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Technicians make it happen

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The encouragement and promotion of vital STEM technician roles in the UK is supported by The Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Find out more at: gatsby.org.uk



The Technician Commitment

Technicians make it happen



The Science Council

The Science Council is a membership organisation for professional bodies and learned societies across the disciplines of science. The Science Council are in a unique position, bringing together a range of disciplines and sectors to reflect the multi-disciplinary practice of science in today's society.

The Science Council set the standards for professional registration for practising scientists and science technicians, independent of scientific discipline. Professional bodies within the membership are licensed to award professional registration to their members who meet these standards.

The Science Council's purpose, as defined in its Royal Charter, is to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge of and education in science, pure and applied for public benefit.

The Science Council believe in professional recognition for everyone working in science and recognise that technicians do not always benefit from the same opportunities as others. The Science Council has been working to increase the visibility and recognition of technicians and to improve their professional development opportunities at all career stages.

For more information on The Science Council visit:
www.sciencecouncil.org



Technicians Make it Happen

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation is committed to tackling the science, engineering and technology skills shortage in the UK through programmes that support the education, training and career development of the country's technical workforce.

Gatsby has developed a wide range of innovative programmes and partnerships over the last three decades to address this skills shortage. To complement its more targeted interventions, in 2016 Gatsby launched the Technicians Make it Happen (TMiH) campaign.

TMiH celebrates technicians working across industry and sectors. The campaign uses individual stories of technicians to reveal how every technician has an important impact on innovation, the economy and society itself.

Gatsby has been delighted with the support the campaign has had to date from universities and HE. The campaign has been a valuable tool for HE employers to showcase their skilled technician workforce and promote the opportunities available for their current and potential technicians.

For more information on TMiH visit:
www.technicians.org.uk

Technicians
make it happen



Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge



Demand for people across the UK economy with STEM qualifications is increasing, and as science becomes more complex and interconnected, the roles undertaken by scientists and engineers in the future will often require high-level practical and technical skills. Attracting, educating, training and retaining more STEM technicians is therefore vital to the success of the UK economy.

Technicians are particularly vital to the success of the UK's universities and research institutes. They are a highly skilled workforce with a diverse range of expertise, underpinning the key activities across organisations, and providing the technical expertise essential to supporting research and knowledge transfer.

Alongside this, many technicians are researchers and teachers in their own right. They play an important part in the development of the UK's future STEM workforce by teaching and developing the technical skills students require to pursue a future career in research, academia and/or industry.

With the ever increasing focus on research and teaching quality, and graduate employability, the role of technicians has never been more important. It is crucial that they are at the forefront of ever evolving technologies in order to provide



academic colleagues and students with first-class technical support, enabling research and teaching of the highest quality on an international stage.

Despite the importance of technicians, their role is not well recognised and their career and professional development often overlooked. The aging technical workforce also means that large numbers of highly skilled technicians are retiring every year, taking their knowledge and experience with them. The UK now faces an identified shortage of technicians, which poses a serious threat to our innovative strength and global competitiveness, and it is estimated that there will be a demand for 700,000 new technicians by 2020.

Technicians have been a pivotal part of Cambridge's ground-breaking research for centuries. Today we have over 800 technicians who play a vital role in teaching and research, and we have made strides to improve our workforce planning and introduced technical apprenticeships with an eye to the future.

The Science Council's Technician Commitment consists of five key strands, each of equal importance to us as institutions. It also recognises that long term change can only be achieved through sector-wide commitment, and I welcome the support of HEFCE and the Research Councils for this initiative.

Technicians are very much the unsung heroes of our institutions, their work is largely invisible and yet much of what we do would grind to a halt without them. I am delighted to be signing the Technician Commitment on behalf of the University of Cambridge to help ensure that doesn't happen.





Professor Sir David Greenaway, Vice-Chancellor, University of Nottingham



Our technicians are essential to the success of our institutions. It's unimaginable that we could deliver research, teaching and knowledge transfer activities without talented, well qualified and motivated technical staff.

Technicians make up almost ten percent of staff at the University of Nottingham with expertise spanning a broad range of disciplines. Our technicians have the practical skills and knowledge to turn research concepts into reality and to contextualise the theory of the lecture theatre for students through practical classes and workshops. They are actively involved in delivering research outputs; many are authors of published research; and they are developing key technical skills our students need for future employment.

At Nottingham we have been working to ensure increased visibility and recognition of our 700+ technicians through a number of initiatives. We have created opportunities for early career talent through trainee



technician programmes, and invested in accredited teacher training to ensure development opportunities for those in student-facing roles. Technicians can gain professional registration through the Engineering Council and Science Council through which we have also achieved Employer Champion status – a mark of our dedication to the quality and practice of science through the professional development of our STEM technicians.

In 2015 we hosted the inaugural Higher Education Technicians Summit, in association with the Midlands Innovation consortium, which attracted more than 450 delegates from over 40 organisations. We are delighted our Midlands Innovation partner, the University of Warwick, is hosting the event in 2017. Nottingham's technicians are also profiled in two national campaigns: the Department of Work and Pensions' #NotJustForBoys; and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation's #TechniciansMakeItHappen.

We are proud to be a founding signatory of the Technician Commitment and look forward to working with colleagues across the sector to build on our progress and ensure the future sustainability of the technician community in the UK and beyond.



Higher Education Funding Council for England



HEFCE is pleased to support the Science Council's Technician Commitment. This is a positive step to combat the widening science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills gap in this important, and sometimes overlooked, occupation in the higher education sector. Technicians are often experts in the operation of critical and expensive research equipment, and can be crucial to interpreting results and producing research outputs. Technicians work across many other areas of universities, across a wide range of disciplines.

Skills gaps and shortages remains a high priority for government, particularly in science and technical occupations. Estimates are that 1.2 million technical and digitally skilled people will be needed by 2022 to satisfy skills needs. The Gatsby Charitable Foundation says that over 700,000 technicians are needed over the next few years to meet employer demand. Skills shortages are a major risk to economic growth and innovation, and HEFCE is working with Government on a number of policies to address them, including degree apprenticeships. In seeking to address the professional development of technicians, some organisations are looking at these among other new ways to train the technician workforce, and we look forward to seeing new opportunities open up through this route.



HEFCE recognises that more work needs to be done to develop career pathways for this profession. We are funding a Catalyst project, based at the University of Sheffield, looking at this. One of the many issues being considered is understanding the breadth and depth of the technician workforce across the higher education sector. The project has made progress on many fronts, including mapping over 1,000 competencies for the technician role and raising awareness and understanding of its benefits among senior management.



Medical Research Council



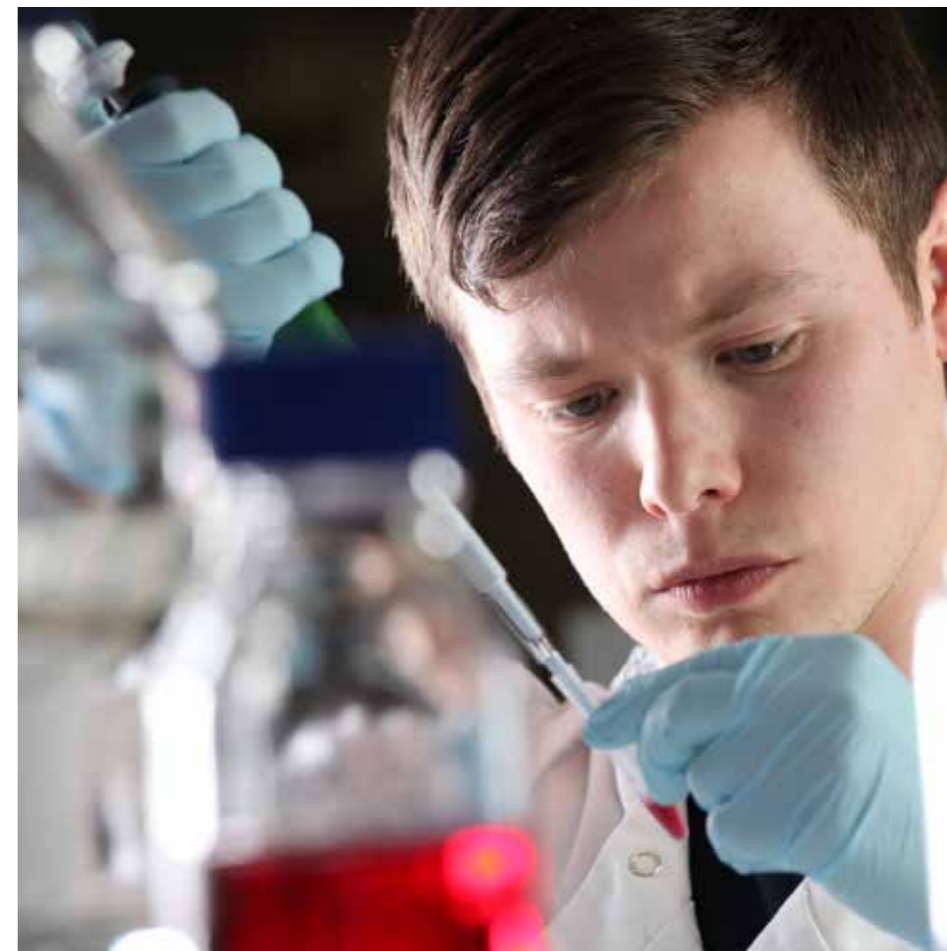
The Medical Research Council (MRC), as a large employer of technicians and technical staff, is recognising their importance to science by providing better career support and guidance for this group of staff. There are various ways in which we are doing this, but working with the Science Council is one of our most important ways of achieving better career support and career frameworks for our staff.

We are an Employer Champion with the Science Council and are encouraging and supporting our staff to join their professional registration scheme to get recognition for the work they do and support their career development. We are delighted to back the Technician Commitment which will help to ensure that technical staff across the sector are able to benefit in the same way that ours now do.

With the increasing importance of new technologies, the ability of universities to attract and retain the best technology specialists will support the Research Councils' ability to maximise their large investments. In addition to the responsibilities and expectations set out in the Concordat to support the career development of researchers



and technologists, Research Councils (RCs) want to ensure that technology specialists funded through RC mechanisms are well supported by universities, and have access to appropriate career development and progression. Research Councils are working together to make clear our position, through clarifying our guidance on how technology specialists and costs for research facilities can be supported through grant funding.



The Technician Commitment

The Science Council is working with partners to ensure greater visibility and recognition for technicians in higher education. The Technician Commitment has been developed to address the key issues affecting the technical community.

1. Visibility

Ensure that all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution

2. Recognition

Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration

3. Career Development

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

4. Sustainability

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

5. Evaluating Impact

Regularly assess the impact of actions taken in support of the commitment to ensure their effectiveness





Becoming a Signatory

Higher Education Institutions and Research Institutes across the UK are invited to sign the Technician Commitment. To become a signatory, you simply need to commit to taking action to address each of the five areas and to appoint a named lead within your institution.

As a signatory institution you will benefit from access to a toolkit providing advice and signposting to support your institution in addressing the five areas of the commitment. The toolkit, developed with partner organisations across the sector, will highlight resources available and technician-specific projects.

The Technician Commitment is overseen by a Steering Group with representation from across the sector and plans are in place for an annual conference to share good practice and progress among signatory institutions.

For further details and to become a signatory, please contact:

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