

Queen's University Belfast, Technician Commitment 36-month Action Plan 2024/27

The Technician Commitment Action Plan has been aligned with the pillars of the Technician Commitment and the recommendations of the TALENT Commission (<https://www.mitalent.ac.uk/theTALENTcommission>).

	Objective	Action	Success Criteria	Responsibility	Target Date
1 Visibility R11	To ensure that the delivery of the Technician Commitment (TC) is visible at all levels of the University, ie. Technicians, Schools, Faculties, Professional Services Management Group, University Management Board	All key activity and updates relating to the TC (including delivery on the (Action Plan) is communicated on the website and social media platforms. Progress is reported regularly into appropriate committees.	Increase engagement, attendance at events and membership on technician committees	TC Manager Technician Commitment Steering Group (TCSG)	Ongoing
		Continue to update the Technician webpage and social media platforms to raise awareness of successes, opportunities and information for the technical and wider University community.	Update webpage and social media regularly and review content quarterly to ensure content is up to date.	TC Manager Webpage support	Ongoing
		Information about the TC is incorporated during the University's Welcome Events, which take part throughout the year as part of staff induction.	Have a TC presence at the Welcome events, with mention of what the University is delivering for technicians.	People & Culture (P&C)	2024
		TCSG and Faculty Technician Committee members report into relevant committees on the progress of the TC, e.g. School/Faculty Boards.	TC progress is regularly reported to relevant stakeholders in Schools and Departments.	TCSG Faculty Committee members	Ongoing
2 Visibility R11	Promote networking: both the Queen's technician network and inter-institution networking with technicians across the other HE institutions locally and nationally.	Successfully deliver networking initiative and events that actively encourage technicians to form meaningful connections across the University.	Deliver a minimum of 2 events per year, either a Technician Showcase or Networking event, to update technicians and key stakeholders on progress at Queen's and across the sector.	TCSG	Annually
		Further develop connections on the island of Ireland (including FE colleges, Ulster University (UU), Irish Universities) to build the All-Ireland Technical Staff Network. Provide opportunities for collaboration, staff development and support for technicians, in core and niche roles.	Engage with joint ventures with UU and other Universities on the island, providing and attending events (online and in-person).	TC Manager TCSG Technicians	2024
		Develop collaboration with UU to deliver the TC Action Plan for NI Universities.			
		Promote and support attendance at national events, conferences, workshops etc enabling technical staff to establish networks, sharing of best practice and keep abreast of activities associated with the TC.	Publicise national events and provide support for technicians to attend national conferences and workshops.	TCSG	Annually

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3 Recognition R4	Ensure that Technicians are actively involved in leadership and decision-making relating to QUB policies around EDI, Wellbeing and Mental Health	Address challenges and disparity for the technical workforce in matters relating to equality, diversity & inclusion, Athena SWAN, Mental Health & Wellbeing.	Ensure technician representation on relevant committees relating to these University policies.	P&C QGI, EDI	2024
4 Sustainability R1, R3	Take a strategic approach to development and sustainability of technical staff and skills, considering succession planning and identifying existing and potential skills gaps	With Faculty leadership ensure that the appropriate structures, processes and practices are in place for Technical Services, to provide coordinated provision of technical support into schools. Consider appointment of provision of a Faculty level Technical Manager, reporting to the Director of Operations in Faculties or Assistant Directors in Directorates.	Form a subgroup to discuss and plan the development of Technical Services, with representation from P&C, Directors of Operations, Heads of Schools, Senior Academics, Technical Managers & the TC Manager.	UMB Directors of Operations P&C	2026
Explore the appointment of a Strategic Technical Lead as recommended by the TALENT Commission. This position would develop strategy and implement actions “to ensure institutional understanding of the contributions and expertise of technical staff.”		Strategic overview of technical staff and skills.	UMB P&C	2026	
Explore alignment with the proposed Global Institute of Educational Excellence.		Hold a consultation with the PVC and Director of Education and Students to develop a plan to recognise how the role of technicians can further enhance the student experience.	TC Manager Education & Student Services	2026	
Capture existing and future skills for technical staff., through engagement with Schools, Faculties and the Global Institute of Educational Excellence.		Have a horizon scanning exercise to develop a skills database for Faculties to reflect current and future needs. Identify and remove any single point of failure and future proof the workforce. Considering the Strategy 2030 pillar for Education and Skills, work with the Chair of the Global Institute for Educational Excellence to create inclusive developmental programmes open to Technical Staff.	OD Technical Managers Technicians	Annually	
Continue to collect data on the technical workforce through HESA, capture numbers of technical staff. delivering		Review Technical HESA annually.	TC Manager HRHub		

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		teaching and learning activities, as well as those delivering research.			
5 Recognition R12	Embed Technical Staff within Research Culture initiatives.	Showcase the contributions of technicians to R&I at institutional and unit level in REF 2029 through outputs, impact and, in particular, the broadened People, Culture & Environment statement.	Technicians to be consulted on the submission processes, similar to other staff groups, and contribute to develop of PCE statements at institutional and unit level.	R&E Heads of School Deans/Directors of Research Technical Managers	2026
		Ensure technicians and their managers are aware of, and closely involved in, the development of institutional strategies and plans for research culture, including through attendance and contributions to relevant discussions and events.	Technical representation on Research committees at all levels in the University.	R&E Heads of School Deans/Directors of Research Technical Managers	2024
		Technician Commitment and Postdoctoral Development Centre (PDC) will work together to deliver on shared goals, under the auspices of institutional strategies and plans for research culture.	PDC and TC Managers hold regular meetings (3 per year).	PDC & TC Managers	2024
		Ensure Technical staff are appropriately recognised for their contribution to research.	Share Fair Attribution Guidelines to Deans and Directors of Research, PIs, Postdoctoral Researchers and Postgraduates.	SG members Technical Managers	2024
6 Recognition R5	Document how technical staff are costed on research grants, and agree a new process	Provide clear and consistent guidance to ensure all relevant technical contributions are costed appropriately on grant applications, exploring how Schools can recoup costs to further support technical activities.	Hold a roundtable discussion with the Head of Research Finance, Finance Business Partners, Directors of Operations, Technical Managers and other relevant R&E colleagues to produce a policy for cost recovery for technical contribution.	R&E Research Finance Deans/Directors of Research	2025
7 Recognition R11	Ensure technicians are recognised for their contribution to education	Promote and record engagement with Advance HE accreditation (Associate Fellowship, Fellowship). Hold discussions with Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students) on new methods of submission (presentations, interviews etc.).	Hold workshops and form a support network for those working towards Advance HE accreditation.	Education & Student Services TC Manager Technicians	2025
		Ensure technicians are recognised locally for their contribution to education, by acknowledgements on thesis and/or recognition for supervisory contribution.	Heads of School and academic supervisors are given clarification on how to appropriately recognise technical contribution, eg through Canvas sites for writing student dissertations,	Heads of School Deans/Directors of Education, Director of Graduate School	2025

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			thesis writing workshops through the Graduate School		
		Promote internal and external awards for excellence in teaching, making application accessible to technical staff.	Identify and advertise awards that recognise technical contribution to teaching and education	Website TC communications	2024
8 Recognition R11	Continue to encourage nominations for Technical staff for internal and external awards	Have oversight of awards for technicians, both internally and externally, eg Staff Excellence Awards, Technician prizes, Times Higher "Outstanding Technician of the Year" Awards, Papin Prizes.	Advertise opportunities to nominate Queen's technicians for both internal and external awards,	Website TC communications	2024
9 Career Development R9	Develop clear career pathways that provide clear guidance for development and progression for technical staff	Ensure visibility of clearly defined career pathways and standardised job description for technical roles and careers. Investigate the possibility of a promotional Technical Specialist Pathway.	Review the profiles in the Technical Job family and reduce the number of job descriptions for technical staff. Review best practice in Liverpool, Warwick, Nottingham Universities to propose a promotional Technical Specialist Pathway.	P&C Union reps TCSG	2025
		Explore and develop the expansion of the technical grade profiles beyond the "glass ceiling" Grade 7 to align with progression possibilities available to Professional Services, Research and Academic groups.	Introduce higher grade technical job profiles to enable progression beyond Grade 7	P&C Union reps TCSG	2025
10 Career Development R1, R10	Provide career development opportunities to technical staff (mapping onto the agreed career pathway)	Implement work-shadowing, within and cross-Faculty to reskill/upskill existing technical staff.	Develop a formal process to identify and facilitate a work-shadowing programme.	TC Manager Technical Managers P&C	2025
		Continue to promote the benefits of Professional Registration providing financial assistance for associated administrative costs. Continue to support applicants through peer mentoring and provide the opportunity to attend Professional Registration workshops, through the Science Council.	Aim to have at least one workshop per year, with regular internal peer support meetings.	Prof Reg Champion	2024
		Continue to promote learning (training) and development opportunities for technical staff. Provide L&D opportunities internally and externally. Internally through People and Culture, LinkedIn Learning, iTrent and externally, through the Institute of Technical	Capture development needs and requests in PDR discussions with Technical Managers.	L&D Technical Managers	2024

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		Strategy & Skills (ITSS) encouraging technicians to take ownership of their own career development.			
		Continue to provide a Technician Mentoring Programme, offering both group and individual mentoring to support and advise colleagues.	Technician Mentoring will be offered annually.	TC Manager OD Mentors	2024
		Introduce mandatory development days similar to what has already been implemented for postdocs (up to 10 days per year).	Technicians will discuss development requests with Technical Line Managers.	L&D	2025
11 Career Development R6, R13	Investigate how technicians contribute to all aspects of Knowledge Exchange (KE) and explore future involvement (KEC, KTPs, AKT21, iCURE, Accelerate to Innovate)	Identify ways in which technicians can contribute and support KE activities.	Define KE and identify where technicians contribute to activities, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement and creation of innovation/invention • Public engagement • Outreach • Delivering training & development • Enabling access to facilities, providing analysis • Working with business 	TC Manager R&E Technical Managers	2026
		Monitor REF 2029 impact case studies to stress the importance of recognising the contribution of technicians..	Review the REF 2029 case studies to ensure contribution is appropriately acknowledged.		2027
		Continue to support Outreach and Public Engagement activities for Technical staff.	Promote Outreach and Public engagement opportunities, recognising technician contribution in internal and external events, such as school visits, summer schools, NI Science Festival, open days, etc		2024
12 Recognition Career Development R6, R13	Identify how technical expertise can contribute to Queen's Belfast Regional City Deal (BRCD) portfolio.	Explore how new and existing technical staff can enhance the delivery of the BRCD, particularly leveraging their expertise to add to successful delivery of the 3 Innovation Centres and promote exchange programmes for technicians and commercial partners.	With the Executive Director of BCRD at Queen's, and Innovation Centre CEOs, discuss a workforce plan for technical support in the 3 Innovation Centres (AMIC, iReach, Momentum One Zero).	TC Manager Dean of Innovation & Impact	2026

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13 Sustainability R7	Further develop apprenticeship opportunities to address the growing need for succession planning for an aging workforce.	Implement a plan to regularly scope out the need for apprentices in all areas where technicians are positioned, recognising the value for succession planning and sustainability of technical expertise.	Consult with Directors of Operations and Directorates biannually to identify opportunities for apprenticeships.	OD Directors of Operations Technical Managers	Ongoing
14 Sustainability R12	Recognise technician contribution to Environmental Sustainability	Embed technical expertise in the delivery of the University's Sustainability agenda, including the Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice	Support the delivery of the University Sustainable Labs Programme, LEAF to laboratories across the University labs. Support QUB Net Zero Commitments	Sustainability Team HoS Technical Managers Technicians	2024
		Provide training, workshops and events to support and build Technicians knowledge and skills on sustainability.	Hold 2 or more workshops and information sessions annually to inform technicians of the progress of Queen's Sustainability initiatives		Annually
		Raising the profile of the role Technicians play in embedding sustainability at Queen's across Ireland and the UK	Promote awards for contribution to sustainability, such as the Queen's staff awards, the Irish Green Labs (IGL) Network and the Times Higher Education Outstanding Technician of the Year award.		2024
15 Impact	Annual review of progress of the Technician Commitment to UMB		Present or submit an annual report to University Management Board on TC progress.	TC Institutional Lead TC Manager	Annually
16 Impact	Review membership and Terms of Reference of the Technician Commitment Steering Group			TCSG	2024