifeScience 13%
- Health&Society 7%
- HR Division 1%

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:

University of Salford provided a range of mechanisms through which the contribution and role of technicians can be recognised, rewarded and celebrated as part of wider University initiatives. For example:

- Recognising and celebrating the contribution of technicians through the annual Vice Chancellor Awards;
- Long Service Awards through which staff attaining 25 years' service are recognised and celebrated;
- Merit Award Scheme through which outstanding service is recognised through a one-off financial reward;

- University Internal Communications technicians news and success stories on Staff website and weekly email: 'This Week: A Weekly Round Up of Five Things You Need to Know';
- Recognition of achievement and contribution through Directorate monthly face to face sessions and CIO weekly staff briefings;
- Performance and Development Review annual appraisal process assists with identification of career progression and recognition of achievement;
- Supporting technician attendance at Heated and IST conferences and events;

In addition, technicians across the University have proactively engaged in the Technicians Make it Happen campaign for the last three-years by posting short videos and photographs of the work they do on Twitter highlighting the contribution they make to the University and promoting the visibility of technical roles. This activity was a driving force behind the University signing the Technicians Commitment.

The Technician Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technical staff across higher education and research. Please tell us of any initiatives your organisation has put in place to address these themes since becoming a signatory of the Technician Commitment:

- Professor Sheila Pankhurst, Dean of School of Environment and Life Sciences appointed as our academic lead for our Technician Commitment.
- Mark Wantling, Associate Director-Digital Strategy, Digital IT, appointed as our institutional lead for our Technician commitment.
- Established a Technician Commitment Steering Group with University wides representatives from Technical Staff and Managers, Human Resources and Academic colleagues, with 2 x identified leads for the commitment themes of Visibility, Recognition, Career Development and Sustainability.
- Creation of Technician Commitment website featuring individual technicians and technical teams, and signposting for professional registration and career development.
- Data gathering to support identification and mapping of technicians and technical roles to support the submission of the Self-Assessment and Action Plan.
- Networking with other Greater Manchester Universities through individual and group meetings to inform plans and discuss future collaboration.
- Production and distribution of new University lanyards, which includes the Technicians Make it Happen logo, to all technical staff and technical managers.
- Roll out of engaging with the Technician Commitment as a responsibility within technical role job descriptions.

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)

University of Salford 24-month Action Plan

Theme	Objective
Visibility: Ensure that technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution.	• Undertake identification and mapping of technicians and technical managers. • Produce a dedicated webpage for our Technician Commitment which showcasing technicians and the contribution they make. • Develop and promote a University 'Technicians Network' via Teams in O365 • Establish and enable a consistent policy that where technicians have contributed to research outputs and grants, they are named as authors. • Ensure technicians roles have clear job descriptions, which reflect specialisms. • Produce marketing materials, which feature technicians, including: individual technician and team videos and features in the University prospectus.
Recognition: Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration.	• Identify and document professional registration bodies for technicians with details of process for registration including payment. • Communicate opportunities to become professionally registered to technical staff. • Conferment of the organisational level Science Council Employer Champion award in recognition of the support given to technical staff to gain professional registration and engage in continued professional development.

	• Recognition and support of the teaching aspect of many technician roles through the accreditation of teaching practice through the Higher Education Academy
	• Establish and promote a technician specific internal award scheme to recognise the contribution of technical staff.
	• Identify and promote opportunities for nominations to external award schemes that recognise the contribution of technical staff.
	• Ensure visibility of all the above outputs is shared with technicians across the University using Teams.
Career Development: Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways.	• Establish clear and consistent technician specific professional career paths/frameworks which clearly document progression opportunities. • Ensure professional development opportunities are signposted to technicians and aligned to career pathways. • Evaluate and review the expansion of technician specific job families in recognition of high-level technical specialisms. • Align career development opportunities to professional recognition.
Sustainability: Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised.	• Ensure appropriate succession planning for technical roles, including the development of processes and tools for analysis, planning and recruitment. • Establish a secondment and placement programme for technical staff to collaborate, share and develop new skills, linked to organisational plans and

	objectives.
	• Develop a technical apprenticeship programme across the University, including utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy to train and upskill existing staff
	• Promote and communicate technical career opportunities to graduates and post-graduates.

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

A Project Steering Group, which has responsibility for heading up the development and implementation of the University's Action Plan, was established as a response to the widespread involvement of University technicians in the Technicians Make it Happen campaign. This Steering Group comprises of representatives from Technical Staff and Technical Management, Human Resources and the Academic community. However, membership has developed throughout the consultation process to reflect a comprehensive technical voice from all faculties.

Our intention to sign up to the Technician Commitment was announced via a launch event on the 7th February 2018 of which over 60 technicians attended. The purpose of the event also being to hear the true voice of the technical staff and capture their feedback on the five themes of the Commitment. These would then form the basis of the University's Action Plan. We have received a wide range of responses to the Technician Commitment and the Group has endeavoured to ensure that all are represented.

The Steering Group has played a fundamental role in ensuring the University of Salford can confidently sign up to the Commitment and have collaboratively developed the necessary actions to fulfil the standards of the Technicians Commitment.

Please confirm that your Technician Commitment status and action plan is published on your organisation's website and provide the relevant URL here: https://www.salford.ac.uk/technicians-commitment

Signed................................(Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead)

Date: 08/02/19

Signed................................(Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 11/2/19.