

Technician Commitment: Stage 3 Self-Assessment & Action Plan Guidance

Please note: This guidance and template is for institutions who have already submitted their Stage One and Two Self-Assessments & Action Plans, 1 and 3 years after becoming an official signatory of the Technician Commitment. This guidance and template refers to the third stage of self-assessment and action planning to be submitted 6 years after the submission of the original submission.

The Technician Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines.

The third stage of self-assessment and action planning process asks for reflection on past action plans, evidence of progress and engagement and a further 36 month action plan. The self-assessment includes a 'RAG' analysis of previous action plans - a 'Red, Amber & Green' status report.

The Technician Commitment Steering Board does not seek to dictate how organisations promote a positive culture for the technician community. This is a matter for autonomous institutions and the technician, research and academic community to agree. It is expected that as a minimum, signatories publicly state their Technician Commitment signatory status and institutional action plans on a dedicated and discoverable webpage, along with their named point of contact. The Steering Board asks signatories to evidence that the 'technician voice' is present in the development and formation of institutional action plans. The Technician Commitment is a collaborative endeavour and the Steering Board will support and facilitate the establishment and sharing of best practice demonstrated in the self-assessments and action plans. A vibrant community of Institutional Leads tasked with implementing the Technician Commitment has developed since the Commitment's inception and the Steering Board aims to ensure a range of forums are available to enable peers to share expertise, good practice and experiences.

Cross referencing to other sector institutional reviews relevant to technicians is welcomed; for example, the Steering Board are keen to learn how signatories are advancing equality, diversity and inclusion for the technical community and institutions may wish to reference Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter submissions. The Steering Board are also keen to learn of Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submissions and Research Excellence Framework (REF) environment statements where technicians have been explicitly mentioned. The Steering Board are particularly keen to see activity and plans to enact the recommendations of the TALENT Commission embedded in Stage 3 self-assessments and action plans.

The Technician Commitment Steering Board, through the executive team, will choose a limited number of submissions for active review between the institution and the Technician Commitment.

Please note that finalised Action Plans should be signed off at an institutional leadership level (e.g. Vice-Chancellor/President/Director level).

For any additional queries, please contact techscommit@gatsby.org.uk

Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: Royal Holloway University of London

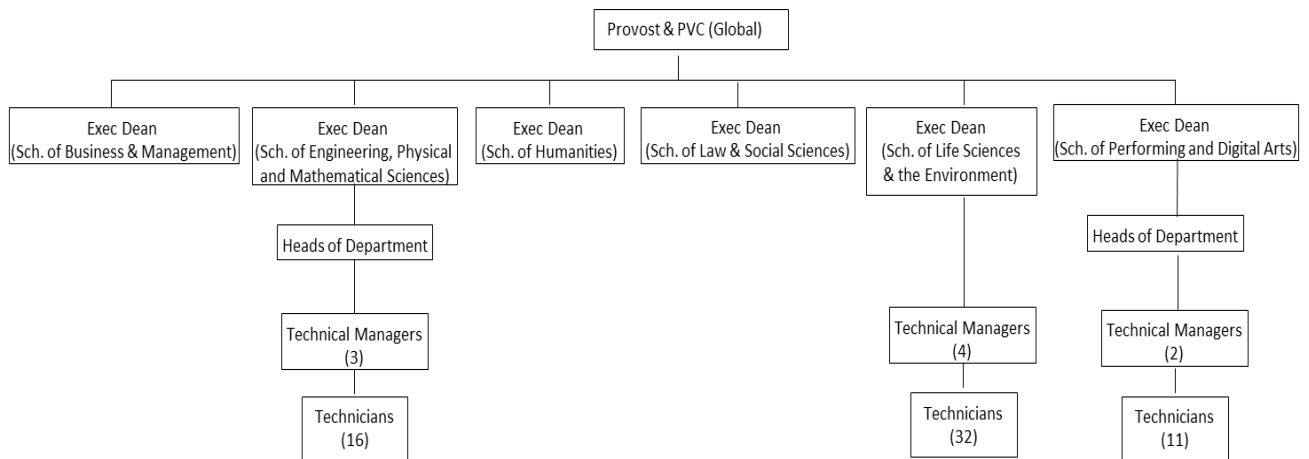
Name of Institutional Lead: Claire Mayers

E-mail: Claire.mayers@rhul.ac.uk

Contact Number: 01784 443808

Please provide an overview of technical staff structures in your organisation, along with details of any changes to these over the past 6 years in response to the Technician Commitment.

1. There are currently 68 centrally funded technicians (3.7% of salaried staff) within the university supporting a wide array of teaching, research and central services.



2. The table below provides a breakdown of the number of technicians by department as at June 2024.

SCHOOL	DEPARTMENT	NUMBERS
Business and Management		0
Engineering, Physical and Mathematical Sciences	Electronic Engineering	4
	Physics	11
	Computer Science, Information Security & Maths	4
Humanities		0
Law and Social Sciences		0
Life Sciences and the Environment	Biological Sciences	17
	Earth Sciences	8
	Geography	7
	Health Studies	0.2
	Psychology	3.8
Performing and Digital Arts	Media Arts	7
	Music	1
	Drama, Theatre & Dance	5
	TOTAL	68

3. Technical staff are line managed by a department-based Technical Manager who reports to either an academic Head of Department or Executive Dean within a School structure.
4. In 2023 it was recognised that a new Technical Operations Manager (TOM) post was required for the Department of Psychology, reflecting the responsibilities taken on by technical staff in that department. This post also supports the new and growing Department of Health Studies.
5. As a direct result of the Technician Commitment a member of the Senior Leadership Team (the Provost and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Global)) has been appointed as Technician Champion. Their role is to represent the technical community at senior leadership meetings. The Technical Managers Working Group feedback ideas, problems and suggestions to this position.

Please provide an overview of the governance, leadership and reporting lines of the Technician Commitment at your institution, along with details on how it is resourced, and information on how your organisation has engaged with the wider community within and beyond your institution. How has this developed since you became a signatory?

On becoming a signatory of the Technician Commitment, the Technical Manager's Working Group (TMWG) was created. This is comprised of a Technical Manager from each of the academic departments who employ technical staff. The group is chaired by a member of staff from the Organisational Development sector of our Human Resources department. The governance of the group has developed since becoming a signatory with the creation of the role of Technician Champion which was taken up by the University's Provost & Pro-Vice Chancellor (Global). Whilst many decisions are made by the TMWG it can feed up to the Technician Champion who can then represent the technical community at Senior Leadership level and drive through high level changes as required. The Technician Champion provides TC updates to the university's Executive Board. Technical staff can feed into the TMWG through their line manager. Technical Managers can also report on TC progress, issues and activities at School Executive and Department meetings. Two of the TMWG members are union reps.

The TMWG Chair is resourced by the Organisational Development (OD) Team that sits within Human Resources. The Technician Commitment is included as a key University-wide project that OD support within their areas of responsibility. Technical Managers contribute to TC developments and activities as part of their role with no additional resourcing.

In December 2019 the NTDC were commissioned to develop a skills survey that all technical staff were invited to complete. The aim of the survey was to capture key information about our technicians, in particular their skills and strengths and their current and future development needs. 71% of technical staff engaged with the survey and a summary report, delayed slightly by the pandemic, was made available on our internal webpages. Each staff member who completed the survey was provided with personal copy of their responses to aid development discussions at annual review meetings.

Within our institution we have engaged with the wider community by creating a number of displays and photographs highlighting Technicians at work and how their careers have led them to being technicians in Higher Education. These displays are a new initiative developed since signing up to the TC to improve the visibility of technical staff at the university. The posters were used in a visibility campaign in 2022 around campus. In February 2024 we arranged a technical showcase as part of a staff open meeting where non-technical staff could see examples of work carried out by technicians and ask questions (<https://royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/technicians/news-and-events/technician-showcase/>).

We have engaged with external communities through further use of the posters at a large public outreach event highlighting technical work and staff to the external community. Since becoming a signatory we have also created an externally accessible webpage dedicated to technical staff. This is a work in progress and includes career case studies as well as information about the Technician Commitment eg action plans and previous self-assessments. Work experience students have also been placed within technical teams at RHUL providing an insight into the role of a technician in HE.

Two representatives from the TMWG have joined the London and South-East TC Networking group where issues relevant to the TC are discussed. Technical Managers have also attended a number of TC conferences in order to network with other institutions and keep abreast of developments relating to technicians.

Two representatives from the TMWG have become Technician Commitment Peer Reviewers.

Please provide a RAG analysis on your institutional 36-month action plan indicating which activities you have undertaken and completed (green), which are in progress (amber) and which are still to be carried out (red). Please provide an explanation for those categorised as red.

This may be detailed here or attached to this document as an appendix.

See appendix A.

In most cases the actions that remain in red have been attempted but through discussion have been realised to either not be possible or beneficial to technical staff.

After discussions with our Careers department it was realised that action 1.3 could not coincide with the university's career week as first envisaged. We have had to re-consider how we could highlight technical careers to students. This has been made more challenging by the small size of our technical workforce and the time that would be required to create an event. It is something we continue to consider for the future.

Action 4.1 has not been completed as overlapping posts are not permitted due to financial constraints. It was also unclear how this information would assist with planning so the decision was made to focus on actions that could be progressed more proactively.

Action 4.5 is beyond the capabilities of the TMWG and requires engagement from other university departments. Discussions have been had very recently about expanding or changing the membership of the Technician Commitment working group so that it incorporates more staff from areas of the university that can help contribute to progressing actions.

Historically, the lack of consistent engagement with wider university departments, eg Research and Innovation, Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, and the limitation of only having

technical staff steering the Technician Commitment, has made progressing the action plan challenging. However, there are positive signs that this is now changing with a recognised effort to include technical representation on working groups and committees. The overwhelming impact of our action plan has been the increased visibility of technical staff at the university and awareness of the Technician Commitment outside of the technical community. Although a number of actions have been identified as amber or red the discussions that have been started around potential future actions have brought the Technician Commitment and the significant contributions technical colleagues make to teaching and/or research more to the attention of the wider university.

Please provide evidence that your previous action plans are having impact. (For example, you may wish to provide links to initiatives, websites, testimonials, articles/blogs).

One of the outcomes of the skills survey was the establishment of a small budget provided by the university to support specialist training, professional registration and networking events specifically for technical colleagues. The budget is held by Organisational Development but decisions on spending are made by the TMWG. Technicians can apply to the TMWG for funding. Departments can also contribute to training from their own department budgets.

The creation of the TMWG budget resulted in nearly 30% of technical staff attending specialist training in the academic year 2022-23. In addition, eight technicians were supported with professional registration costs. It has recently been confirmed that this budget will be supported by the university each year going forward. In the academic year 2023-2024, technical staff from 9 departments successfully applied for funding for specialist training and/or professional registration. Technical staff can also attend any of the staff training courses run by the university. These courses are varied and include management and leadership skills, wellbeing, H&S, time management, and many more.

A website has recently been created which is dedicated to, and about, technical staff at RHUL (<https://royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/technicians/>). This is accessible externally as well as by university staff and showcases technical case studies, as well as our action plan and past self-assessments. Images and case studies that were created as a result of our visibility campaign and action plan have been incorporated into the webpage. The aim is to develop this further and to incorporate more news and stories relevant to technicians and to promote technical careers. In addition to the website an internal site, known as the Technician Hub, has also been created accessible only to Technical staff at RHUL. This contains a forum where technical staff can put questions and suggestions to the entire technical workforce and can be used as a way of problem sharing and solving.

The University now funds an annual networking event for RHUL technical staff. This enables technical staff to engage with the TC more openly. The creation of the Technician Hub was a suggestion that came from technical staff at one of our past events and something that has now been incorporated into our action plan. The networking event has also had the impact of introducing technicians who would not normally interact to meet, discuss problems and share good practice. The events have been valuable for technical staff to meet their counterparts from other departments. As a result new contacts have been made and technical staff now often reach out to each other for advice, to borrow equipment and/or use facilities. The Technician Hub includes a forum where

technical staff can ask a question or share a problem and the wider technical community can respond, rather than limiting problem sharing to department level.

Technical staff with a research profile can now be included on PURE if they wish to be. Previously this was only available to academic staff.

Staff surveys at institutional level now include a separate staff category for technical colleagues. This has not been seen previously with technical staff often being forgotten as a demographic and reflects progress in the visibility of the technical community. Our Athena Swan submissions now include reference to Technical staff and consider how technicians are impacted differently to academics and other professional services staff by workload, working patterns etc. The EDI Committee from the Department of Geography invited their technical team to give an EDI-themed talk to department colleagues and PhD students. The team entitled their talk 'Just a Technician' and discussed some of the inequalities they had faced as a result of their role.

All 2021 REF environment statements by departments with university funded technical staff included explicit mention of their technicians. Many also reference the Technician Commitment directly. The Senior Leadership Team have invited technical representation on to the REF 2029 steering group and one of the technical managers has accepted this role.

Our TEF submission referred to technical staff and recognised their contribution to teaching. Our TEF document highlights the importance of professional development for all staff involved in teaching including technicians. The Department of Electrical Engineering was awarded a Teaching Commendation in June 2022 in recognition of their 'holistic technical support of teaching and learning in the laboratory environment'.

A recommendation of the skills survey was the need for acknowledgement of technical contribution to academic papers. In 2023 the University's Executive Board approved a new guidance document highlighting protocol for acknowledging the contribution of technical staff to research publications. See appendix B. This is available on the university's intranet.

In previous years only academic staff were invited to graduation ceremonies. Since 2022, and coming as a direct result of the TC, technical staff have been invited to attend graduation ceremonies in recognition of their contribution to the teaching and support of graduating students.

The university now includes reference to the Technician Commitment in all technical vacancy adverts. This is included so that potential applicants are made aware that the university is a signatory to the TC.

As mentioned previously, in February 2024 Technical staff were invited by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal to showcase their roles at a university-wide Staff Open Meeting. Technical staff from each School were represented with exhibits set up to highlight the wide range of tasks technical staff are involved in. This was the first time technical colleagues had been given the opportunity to highlight their roles.

In March 2024 the university integrated the TC logo into its email signature. This was done in order to raise awareness of the TC to all staff regardless of their role at the university and to publicise to external stakeholders that we are a signatory.

Please provide details of how your institution is enacting the recommendations of the TALENT Commission (<https://www.mitalent.ac.uk/theTALENTcommission>).

R1 – A member of the Senior Leadership Team was appointed Technician Champion. They collaborate with Technical Managers who lead the university's Technician Commitment activities. This allows for a better reporting structure and allows for technical representation at senior management level. The university has created an annual budget specifically for the specialist training of technical staff to allow for career and skills development.

R3 – A survey of all technical staff (University funded research, teaching and central services technicians) has been completed (2020) in order to capture data on technical staff demographics and to highlight the variety of skills teaching and research technicians at the institution possess. This highlighted the wide range of informal/unrecognised roles technical staff take on but also demonstrated the level of expertise held by technical staff.

R4 – Technical staff are represented on departmental EDI Committees and as a result contribute to RHUL's Athena Swan applications. RHUL staff surveys now include 'Technical' as a job group where previously there had been no option for technical staff to identify as a specific group. Athena Swan submissions now include specific actions relevant to improving the equality and inclusion of technical staff.

R6 – Work experience students have been placed within technical teams most years giving them an insight into the role of an HE technician.

R8 - Technical staff are involved in designing and leading technical/practical tests which feed into the interview and selection process. Technical Managers have been included on informal interview panels for Senior Management positions.

R10 – A budget has been created specifically to support specialist training for technical staff. As noted in the previous section 20 technicians benefitted from the budget in support of training and 8 staff were supported with professional registration costs. The university also offers work-shadowing placements which technical staff have taken part in. Technical staff are encouraged to attend external conferences and workshops with funding for such available from either the specialist training budget or their own academic department.

R11 – A new paper entitled 'Guidelines on acknowledgement of Technical and Support Staff Contributions' has been approved at Exec Board. Clear guidance is given about appropriate levels of acknowledgment according to level of contribution.

R12 – Technical Managers sit on institution level decision making committees including but not restricted to Health & Safety and Sustainability. Technical Staff are invited to take part in 'creative conversations' and discussions relating to the development of university strategies.

R15 - Technical Managers pass on information regarding conferences and training opportunities where appropriate to their teams. Technical staff have attended various external training courses as a result. Attendance at relevant conferences is also supported to aid networking within areas of expertise as well as developing knowledge.

R16 – Links to external organisations such as the ITSS are included on the new Technician webpage and Hub.

Please provide a 36-month action plan; detailing plans to ensure your organisation continues to address the themes of the Technician Commitment and details of how impact will be evidenced and initiatives resourced: (this may be detailed here or attached to this document as an appendix). Please evidence how the ‘technician voice’ was present in the development and formation of the 36-month action plan.

See appendix C.

Technical Managers meet with their teams and all TC related issues can be taken to the TMWG. In addition the Technician Commitment is openly discussed at an annual event with opportunities for technical staff to feedback and make suggestions.

All technical staff were invited to feed into the new action plan through informal group discussions. A group met in April to provide their views on progress so far and to express their priorities for the future 36-month action plan.


The Technician Forum that has been created encourages Technical Staff to put forward ideas. So far this has not generated much response and may be due to the lack of anonymity. We will be reviewing staff engagement with the Technician Forum after 1 year of operation (December 2024).

Please confirm that your Technician Commitment status and 3-year action plan is published on your organisation’s website and provide the relevant URL here:

I confirm that RHUL publishes its status and action plans on the website.

<https://royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/technicians/technician-commitment/>

We have decided to change the format of our action plan for this submission. Previous plans were broken down annually with specific actions designated to particular years. Where some actions were delayed due to challenges some were easier to achieve and were done much more quickly. As a result our action plan no longer restricts an action to a particular year but we will progress all actions across the 36-month time frame as and when they can be achieved. This gives us much more flexibility, allowing us to respond to changing priorities more readily, alongside resourcing uncertainties.

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

Date: 18/07/2024

Signed  (Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 18/07/2024

Technician Commitment Action Plan: 2021/23

VISION: To build a community of inspiring people with a global outlook to research and teaching.			
Technician Commitment Priority	Action Plan for 2021	Action Plan for 2021/22	Action Plan 2022/23
1. Visibility Ensure that all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is viable within and beyond the institution Career Development	<p>1.1 Circulate and display the Posters that were produced as part of the technician's commitment launch event in December 2019. This will further highlight the work of the profession and technical staff in all areas and grades. <i>Posters were displayed at 3 locations on campus. Posters have been on permanent display in Tolansky Building foyer since. Digital copy of posters on file and can be used for future events eg Science Festival, Careers Week. Posters have also been used on Staff newsletter promoting the Tech Commitment.</i></p>	<p>1.3 Develop an annual Technician Awareness Week (this could be jointly coordinated with the Careers and Employability Centre for students and staff), to further promote the technical profession and the types of opportunities available. <i>The Employability & Engagement Team were contacted to discuss the opportunity for Technicians to participate in the Careers & Placements Week. Decision made that it wasn't appropriate as no vacancies available and the event is a recruitment fair rather than an opportunity to promote careers.</i></p>	<p>1.5 Consider a Technician display at the College Science Festival promoting roles of Techs at RHUL to external visitors. <i>Posters were displayed at 27th May 2023 event.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Promote the role of technicians in the 'My Why' campaign and the "get to know your staff" in the Principal's newsletter. <i>The career of one of the TOMs was showcased in the January 2021 Principal's Newsletter.</i></p>	<p>1.4 Identify a technical staff month to promote, showcase and celebrate the work of the profession. <i>Following first Tech event held in December 2019, a Technician networking event has been held in December 22 and December 23 with presentations given by the College Principal and Technician Champion. The 2022 event was highlighted in the monthly staff newsletter. Following the 2023 event technical staff were invited by Senior Management to showcase their work at a formal staff open meeting.</i></p>	

<p>2. Recognition Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration.</p>	<p>2.1 Ensure that technicians are acknowledged and mentioned for their contribution in academic papers. <i>Acknowledgment Policy approved at Exec Board August 2023</i></p> <p>2.2 Ensure that technical staff, specifically those with research skills are included on PURE. <i>Meeting held 25/11/21 with KenB, Sue Starbuck (R&I) and TOMs. It was agreed that technicians who make contributions to research projects could have their research profile on PURE.</i></p> <p>2.3 Ensure all technical staff have business cards. A useful and inexpensive way to demonstrate to the College and external organisations who they are. <i>Ongoing objective determined by local needs.</i></p>	<p>2.4 Create an annual technical award for Technical staff. This can be a section in the annual Staff Awards. <i>Technicians are included in College Teaching awards. Meeting held with HR to review lack of options for Technicians to be recognised in annual awards. HR agreed staff awards would be reviewed and would be more inclusive for all Professional Services staff. In June 2022 the Department of Electronic Engineering were awarded a Teaching Commendation for their 'Holistic Technical Support of Teaching and Learning in the Engineering Laboratory Environment'</i></p>	<p>2.5 Consider nominating technical staff in the Celebrate a Success campaign. <i>Nomination for 2 staff was successfully put forward for October 2023 open meeting. Objective on-going.</i></p>
<p>3. Career Development Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documental career pathways</p>	<p>3.1 Identify central and local financial support for staff wanting to register for professional membership and training as a result of the training needs survey. <i>December 2020: AMS met with Ken Badcock to review planned training/professional registration cost. KB agreed to support with budget over next 3 years. September 2023: Budget approved to continue each year going forward.</i></p>	<p>3.6 Invite professional bodies to provide guidance, training and support on how to complete professional registration forms for accreditation. <i>The university arranged an online event for all staff.</i></p>	<p>3.7 Develop a Career Pathway for technicians clearly demonstrating the requirements for progression from one grade to the next and how transferable skills can be used to enable movement from one department to another. <i>Work done to review how technical grades and associated responsibilities are explained on HR webpages. All Technicians were invited to a session about HERA and the grading process. Action ongoing.</i></p>

	<p>3.2 All managers to discuss with technicians their personal development needs and career aspiration plans in line with the Annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) policy. Development needs will be met where possible. <i>Managers have met with staff and discussed personal development and career plans in line with the college PDR process. Managers are updated on internal and external training provision for sharing and dissemination.</i></p> <p>3.3 ODDT to highlight and promote appropriate training for technicians from the suite of workshops available within the College. <i>Managers are regularly updated with internal and external training and learning opportunities that might be of benefit to their staff and teams. In particular workshops and conferences offered by HEATED, Science Council and College, including the work shadowing programmes, the coaching and mentoring programmes. In January 2021 the Principal's Newsletter highlighted learning and development for all staff – including Technicians.</i></p> <p>3.4 Invite professional bodies to promote the benefits of professional registration. <i>Managers to have discussions with staff about the benefits of professional registration and the fact that the college</i></p>		<p>3.8 Consider possibility of holding an external Technical Staff Conference bringing together the profession and talent enabling them to network and showcase their work. <i>Members of TMWG attending other institution events to gain ideas for RHUL.</i></p> <p>3.9 Review Training/Professional registration budgets with incoming Technician Champion. <i>This has been reviewed and budget has been approved as annual.</i></p>
--	---	--	---

	<p><i>will now contribute £100 towards fees as of September 2021/22.</i></p> <p>3.5 Promote opportunities for development inside and outside of the organisation, for example the Outside Insight work shadowing scheme, Internal work shadowing programme, secondments, projects, mentoring and coaching. <i>Technicians have accessed the Outside Insight work shadowing opportunity.</i></p> <p>3.7 Develop a Career Pathway for technicians clearly demonstrating the requirements for progression from one grade to the next and how transferable skills can be used to enable movement from one department to another. <i>A meeting with Lorraine Lewis in ODDT, was arranged in April to discuss how we take this matter forward. We determined that it was best not to consider the "traditional" career pathway for technicians, primarily because the role of our technicians is varied, depending on the department they work for. It was agreed that developing an "individualised career development plan / approach" (and in some departments this was already happening) would be best.</i></p>		
4. Sustainability	4.1 Conduct an analysis of the number of resignations and appointments made	4.4 Develop a Succession planning strategy that supports routine work, teaching and	4.6 Create Technician 'Hub' where technical staff can find information

	<p>over the last two years. Clarifying the cost benefit of overlapping appointments/hand over periods.</p> <p>4.2 Introduce Apprenticeships for technical roles. <i>College Apprenticeship Policy drafted.</i></p> <p>4.3 We will ensure students are aware of the work of technicians in the College by highlighting the importance of their work in the prospectus, giving presentations during Fresher's week and showcasing their expertise at Open Days, Careers Fairs and other internal and external facing events. <i>Action point is linked with 1.3 & 1.4. CM approached Tania Mohammad to have a Poster campaign about the profession around the college. Campaign held in September 2021.</i></p>	<p>research work of those who leave or are planning to leave. <i>Ongoing</i></p> <p>4.5 Introduce Apprenticeships for new staff, and exploring the possibility of offering a permanent position for those apprentices. <i>Discussions had regarding how apprenticeships would work within technical areas. Not being able to guarantee job at end of role makes scheme difficult. Need to review what departments can predict staff leaving eg retirement.</i></p>	<p>about training, problem solving, networking etc.</p>
--	---	--	---

Guidelines on acknowledgement of Technical and Support Staff Contributions

This purpose of this document is to guide on appropriate acknowledgements of technical and support staff contributions in reports and publications. This will apply to all research output by postgraduates, research and academic staff.

It is expected that a discussion regarding authorship takes place in the early stages of planning a research project amongst all potential contributors. Each party should have a common understanding of what work merits authorship and who amongst the authors will have primary responsibility for writing, submission and editing work required for a paper.

Technician input into a research project may fall into two broad but overlapping categories- 'intellectual' and 'laborious'. 'Intellectual' inputs often require special skills leading to scientific insight (see A1 below). 'Laborious' inputs are usually particularly time-consuming and repetitive work, such as the generation of large data-sets, that nevertheless require an understanding of the underlying scientific questions, the methodological expertise necessary to undertake the tasks and the ability to exercise personal judgement in order to see the work is completed (A2).

A technician who has made a substantial contribution to a project in A1 or A2 categories should be considered for authorship. It is not possible to define a threshold for which a contribution can be considered to be 'substantial' and determining the threshold will be a matter of judgement on a case-by-case basis. However, when evaluating 'substantial' input it needs to be considered whether a project could have attained its final form without the contribution of a technician. Grants that include a direct costing of a technician's time (equal to or greater than 20%) should be automatically considered to achieve the threshold to qualify for authorship for the individual technician assigned to the work they have contributed to.

As a research project progresses the level and amount of technician input may change, either increasing or decreasing, necessitating a further evaluation of the authorship threshold involving a discussion between all parties.

It is understood that there may be stipulations from funding bodies, publishers and on large-scale consortia projects, where flexibility on authorship or co-authorship will not be possible. This does not seek to replace such guidelines. This document aims to provide a framework for consistency in acknowledgement across the institution. To fairly recognise the active contribution that technical and support staff make to research activities and embed the practice at every level where the opportunity exists to do so.

Types of work involving technician contribution – research focussed.

- A1. Technician substantially involved in project/experimental design, preparation, data or media generation, editing, interpretation and/or analysis. May have sole responsibility for a section or subsection of the output.
- A2. Technician involved in straightforward or routine work, generating data or media, sending resulting data or media to user for analysis, editing and/or interpretation.
- A3. User led project work in laboratory, facility or workshop; with technician responsible for initial training, induction and further support.
- A4. Technician involved in preparation, care, maintenance of materials, specialist equipment or facilities used during work or experiments. No direct input into the work.

Advised levels of acknowledgement for technical contribution

Meeting criteria in A1:

Technician, particularly if named on a grant application, should be considered for inclusion on the co-author list where there is a substantial level of input and support. The main distinction being significant intellectual contribution, inclusion in discussion during drafting and publications, writing elements of the paper itself, and final approval before submission.

Meeting criteria in A2.

Level of contribution may justify authorship if a significant contribution has been undertaken. Time costed into grant or individual directly costed in research grant should be considered for authorship. If not achieving authorship threshold should be automatically named and included in an acknowledgement section with their function or contribution described.

Would require consideration on a case by case basis, with acknowledgement made to fairly reflect the intellectual or laborious contribution to the project.

Time costed into a research grant. (20%) likely to be A1 or A2 above

Meeting criteria in A3 or A4 above

Acknowledgement statement in publication or report:

A3: *"The [author/s] would like to acknowledge the help of [technician name] and the use of [service or facility] within the [facility / department / school], Royal Holloway, University of London."*

A4: *"The [author/s] acknowledge use of [insert equipment or service used] supplied by/within the [facility name / department / school if appropriate], Royal Holloway, University of London." Assisted and supported by [insert technician name]*

References, acknowledgments and further reading:

This guidance was drafted with and at the suggestion of Dr. Neil Morley, and using similar documentation from the University of Warwick with thanks to and permission from Ian Hancox. Much of the existing guidelines across the sector can be traced back to common source documents, rather than reproduce these in detail the links can be found below.

Also with reference to:

[ICMJE recommendations for roles of authors and contributors](#),

[BMJ Authorship and Contributorship](#).

Macintyre, S. (1995) [MRC Social & Public Health Sciences Unit Policy on Authorship of Publications and Presentations](#).

Further reading:

The British Sociological Association has produced a comprehensive set of guidelines on this subject using some of the source material listed above these can be found here: <https://www.britisoc.co.uk/publications/guidelines-reports/authorship-guidelines.aspx>

Technician Commitment Action Plan: 2024-2026

Technician Commitment Priority	Action Plan for 2024-26	How will this be evidenced?
<p>1. Visibility Ensure that all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is viable within and beyond the institution Career Development</p>	<p>Further develop an externally facing website dedicated to the work of our technicians in order to increase visibility of technical roles in HE.</p> <p>Improve technical staff profiles available on internal webpages to include specialisms and areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Promote the Technician Commitment, its purpose and Technical achievements to the wider RHUL non-technical community. This could include information being included in staff newsletters, announcements at Staff Open meetings or displays of technical work around the campus.</p> <p>Consider formation of new TC steering group incorporating wider membership to include non-technical staff and senior management.</p> <p>Create Technical staff working group to feed into TMWG/TC Steering Group.</p> <p>Complete a survey of all technical staff to assess impact of TC so far. Review responses to assess perceptions of progress and success and/or failures of TC at RHUL.</p>	<p>Gradual increased content especially in the 'News and Events' section.</p> <p>Updated internal webpages that accurately reflect roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Increased visible presence of technical activities and news in university-wide communications.</p> <p>Scoping meeting held with Technician Champion to review options for change and possible membership of steering group.</p> <p>Send out request for volunteers to lead/join new working group. New group formed and active.</p> <p>Survey sent to all technical staff. Responses will dictate discussions at December 2024 networking event.</p>
<p>2. Recognition Support technicians to gain recognition</p>	<p>Review the number of technical staff who have applied/been nominated for a Performance Award over past 5 years.</p>	<p>Receipt of data from HR. Use of data as evidence of impact of TC.</p>

<p>through professional registration.</p>	<p>Ensure new 'Guidelines on acknowledgement of Technical and Support Staff Contributions' is publicised and accessible to all staff within the University. Review whether numbers of staff acknowledged increase or remain the same.</p> <p>Review how many technicians are costed into research grants and assess whether this accurately reflects work being completed.</p> <p>Create more opportunities for team building and networking.</p>	<p>Document made available on webpage. Data collected to aid review of technical staff receiving acknowledgements.</p> <p>Receipt of data from HR/R&I. Improved understanding of current trends for use in future discussions for change.</p> <p>Creation of at least one more technical staff event in the calendar.</p>
<p>3. Career Development Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documental career pathways</p>	<p>Define benchmarks for progression and examples of skills and experience needed at each grade similar to those already defined and available for Administrative and Operational roles.</p> <p>Meet with HR to discuss possibilities for amending/standardising technical job titles to reflect level of experience and progression.</p> <p>Provide 'Understanding HERA' sessions specifically for technical staff.</p> <p>Increase support for training, work shadowing, placements.</p> <p>Consider the option of a Technical Specialist career pathway and if it would work at RHUL.</p>	<p>Technician specific information available on HR webpages.</p> <p>Scoping meeting with HR. If deemed appropriate to do so process of making changes can start to be planned.</p> <p>Run course annually/as required according to demand.</p> <p>Increase in number and range of technicians applying for and being supported by training budget.</p> <p>TMWG to attend events/hold discussions with other institutions already doing this. Further</p>

		scoping meetings to be held to assess feasibility at RHUL.
4. Sustainability	<p>Review the skills survey originally completed in 2018. Update information held around technical skills of the current workforce to aid discussions around skills at risk and succession planning.</p> <p>Work with the SLT and HR to consider offering technical apprenticeships, particularly in areas where there is high turn-over of staff or where team members are considering retirement.</p> <p>Work with HR to gather EDI data for technical staff. Review patterns and identify areas of challenge.</p>	<p>Formal register of skills at risk created.</p> <p>RHUL areas identified that could benefit from apprenticeships.</p> <p>Have formal baseline data for current workforce.</p>