

Technician Commitment Action Plan

2025-27



**Harper Adams
University**

The Technician Commitment

The Technician Commitment is a university and research institution initiative, led by a steering board of sector bodies, hosted by the UK Institute for Technical Skills & Strategy.

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 to tackle the key challenges affecting their technical staff.

<https://www.techniciancommitment.org.uk/>

Statement from the Technician Commitment Steering Group

Technicians play an essential role in the functioning and advancement of Harper Adams University, offering vital expertise and support that enriches operations, teaching and research. Their contributions are wide-ranging, including preparing and maintaining specialised equipment, creating tailored learning environments, and ensuring that students and academics can safely and effectively conduct experiments, practical sessions, and hands-on research. Skilled in various disciplines, from science and engineering to communication technology and animal care, technicians bring a depth of knowledge that bridges the gap between theory and practice, directly enhancing student learning experiences.

Technicians at Harper Adams are also instrumental in supporting research projects, offering technical insights that often lead to innovations in methodology and results. Their work ensures that projects are conducted to the highest standards, meeting complex compliance and safety requirements, which is crucial in fields where accuracy and reliability are paramount. Furthermore, they frequently mentor students, providing guidance on technical skills and fostering an environment where practical skills can flourish. In times of rapid technological change, technicians are key to the adoption and integration of new technologies in academia. Their dedication, expertise, and adaptability make them invaluable contributors to the university community, supporting both the immediate and long-term organisational goals.

December 2024

In signing up to the commitment, Harper Adams has pledged to act in key areas:

Visibility

We will ensure that all technicians within the institution are identifiable and that their contributions are visible within and beyond the institution.

Recognition

We will support our technical staff to gain recognition through professional registration and/ or external award schemes.

Career Development

We will enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear and documented career pathways.

Sustainability

We will ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the institution and that technical expertise is fully utilised.

Evaluating Impact

We will regularly assess the impact of actions taken in support of the commitment to ensure their effectiveness.

Defining the Technician Role

Not all roles within scope of the Technician Commitment will have the title of technician, and so we adopt the definition of Wragg et al (2023)¹:

A technician is “trained and/ or skilled in the techniques, tools and technology of their subject, providing the practical application of knowledge and/ or the expertise to best utilise this practical application through managing, teaching, and/ or training others to do so, and/ or through maintaining and developing the environment, standards, resources, and facilities required.”¹

¹ Wragg, F. P. H., Harris, C., Noyes, A., & Vere, K. (2023). **Technicians as teachers: the emerging role of technical staff within higher education teaching and learning environments**. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 47(9), 1196–1210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2023.2231380>

Technician Commitment Action Plan

All Technician Commitment signatories must produce a two to three-year action plan setting out interventions required to achieve the principles of the Commitment.

To set a clear direction for our work we have set out both our short term and longer-term actions to drive continuous improvement and achieve greater visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians and have aligned these with the recommendations from the [TALENT Commission report](#).

Our plan is a living document that will adapt as initiatives emerge and additional evidence becomes available. We will work with other sector initiatives and build on existing good practice and resources.

We will regularly assess the impact of our interventions and consult with stakeholders, especially the technician community, to further develop the action plan as we make progress against our stated aims. The growth of this plan will be evidence-led, including quantitative, qualitative and narrative corroboration that supports our plans.

Visibility

We will ensure that all technicians within the institution are identifiable and that their contributions are visible within and beyond the institution.

Intended Outcome	Action
We have technician recognition in staff communications	Include regular features on technicians in internal newsletters, bulletins, and website stories, spotlighting specific projects, achievements, and roles within teaching and research.
We create Technicians' Spotlights on social media	Regularly share posts on institutional social media channels celebrating technician achievements and showcasing their contributions to teaching, research, and innovation.
We have a Technician Recognition Scheme	Establish awards or an annual celebration event to formally recognise and reward outstanding technician contributions, with categories for teaching support, research support, and operational excellence.
We support technicians in presenting at conferences	Provide funding or professional development support to enable technicians to present their work and represent the institution at relevant national and international conferences, raising their profile externally.
We promote technician authorship in research publications	Encourage and support technicians to be recognised as authors or contributors in research papers, highlighting their roles in supporting and advancing research projects. Promote Fair Attribution Guidelines.

Recognition

We will support our technical staff to gain recognition through professional registration and external awards schemes.

Intended Outcome	Action
We promote available accreditations and pathways	Regularly communicate and promote the benefits and pathways for professional registration and accreditation through emails, workshops, or intranet resources, clarifying eligibility, processes, and benefits.
We have mentorship programmes with accredited staff	Technicians pursuing accreditation, and who would benefit from mentoring, will be assisted in finding a suitable mentor through internal and external networks.
We have a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme	Sponsor and support CPD opportunities aligned with professional registration requirements, covering skill areas like technical expertise, project management, and leadership to help technicians meet criteria for registration.
We have internal recognition for accreditation achievements	Celebrate newly registered technicians with features in internal newsletters, award presentations, or social media, enhancing the prestige of professional registration and inspiring others.
We incorporate accreditation goals into Personal Development Plans	Encourage managers to discuss professional registration goals during PDRs, incorporating accreditation support and CPD activities into technicians' individual development plans.
We encourage external peer networking	Support technicians in joining or attending meetings of professional bodies and technical networks, where they can connect with peers, gain insights into registration benefits, and learn best practices.

Career Development

We will enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear and documented career pathways.

Intended Outcome	Action
We conduct regular career development workshops	Host workshops where technicians can learn about career progression opportunities, gain insights into pathways, and hear directly from those who have advanced within the university.
We create job shadowing and secondment opportunities	Develop a programme that enables technicians to shadow colleagues in advanced roles or take on short-term secondments, allowing them to explore different career pathways and gain new experiences.
We integrate technician progression in PDR processes	Encourage managers to discuss career aspirations during PDRs and document specific steps, training, or qualifications needed for technicians to progress along their chosen pathways.
We offer tailored career coaching	Provide access to career coaching for technicians to help them identify goals, map out career steps, and receive advice on training and skill-building for advancement.
We offer Technical Leadership Training Programmes	Support a training programme for technicians who wish to progress into leadership roles, covering key competencies like team management, project leadership, and strategic planning.
We support accredited apprenticeships and certification programmes	Partner with external training providers to offer apprenticeships or certification programs specific to technician roles, allowing technicians to gain recognised qualifications that align with career progression pathways.
We support CPD in teaching and supporting learning	Provide opportunities for technicians to achieve a recognised teaching qualification and gain HEA membership.

Sustainability

We will ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the institution and that technical expertise is fully utilised.

Intended Outcome	Action
We promote cross-training and skill sharing	Facilitate cross-training opportunities where technicians can learn from one another and share expertise across departments, helping to distribute technical skills more widely within the institution.
We facilitate mentoring	Pair experienced technicians with newer or junior staff for mentorship, focusing on knowledge transfer and skill-building, particularly for highly specialised skills.
We offer regular technical skill-building workshops	Offer a calendar of workshops or “skills days” where technicians can learn new techniques, industry best practices, or emerging technologies relevant to their roles.
We support technicians in engaging with external networks	Encourage and fund technicians to attend external conferences, join professional networks, or participate in collaborative projects, helping them to stay updated on industry trends and maintain cutting-edge skills.
We encourage research and development projects for technicians	Facilitate technician-led R&D projects, allowing them to innovate, refine processes, or develop new technical methods that enhance institutional capabilities and sustainability.
We mitigate the risk of single points of failure	Identify, analyse and mitigate the risk of individual technicians with unique knowledge, qualifications, skills, contacts, or equipment.

Evaluating Impact

We will regularly assess the impact of actions taken in support of the commitment to ensure their effectiveness.

Intended Outcome	Action
We have outcome measures for each commitment area	Establish specific measures to track progress on visibility, recognition, career development, sustainability, and other areas of the Technician Commitment, providing measurable targets to assess impact.
We organise focus groups with technicians and technician managers	Run focus groups when there is a need to explore the technician experience and perspective.
We implement annual progress reviews	Conduct a formal annual review of the Technician Commitment action plan to assess achievements, identify areas needing further action, and publish a report with key outcomes and adjustments.
We monitor technician turnover and recruitment	Track metrics like technician retention/ turnover, success rates in recruitment campaigns, and career progression to gauge the impact of development initiatives and identify trends over time.
We produce case studies on individual technician journeys	Showcase technician success stories through case studies that highlight individual journeys, demonstrating the impact of development programmes and showing how technicians are progressing.
We report impact annually to senior leadership and technicians	Prepare an annual impact report for senior leadership and technicians, including highlights of progress, key metrics, challenges, and future plans, keeping everyone informed and engaged with ongoing efforts.