PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE
Technician Commitment

Technician Commitment

Guidance for Completing the Self-Assessment & Action Plan

The Technician Commitment is a university and research institution initiative, led by a steering group of sector bodies, with support from the Science Council and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation's Technicians Make It Happen campaign. The Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines. Universities and research institutes are invited to become signatories of the Technician Commitment and pledge action against the key challenges affecting their technical staff.

The themes of the Technician Commitment are: Visibility, Recognition, Career Development, Sustainability and Evaluating Impact. The fifth theme of Evaluating Impact takes the form of a self-assessment process, to be undertaken one year after an organisation becomes a signatory and biennially thereafter.

The self-assessment process enables the Technician Commitment Steering Group to gain an understanding of the position of each signatory organisation and the measures to be put in place to ensure that signatories are making progress against the themes outlined in the Commitment. The self-assessment process asks for contextual information, progress to date and a detailed 24-month future action plan.

The Technician Commitment Steering Group 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 plan on a dedicated and discoverable webpage, along with their named point of contact. The Steering Group would like 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 Group 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 is emerging and the Steering Group aims to ensure a range of forums are available to enable peers to share expertise, good practice and experiences.

To support institutional action planning, please see Appendix A for examples of activities and initiatives that have been successfully implemented in a range of universities and research institutes. Additional details are available on the Technician Commitment's dedicated online resource, available at http://technicians.org.uk/techniciancommitment/. Cross referencing to other sector institutional reviews relevant to technicians is welcomed; for example, institutions may wish to reference Athena SWAN applications, Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submissions and Research Excellence Framework (REF) environment statements where technicians have been explicitly mentioned.

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 k.vere@sciencecouncil.org or tracey.dickens@gatsby.org.uk.

PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE
Technician Commitment

Technician Commitment

Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: The University of Leicester

Name of Institutional Lead: Penny Jackson

E-mail: pj83@leicester.ac.uk

Contact Number: 0116 252 2912

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

The University of Leicester is a research intensive institution, we are committed to international excellence, world-changing research and high quality, inspirational teaching. Celebrating diversity among our staff and students; widening participation in higher education; engaging with local, national and international communities – all of these are part of what we do and who we are.

The University was founded as Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland University College in 1921. The site for the University was donated by a local businessman, Thomas Fielding Johnson, in order to create a living memorial for all local people who made sacrifices during the First World War. This is reflected in the University's motto *Ut vitam habeant* – 'so that they may have life'.

Students were first admitted to the college in 1921, sitting examinations for external degrees awarded of the University of London. In 1927 the institution became University College, Leicester; 30 years later the college was granted its Royal Charter. This gave it the status of a University with the right to award its own degrees.

The University now presents programmes in a wide variety of disciplines within our three Colleges; Science and Engineering, Life Sciences (including medicine) and Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (including the School of Business and Law).

Please tell us how your organisation defines its technicians:

We have a number of different roles with a variety of titles that we would describe as technical.

These include technician, teaching technician, research technician, workshop (mechanical or electrical) technician, IT services technician or officer, as well as experimental officers (although this title is no longer used for new hires).

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 366 staff members (340 FTE) across the institution categorised as technicians or technical. The majority of these roles are within the College of Life Sciences (175 staff), with 81 in the College of Science and Engineering and 74 in corporate services.

Job profile ranges from grade 2 staff all the way up to grade 8.

In Life Sciences technicians typically report into local research departments working directly for academic colleagues, although there is a central technical service team providing laboratory auxiliary services and specialised analytical services that report via the professional services line.

In Science and Engineering the technical teams are organised in three clusters, each reporting to a technical services manager, with a small number of technicians within research centres reporting directly to centre academic directors.

Corporate services roles are typically within Estates and Campus Services and IT Services teams.

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:

There was little activity prior to our signing the commitment.

We have a job family for technical roles which sets out the criteria for grading roles. This is intended to ensure that analogous roles in different disciplines are rewarded in a consistent way.

We had traditionally had a Technical Training Advisory Group but this had not been active for a number of years prior to the signing of the commitment. I suspect a number of reasons for this partly around the retirement of colleagues committed to the group and also due to the pressure on training budgets leading to less opportunities for formal training.

We have established two apprenticeship schemes over the last five years, one in Estates and Campus Services and the other in the College of Science and Engineering, and these are beginning to bear fruit. In the College of Science and Engineering we have now brought our first three apprentices through to full employment by the University.

We have begun an activity looking at succession planning for our technical workforce.

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:

<u>Visibility</u>

We have done a piece of work to identify our technical workforce and are continuing this work to get a clear understanding of job roles and responsibilities. The work is ongoing.

We have a proposal, as the result of the session we did to seek the Technicians' input into this work, that all technicians who have contributed to published work should be recognised as authors on papers. This proposal is yet to be agreed by the University Leadership Team (ULT) but is included in a paper that they will consider at their September meeting.

We have a policy that technical time must be costed into research grants.

We plan to have an institutional Technicians Conference in 2019.

We have a Gender Equality Action Group (GEAG) and in order to help with our understanding of intersectionality and analysis of the different issues facing professional services, we aim to recruit members currently underrepresented on GEAG including BAME, male, and Technical staff.

Recognition

We have held our first workshop on the subject of professional registration, which attracted around 60 colleagues.

We plan to hold more in-depth sessions for colleagues who wish to pursue this course in the autumn (timeframe to be agreed with support from the Science Council).

The ULT paper for September will include a proposal to pay professional fees for technicians wishing to gain professional registration.

We already require all technical staff engaged in teaching and teaching support in the College of Science and Engineering to hold AFHEA status, we are rolling this out across the institution.

We have had a number of colleagues nominated for Papin Awards in the last two years.

We have an internal award scheme called 'Discovering Excellence People Awards', we plan to have a new category of 'Technician of the Year' in the 2019 awards (we were too late for the 2018 round).

Career Development

Colleagues in Human Resources are in the process of doing a piece of work to identify opportunities to use the apprenticeship levy in order to develop our technicians, so far we have mapped the standards to our technical roles and identified 30 different standards from Engineering technician and Science technician to Information Science Business Analyst and Museums and Galleries Technician to name but 4! The next step is to work with the technicians to plan how we might operationalise this training.

We are in the process of piloting career pathways for professional services colleagues which shows what is required at each grade level and the development opportunities to support career aspirations. We want to encourage lateral as well as vertical moves to ensure that all staff, especially female staff have the opportunity to develop a breath of experience as well as a technical specialism. To this end we are encouraging job shadowing, mentoring and buddy systems. This is part of our Athena Swan silver award application action plan, (Action 5.5).

We have recently re-established the Technical Training Advisory Group and intend to broaden the remit of this group to encompass a remit to oversee all aspects of the technical workforce.

Sustainability

As part of the work to identify our total technical workforce, we have just begun and analysis of the succession planning needs of our technicians. This is key as in some areas we have an aging population. We are using this as an opportunity to increase the diversity within our technical population in terms of background, gender and experience.

We plan to bring our apprenticeship schemes together to create a single coherent scheme that can be rolled out across the institution. We will be promoting opportunities for existing technicians as well as engaging new ones and will extend this in due course to degree apprenticeships.

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):

See appendix 1.

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

We held an initial workshop session on 22nd May to enable technicians to contribute to this plan.

This is a summary of the emergent themes;

Recognition:

"Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration"

2. In relation to the given theme, what questions does this raise with you?

- In light of people retiring and a recruitment freeze how is this sustainable?
- Considering the above how can we fit in the time to undertake registration and costs?
- Are there any pay incentives for development?
- What does the University want from us as Technicians i.e. what are the expectations for Technicians?
- Most Technicians are not aware of professional bodies

3. What are the barriers/issues that would get in the way of this happening

- Recruitment freeze
- Budget cuts
- Work pressure – leaves no time
- No support from academic or PG staff/students
- Ongoing Technical reviews
- Financial support
- Top heavy management: Lack of understanding of ground effects of their decisions
- Understaffed: no time for course based CPD
- Silo effect: lack of sharing of best practice
- Culture change. Academics need to change mind set and show buy in
- Support and resources: academics should put forward individuals for recognition e.g. registration and membership payments

4. What would good look like if we did this well?

- Progression i.e. fair pay for jobs done
- Better moral
- Good and clear career structure
- Time given to achieve recognition
- Financial support to undertake
- Recognition should not always be based on achievements and academic research, just fair pay and recognition where deserved
- Support for professional accreditation if desired (time and money should not be an issue) this should be incorporated into WAM e.g. 1 hr dedicated weekly to CPD
- Buy in and support from all
- Celebrate news of staff who complete registration
- Support for registration – provide mentoring and writing workshops. Time out of dept. to work on registration with help to ID your skills

Career development:

"Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways"

2. In relation to the given theme, what questions does this raise with you?

- Need career progression within roles – how can this happen with all of the redundancies and down grading?
- There is a barrier between Technicians and Academics – how can this culture be changed/influenced?
- Continuity of skills for long term training and professional recognition
- Job grading's changed/clear? Is there a grade 1 Technical role?

3. **What are the barriers/issues that would get in the way of this happening**
    - Staff levels: Can't spare or cover the people, who does the job when they are not there how do people know what to do? e.g. how to free up time
    - Workload: same as above… how does my job get done when I am undertaking career development and not there? How do I find the time to go?
    - Finances: who pays for the career development/training?
    - Communication: Knowing whether you are supported by management to undertake career development opportunities and communicating this to all in Dept./School
    - No junior roles are available
    - There is no progression within roles to higher levels. It seems an ongoing battle that Technicians are forced to change jobs, we should not have to change!
    - There is a barrier between Technicians and Academics
    - Too few people too thinly spread
    - Staff progression and retention "Get a new role" is not a solution. Pay and reward needs to address this
    - Can't claim that Technicians are important whilst treating their progression and promotion different to academics
    - Apprenticeships: need jobs for at least 50% of them to go into on completion
    - Apprenticeships: need a more formal structure and support for trainers
    - Need pay progression routes and ability to stay within a research group and have the opportunity to be regraded. This has been stopped
    - Currently there seems to be no (or a major lack of) junior posts so we need to make sure we get them and keep them
    - Parity of progression routes between academic and Technical staff. Academics get promoted on personal merit this has been actively prevented for Technicians at Leicester
    - The people who do the assessment of career development need to understand the role of a Technician or be a senior Technician
    - CTS has ALL low grade technicians – no promotions
    - Job specification is far too vague! Not consistent across departments
    - Numbers of technicians should be increased! More funding! More chance of promotion
    - No incentives for depts. to promote – G7 jobs do not get replaced!
    - Preaching to converted, no real recognition. Promotion and money. Less technicians. More work
    - Gaining new skills does not have promotion. Route to promotion is far too difficult

4. **What would good look like if we did this well?**
    - Opportunity to pass on knowledge and skill to other technical staff, helping with service continuity and helping to build up skill level of Technicians within a team
    - Create a group of highly skilled Technicians to offer a talent pool to aid and nurture less experienced Technicians
    - Sharing skills and best practices
    - Apprentices/trainees need to be taken on in a timely fashion, too many young/new staff are left without the guidance from experienced Technical staff while still finding their feet within their field…. E.g. a working overlap should be considered where possible
    - Proper training budgets for all costs
    - Opportunity for development internally and externally
    - Courses/formal/informal learning

- Possibly to go and spend time in industry learn new techniques that may not be learnt vocationally within the university
- Learning new skill though different departments
- Opportunity for higher qualifications
- Management and leadership training for Technicians

Sustainability:

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

2. In relation to the given theme, what questions does this raise with you?

- How is the University planning on reversing the decline in technical numbers? – the Apprenticeship levy needs communicating out

3. What are the barriers/issues that would get in the way of this happening

- Finding the time for training, don't be overburdened with stuff to do
- We need some forward planning before an Apprentice starts
- Because there is no CAREER PROGRESSION, Technicians want to leave early and take away the knowledge when they leave. Technicians need to feel valued and that they can proceed
- Technicians needs to be included in grant applications for money purposes and feeling valued/recognised
- Go on training courses but that takes time and money. Need time afterwards to consolidate new knowledge and skills. Pot of money for funding bodies e.g. BBSRC
- Finance – for Apprentices/new staff/training etc.
- No cross over of skills e.g. a Technician leaves and a new person starts and they are left to discover new processes alone
- Lack of information. Do people know what Technicians do in specific areas? e.g. People don't know what they do across Depts./Schools etc.
- More RA's are is coming in and taking the Technical skills. It seems preference that an RA is recruited rather than a Technician; the RA's then leave due to the end of grant funding therefore losing skill and continuity

4. What would good look like if we did this well?

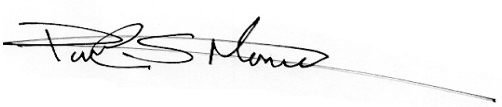
- Provide interesting (I think relevant) courses at staff development
- Mentoring would be useful to allow the knowledge to be passed on
- Better networking/Technician Forum/Yammer group etc.
- Secondment opportunities
- New staff realising that the University is a good place to work
- Technicians have a good career path
- Flexibility in recruitment of different grades??
- Better promotions

- Passing on skills – giving continuity of service
- Good career progression
- Good distribution of grades across University/depts.
- Use of apprenticeship levy across University (education and communication of this scheme to all)
- Training and development of all where needed and within the role.

Please confirm that your Technician Commitment status and action plan is published on your organisation's website and provide the relevant URL here: This is work in progress, the web page will be ready by the end of January.

Signed (Penny Jackson, Director of Operations, College of Science and Engineering - Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead)

Date: 18/12/18



Signed (Professor Paul Monks, PVC, Head of the College of Science and Engineering - Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 20/12/18

Appendix A: Examples of activities and initiatives to address the themes of the Technician Commitment

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Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, it intends to demonstrate example activities to support institutions in action planning.

Theme	Example Activities
Visibility Ensure that technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution	• Organisations can identify how many technicians they employ • Technician roles have clear job descriptions • A consistent policy that where technicians have contributed to research outputs and grants, they are named as authors • Technicians to feature in organisation prospectuses and marketing materials • Technicians to sit on decision making committees where appropriate • Technicians visible in costing mechanisms for research grants • A mechanism for celebrating technician achievements across the organisation • Organisation strategy documents to include technicians where appropriate • A vibrant 'Technician Network'
Recognition Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration	• Organisation communicates the opportunity to become professionally registered to technical staff (Science Council, Engineering Council, BCS). 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 • Internal award schemes recognise the contribution of technical staff • Nominations to external award schemes that recognise the contribution of technical staff
Career Development Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways	• Technician specific professional career paths/frameworks which clearly document progression opportunities • Professional development opportunities, signposted to technicians and aligned to career pathways • A dedicated webpage showcasing case studies of technician careers • Expansion of technician specific job families in recognition of high level technical specialisms
Sustainability Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised	• Appropriate succession planning for technical roles including the analysis of technician profiles to ensure future sustainability of skills within the organisation • Secondment/placement programmes for technical staff to develop new skills • A technician trainee/apprenticeship programme • Utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy to train and upskill existing staff

Appendix 1: University of Leicester Technician Commitment Action Plan

We will establish a Steering Committee to oversee activity. It will be chaired by a ULT member, PVC and Head of the College of Science and Engineering and include technical staff from across the institution.

Work stream	6-12 months	1 to 2 years	Success Measures
Visibility	Technicians' Conference – the technical staff consulted were very enthusiastic about having a conference to highlight and celebrate their achievements.	Annual event beginning in summer 2019	40% engagement in first year 40% participation in second
	A key theme that emerged as the result of the session was the principle that all technicians who have contributed to published work should be recognised as authors on papers. This seems to be inconsistent across the Institution and colleagues felt that it was a significant barrier to recognition of their contribution.	A clear University policy regarding the inclusion of technical staff on research outputs.	Expectation that 100% of technical staff will be included as authors on papers where technical expertise has been used in research
	We will conduct an analysis of technical staff representation in broader University committees, initiatives and planning processes, as the perception is that technicians are underrepresented in such fora.	Inclusion of technical staff in key committees and groups involved in deciding policy and process for the institution.	90% of key University committees to include technical staff colleagues.

Work stream	6-12 months	1 to 2 years	Success Measures
Recognition	Support for Technical staff to achieve their professional registration Continue to promote reward and recognition scheme widely in the University via workshops and communication events. Commitment to funding of around £10K per year.	Case study career pathways / accolades etc. on web page Use of increasing cohort of registered technicians to promote registration to others.	At least 20% of staff achieving professional registration in the first 2 years. College level celebration of technician professional registration and other achievements. Use of merit and other recognition mechanisms for Technicians. Technical staff recognised as an integral part of the research via inclusion in authorship of papers (as stated above).
	Technician of the year award in Discovering Excellence. We hold a University wide awards ceremony every year called 'The Discovering Excellence Awards' The University Leadership Team have agreed to introduce a new category of 'Technician of the Year' into the 2019 awards for the first time.	Introduction into 2019 process, along with a strong campaign of ensuring that technicians, technical managers and other colleagues are aware of the opportunity to nominate people for this category.	At least 20 nominations in the first year. 50% increase in nominations in second year

Work stream	6-12 months	1 to 2 years	Success Measures
Career Development	Institutionally as part of our Athena Swan work we are in the process of piloting career pathways for professional services colleagues which show what is required at each grade level and the development opportunities to support career aspirations. We will to extend this work to technical staff, as part of this it would be valuable to encourage lateral as well as vertical moves to ensure that all staff, especially female staff have the opportunity to develop a breath of experience as well as a technical specialism. To this end we will be encouraging job shadowing, (including exploring opportunities for shadowing at other Universities within the Midlands Innovation group), mentoring and buddy systems.	Clear and transparent pathways for career development.	All Colleges have structures with a clearly defined career pathway support and funding for Technician's development Technical staff can work across Departments, Schools and Colleges, and have a wider/diverse skill set Evidence of career progression across the university Mechanisms for coaching and mentoring in place.
	Expansion of our current apprenticeship scheme to make the best use of the apprenticeship levy. Definition of the departments and schools who will take apprentices. Target numbers established.	Further expansion to be explored. Establishment of an apprentice network to enable sharing of best practice and development.	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both apprentices and supervisors. Succession plans to ensure career paths for apprentices. Clear requirements for supervisory activities defined.

	A budget of £36K to be made available to support technical training in order to achieve the two items above.		
Work stream	6-12 months	1 to 2 years	Success Measures
Sustainability	Full exploration of succession planning needs feeding into departmental and College work force planning.	Ensure that we have plans in place to develop the technical workforce to enable knowledge transfer from senior technician's to ensure continuity of activities and development of new opportunities.	A diverse, highly skilled and knowledgeable sustainable Technical community across the University. Increase in job and apprenticeship applications.

Technician Commitment

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30th January 2019

FAO: Penny Jackson
The University of Leicester
University Road
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Re: Technician Commitment – Self-Assessment & Action Plan

Dear Penny,

We are delighted to write to Signatories of the Technician Commitment following the recent Self-Assessment and Action Plan submissions. Reviews were undertaken by a trained peer review panel, consisting of representatives from the Technician Commitment signatory community. All submissions received have now been assessed and the panellists are delighted to see how positively organisations have engaged with the Technician Commitment, giving it the respect and dedication that it deserves.

Please find below the feedback from the reviewers of the University of Leicester:

Technical structures and the internal scope/reach established for the Technician Commitment:

The split of technicians seems reasonable with the majority in Life Sciences, followed by Science and Engineering with the remaining being in corporate services: it is pleasing to see that they span the whole grade range; this is something that is not seen across all institutions, so should be appreciated. It might be useful however to analyse the distribution. The diverse and large number of job titles for technicians is also common for many organisations. The total number of technicians or technical roles across the University is 340 FTE but there may be some gaps within this; it might be useful to consider a tighter definition of 'technician', perhaps against a list of roles, to ensure a comprehensive, transparent FTE assessment.

The numbers of technicians within two of the colleges are reported, as is line management in these areas, with some technicians reporting into academic colleagues and others reporting to a central service team. There is a risk that these different reporting lines could prove challenging to ensure consistency across the board and it might be useful to address this as part of future work.

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2. 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:

It was very pleasing to see such an honest assessment with a superb opening line! The creation of a job family to ensure consistency of grading across the institution is an excellent initiative and it would be interesting to know how long this has been in place as consistency of grading is often an issue between central services and research departments. The honest evaluation of the Technical Training Advisory Group is noted and similarly recognisable across the sector.

That there are two apprenticeship schemes in place is interesting, showing significant institutional commitment, and apprentices moving into full employment is a fantastic realisation of potential. The fact that there are two schemes gives rise to an opportunity for lessons learned / good practice to be shared between them. The institutional commitment to apprenticeships and consideration of succession planning shows commitment to Leicester's technical staff and this is an excellent platform to build on.

3. Initiatives put in place to address the themes of the Technician Commitment since becoming a signatory:

It is excellent to see the activities that have been implemented since the signing of the Commitment and these are presented in a way that clearly demonstrates good progress. It is good to see the institution really making their technicians more visible by proactively engaging the technical community into groups across the University. The institutional technicians conference is a great idea and a real opportunity for networking across the whole community. Formal recognition through inclusion on grant costings, but more importantly through an authorship policy for research papers, is a positive step and one from which other institutions might learn.

The role that Professional Registration has carved out at Leicester since signing the Technician Commitment is pleasing: of particular note is the application for funding for this as it can be perceived as a significant barrier to uptake. This, allied to roll out of the requirement for Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, will strongly encourage professionalisation of technicians.

Career development has a high profile and encouragement of staff to move within the University; either up or sideways, making a more flexible, agile workforce is a fantastic development and it will be interesting to see how this is received by technicians. There appears to be a good operational relationship with HR enabling synergies with Athena SWAN and developments around apprenticeships to be exploited. This good operational relationship will enable the details around the generic approaches outlined to be agreed and plans developed and delivered.

The strategic goal of developing a succession plan for technicians, particularly to increase diversity in the workforce, is a great one. There appears to be a focus on age but this is not the only criterion; for example loss of skills for other reasons might be considered. The University might wish to investigate whether career development apprenticeships could be used to support succession planning and the fulfilment of skills gaps.

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4. Action Plan:

The action plan is a good high level plan with the majority of it looking achievable within proposed timescales. Additional detail on how some of these goals will be achieved would be helpful. The visibility action plan is a good starting point; the ambition regarding institutional visibility on key committees is to be particularly applauded as is the clear policy around authorship to ensure fairness.

The recognition action plan is achievable with appropriate success measures, and the financial support for training shows real commitment. Engagement with the internal awards is fantastic and starting to look externally for awards (Papin etc.) also shows great ambition.

The synergy between Athena SWAN and the Technician Commitment is recognised and exploited and development of "Clear and transparent pathways for career development" in one to two years is a superb target. The financial backing of this is excellent to see. The mentoring and buddy system is to be encouraged and some metrics to demonstrate engagement with this could easily be developed.

The sustainability action plan seems very ambitious. Some refinement and clarification as to how it will be achieved might be helpful, but the direction of travel indicated is appropriate.

It is fantastic to see how well the technician's voice has clearly been heard at Leicester. As is often seen across the sector, the initial session(s) highlights challenges and obstacles but it is clear that technicians at Leicester show great willingness to address them. In a couple of areas solutions are already beginning to emerge and are being progressed, particularly around apprenticeships, mentoring, secondment and a passing on of skills; all extremely positive developments.

Overall the submission shows that Leicester has now really begun to understand and appreciate the crucial role that technicians play in the University and has a framework to facilitate ongoing meaningful dialogue and engagement with the technical community. The institutional commitment to developing apprenticeships, as part of a wider piece of work around sustainability and career pathways that lie at the heart of the Technician Commitment, will give technicians at Leicester opportunities to progress and develop and assessors look forward to seeing this come to fruition over the coming months and years.

Congratulations on very positive progress coupled with a clear and ambitious Action Plan. In recognition of this submission, the University of Leicester will be presented with an Award of Submission at the forthcoming Technician Commitment Signatory Event on June 24th 2019 at The Jaguar Experience, Castle Bromwich. Registration and further details are available at https://techniciancommitment5.eventbrite.co.uk using the password *Panthera*.

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We look forward to working with you as you continue the implementation of your Action Plan and to supporting the on-going development of technicians at the University of Leicester to further increase visibility, recognition, opportunity and sustainability of this vital community.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Pain CSci CChem FRSC

Chair of the Technician Commitment Steering Board

Kelly Vere MA RSci FHEA

Technician Commitment Lead