

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

Please note: This guidance and template is for institutions who have already submitted their Stage One Self-Assessment & Action Plan, 12-13 months after becoming an official signatory of the Technician Commitment. This guidance and template refers to the second stage of self-assessment and action planning to be submitted 2 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 second stage of self-assessment and action planning process asks for reflection on past action plans, 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.

To continue 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, 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.

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.verre@sciencecouncil.org

Please note that finalised 3-year Action Plans should be signed off at an institutional leadership level (e.g. Vice-Chancellor/President/Director level).

Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: University of Kent

Name of Institutional Lead: Paul Sinnock, Head of Technical Services

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Please provide an overview of technical staff structures in your organisation.

The University of Kent is a leading UK institution with an excellent reputation for outstanding teaching, strong research and international links. The University is currently undergoing a period of change to raise its profile and deliver the ambitious Kent 2025 strategy. Building on the world-class teaching and research reputation the aim is to become a leading civic university, supported by progressive programmes that place the University at the heart of public and intellectual life. Canterbury, The University of Kent's historic base, has been a hub of learning for centuries, while the campus in Medway will be at the heart of the city's bid for City of Culture 2025. The University is proudly international in outlook, with a distinct European identity with centres in Brussels and Paris, and partnerships with over 388 universities worldwide.



The University is celebrated for its inspirational teaching. Awarded a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) gold rating as well as the Outstanding Support for Students award at both the 2017 and 2018 Times Higher Education (THE) Awards, the University actively seeks new ways to open up education, from online learning to apprenticeships.

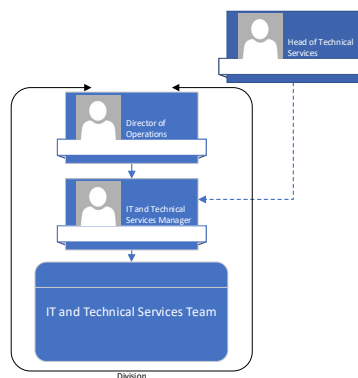
By 2025, the combined talents of Kent's students and staff will ensure the University is known for a transformative student experience, ground-breaking discoveries, and a significant role in wider society.

The University of Kent has recently undertaken a programme of significant organisational change to ensure the institution is equipped to deliver the Kent 2025 strategy. This has included a move from academic schools and faculties to divisions. From November 2020, schools and centres were grouped into six academic divisions replacing the existing faculty structure.

Division of Arts & Humanities	Division of Natural Sciences	Division of Computing, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences	Kent Business School	Division of Human and Social Sciences	Division for the study of Law, Society and Social Justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent School of Architecture and Planning • School of Arts • School of English • School of European Culture and Languages • School of History • Centre for Music and Audio Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Biosciences • School of Physical Sciences • School of Sport and Exercise Sciences • Medway School of Pharmacy (as an affiliate) • Kent and Medway Medical School (as an affiliate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Computing • School of Engineering and Digital Arts • School of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Science 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Anthropology and Conservation • School of Economics • School of Politics and International Relations • School of Psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Law School • School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research • Centre for Journalism

Technician Commitment

Each division has a new academic and operations leadership team with Directors of Divisions now part of the University executive group. This change enables improved decision making and effective oversight of all areas of University operation. The University operates a hybrid structural model where academic divisions have both the accountability and resources to deliver their activities. Professional service and technical services staff are embedded within the division and line managed through the Director of Operations. Technical services is also represented centrally as a professional service department (PSD) and the relationship between divisions and PSD's is managed via a framework agreement (memorandum of understanding). The role of the central Technical Service PSD is to maintain University wide and cross divisional consistency, legislative compliance, policy and ensure the delivery of University strategy including the Technician Commitment.



As part of the organisational changes, in August 2020 the University appointed a Head of Technical Services to provide leadership in the area of Technical Services and to develop and deliver strategy and policy, supporting the devolved technical services teams. The Head of Technical Services is the “Head of Profession” for Technical Services. This role was introduced following feedback from technical staff during technician commitment focus groups. The feedback included a desire to appoint a senior member of staff who could represent technical staff across the University and support the delivery of the Technician Commitment. Furthermore, to ensure professional recognition of technical services and provide visibility of the work undertaken by technicians. The Head of Technical Services is supported by a new technical leadership team with representation from each academic division.

Divisional Technical Leadership



Jason Marshall,
IT and Technical
Services
Manager,
Division of
Human and
Social Sciences



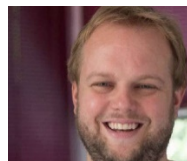
Daniel Knox,
IT and Technical
Services
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Division of
Computing,
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Mathematic
Sciences



Brian Wood,
IT and Technical
Services
Manager,
Division of Arts
and Humanities



Trevor Reece,
IT and Technical
Services
Manager,
Division of
Natural Sciences



Adam Britcher,
IT and Technical
Support Officer,
Kent Business
School



Moses Malekia,
IT and Technical
Support Officer,
Division for the
study of Law,
Society and
Social Justice

The IT and Technical Services Manager role was created as part of the organisational restructure. They are members of the divisional operations management group and provide strategic and

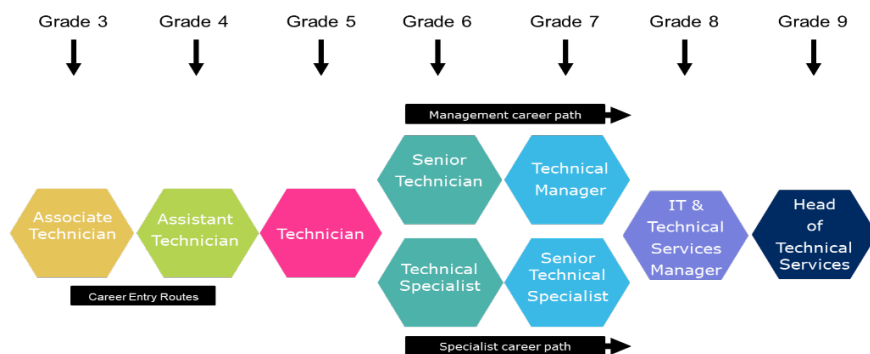
operational oversight of the large divisional technical services teams. They work alongside the divisional professional service managers including education & student experience, research and innovation, marketing, recruitment and engagement and finance and resources.

Both the Kent Business School and the division for the study of law, society and social justice are supported by an alternative role of IT and technical support officer. In these divisions there is a reduced technical service requirement, and as such this hybrid role provides an operational technical member of staff who also leads and represents the IT and Technical Services requirements for that division. The IT and technical service roles ensure the visibility and recognition of technical staff within the divisions, providing a voice for technical staff and ensuring technical staff are engaged in strategic decision making.

Kent Technical Services Career Path

As a direct result of engagement in the Technician Commitment, the University now operates a Technical Services Career Path which sets out a clear set of role types at each grade. As part of the technical service reorganisation in November 2020 it became evident that changes were needed to support the Technician Commitment's key principles of career development, visibility, and sustainability for technicians at the University of Kent. Historically roles were often unique with little consistency, even at the same level and subject area. Within divisions alone there were over 70 unique job descriptions, each with very little consideration to progression routes for staff and linked opportunities for training and development. The Kent Technical Services Career Path was created to tackle this problem and was developed in collaboration with the National Technical Development Centre, The University of York and Manchester Metropolitan University. The Kent Technical Services Career Path builds on the core framework in operation across many of the higher education institutions in the UK. The aims of the career path were: -

- To reduce complexity and inconsistency, whilst valuing unique technical specialisms.
- To enable visibility and commonality of roles across the University
- To improve the opportunities to move roles both within divisions but also across divisions.
- To align staff development more greatly with career aspirations.
- To offer clear career entry routes for those starting the profession as well as aligning with wider UK practice.
- To enable recruiting managers quicker and more consistent access to Technical job roles when recruiting.
- To recognise the specialist nature of individual roles and the settings in which those roles operate.



Kent Technical Services Career Path

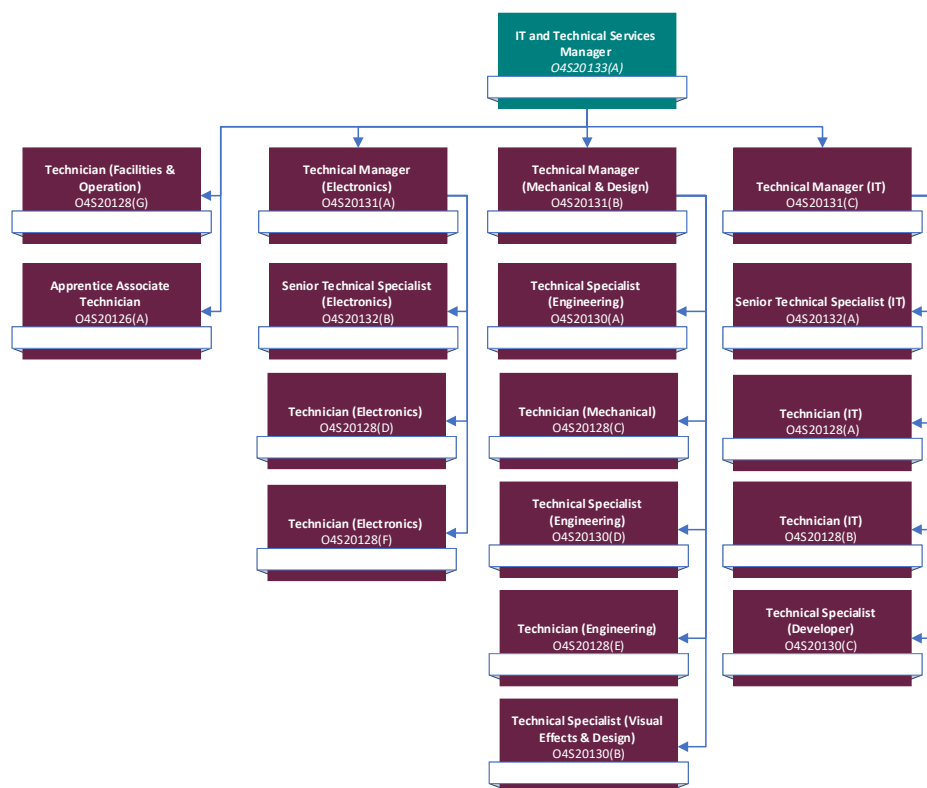
The career path has two distinct development routes. Roles at grade 6 and 7 have both a people management and technical specialist focus. The role Senior Technician and Technical Manager role

have people supervisory/management accountabilities. Whereas the Technical Specialist and Senior Technician specialist roles do not have a management focus but instead recognise expert specialist skills in a given subject area. These two routes were developed directly from the feedback of technical staff. Historically staff who did not have line management duties were unable to progress and as such felt their specialist skills were not valued. The two routes within the career path now offer a resolution to this problem, valuing both management skills and technical specialist skills. Staffing structures now represent the need of the divisions.

In March 2021 the career path was embedded across all divisions with all existing staff migrated to the new job role types (KBS and LSSJ are the only exception within divisions using the role title IT and Technical Support Officer, a unique hybrid role). The Technical Services Career Path recognises the importance of specialist skills and as such reserves a special section within each job description called **Further Technical Specialisms**. This allows the generic roles to be expanded to include specialist skills which are essential to the deployment of that role type whilst maintaining consistency across the profession. Technical specialisms can also be referenced in role titles. For example, a technician could be titled Technician (Biology) or Technician (Electronic engineering). The parenthesis enables this specialisation of roles whilst maintaining consistency.

Divisional IT and Technical Services Structure

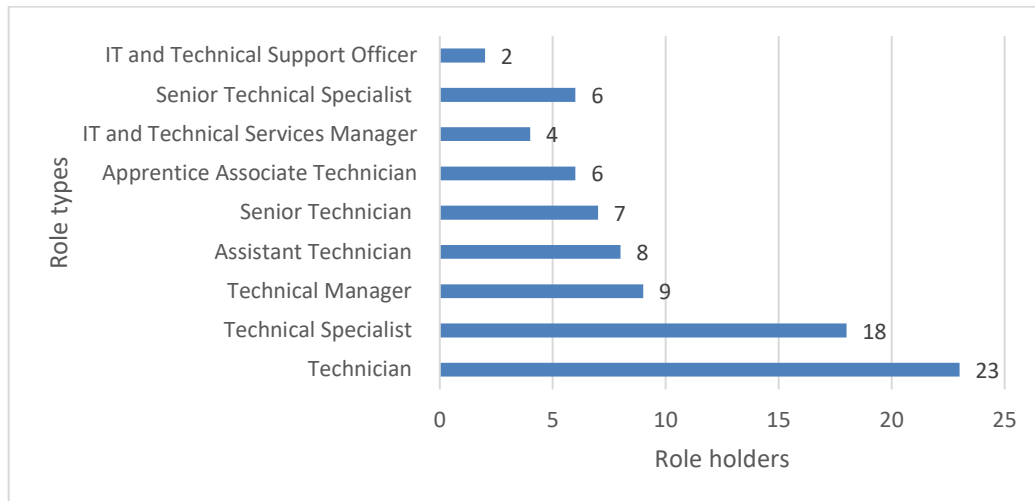
Each of the divisional technical teams are structured to provide subject specialist support and services to enable the delivery of teaching, research, innovation and civic mission activities. Technical staff are managed by either a Technical Manager or a Senior Technician. Technical service staff operate at a divisional level but provide specialist support to all Schools within their corresponding division.



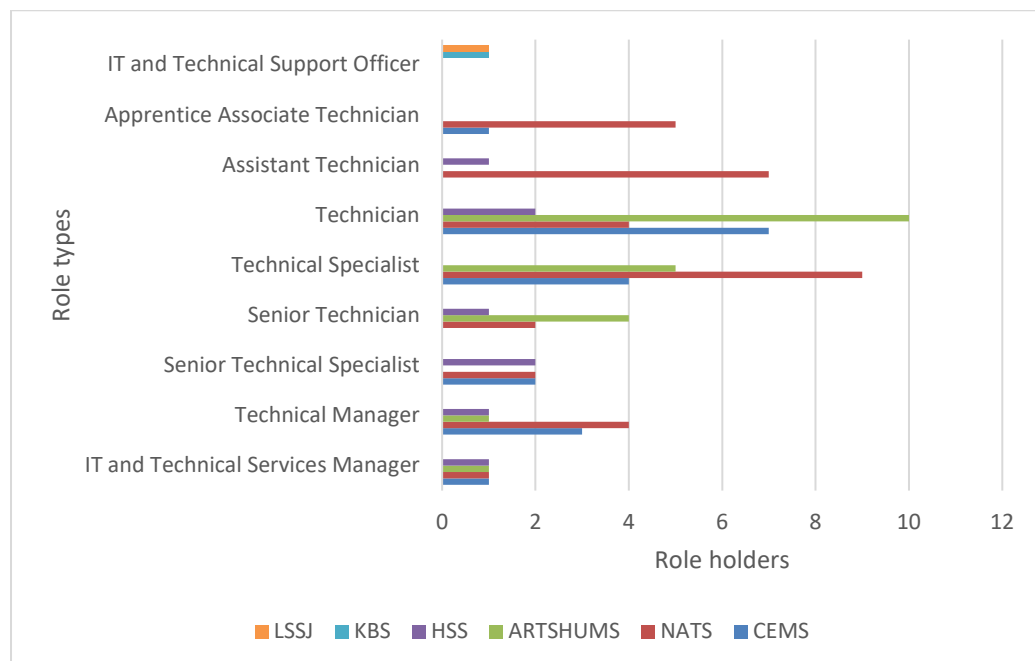
Example: Division of Computing, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences Technical structure

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Within academic divisions there is a total of 83 IT and Technical Service staff. The University is committed to providing a sustainable technical service and as part of the technical service reorganisation has started to increase the number of apprenticeship roles in divisions. Currently across the divisions there are 6 divisional technical apprentice roles which accounts for 7.23% of divisional technical roles. This is an area of strategic importance and technical managers are supported by the Talent and Organisation Development team.



Total Divisional Technical Roles



Technical Roles by Division

Outside of divisional structures there are a number of staff who undertake a “technical” role and operate within central professional service departments. These include Estates, Commercial Services, Information Services, HR and finance. The organisational changes at the University of Kent are still underway at the time of writing this document and as such further work is included in the technician commitment action plan to ensure staff outside of academic divisions are identified and benefit from the principles of the technician commitment. In some cases there are challenges

making sure staff can align to the Technician Commitment principles even if they are outside of the academic divisional structures. Further work is planned in the stage 2 application to develop a wider technical community and engage with these important colleagues.

An area in which the University has developed a very good working relationship is that between Information Services and Technical Services staff. Traditionally IT staff across the sector and in some cases within the University have been reluctant to associate themselves with the title technician and as such the Technician Commitment. There is a developing and progressive relationship in this area which is enabling those staff to identify and benefit from the Technician Commitment. A member of staff from the Information Services department is a member of the IT and Technical Services Management group. Further to this the identity of "IT and Technical Services" is one that is being used to engage more staff across the two professions and create a wider community for the benefit of both staff and the University.

Please tell us about your institution's approach to the Technician Commitment since becoming signatory. Comments on governance and reporting lines, resources and wider community engagement are welcomed.



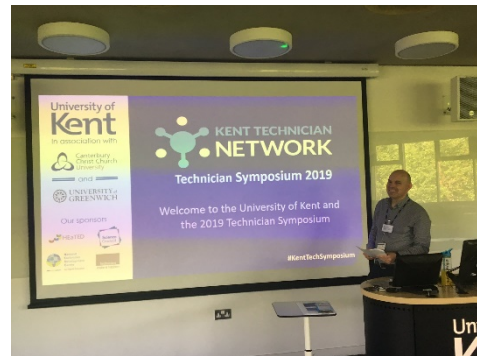
The University of Kent has made significant progress in the implementation of the technician commitment principles since becoming a signatory in 2018. Through a period of significant change at the University and across the sector, the University of Kent has continued to support positive changes to the technician community, recognising the essential roles that technical staff have in every area of the institution.

The University of Kent has established accountability and governance structures which ensures the development and oversight of the Technician Commitment across all areas of the organisation. The Head of Technical Services is responsible for the development and implementation of the Technician Commitment strategy and associated action plan at the University of Kent. This work is overseen and supported by Director of University Operations. The Head of Technical Services is supported by two key oversight and governance groups. The first is the Technician Commitment Working Group. This group supports all aspects of the technician commitment activities including developing the technician commitment action plan, implementing actions, receiving feedback and measuring impact. The membership of the working group is made up of staff from across the University. Technicians are invited to join the working group and represent the wider technical community. Technicians of all grades, roles and thematic areas can join the group. Other members of staff include representatives from professional services departments including HR, EDI (equality, inclusivity, and diversity), commercial services and Health and Safety. This group meets every 6 weeks reviewing the University's Technician Commitment action plan and supporting its implementation.

The second group which oversees the Technician Commitment at the University of Kent is the IT and Technical Services Management Group. The IT and Technical Services Management Group is a new group created following the reorganisation of IT and Technical Services in November 2020 and is made up of the 6 divisional technical leads, the Divisional IT Support manager (Information Services) and the Head of Technical Services. This groups supports the consistent implementation of IT and Technical Services across divisions through the sharing of ideas, best practice, concerns, challenges, and risk. The group work together to develop new processes, systems and procedures in a supportive environment. The group also oversee development of the Technician Commitment action

plan and as well as its implementation. The IT and Technical Services leads oversee over 80 technical members of staff and provide feedback on areas of improvement or success. The IT and Technical Services Management Group meet every two weeks.

The University is also part of the Kent Technician Network, which includes Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Greenwich. This group consists of representatives from each University who work together in raising the profile of technical service staff across the county. The group also undertake an annual, all day Technical Symposium, bringing together technicians from across each University. The lead organiser and location of the symposium rotates each year. In 2019, the University of Kent hosted it's first cross University Technician Symposium bringing together over 80 technicians from across the region discussing key topics, sharing best practice and enabling valuable networking opportunities. Sadly, the COVID pandemic has impacted future events but the group maintains contact and looks forward to supporting future events.



Since becoming a signatory of the Technical Commitment, the University has actively sort to improve the visibility of Technicians both internally and externally. An externally visible technical services website was created (<https://www.kent.ac.uk/technicalservices>) to provide opportunity to publish information, events, and the University's Technician Commitment action plan. A technician commitment news blog was also created and is embedded on the website. This system enables the creation of technician specific news stories as well pulling together stories from across all areas of the University. Marketing and communications teams can now simply add the pre-defined technician commitment category to any University wide news story, and it will be automatically displayed on the technical services webpage. Several TCWG members have been made news blog editors and can create their own news articles.

Further work has been undertaken to provide opportunities for technical staff to share ideas, network and present to a wider audience. Several "Tech Tours" have taken place across the University including a visit to the School of Archaeology and the School of Sports and Exercise Science. Completely led by technicians for technicians these tours have enabled a greater understanding of the roles of other technical staff across the University, a greater visibility of resources and an opportunity to network with other technicians. Unfortunately, further tours have been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. When possible, these will resume.

As detailed previously the most significant changes to the University technical structures have come about following the formal technical services restructure programme which started in November 2020 and concluded in March 2021. This programme of change was heavily influenced by the principles of the Technician Commitment, with changes designed to improve visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability of technical staff. Examples include the creation of the Kent Technician Career Path which provided improved sustainability and visibility for technical staff, as well as providing a pathway to improve career development opportunities. The development of new staffing structures ensured IT and Technical Services staff were represented at various levels across divisions and could influence strategy and operational activities.

The changes made across the organisation were very much influenced by feedback from technicians across the University. When becoming a Technician Commitment signatory, the University held several technician focus groups. These groups provided feedback which was incorporated into

planning and strategic development.

A recent example of a high profile community success story brought about by collaboration within the University of Kent technician community, was the development of PPE during the first COVID pandemic lock down. The work undertaken by the team of technicians produced just under 5000 face visors, specialist ophthalmic shields and over 20,000 face mask ear protectors. Technicians worked with the UK standards body to ensure PPE met the stringent safety standards. In only 2 weeks from the first request for help, the team had designed a prototype, sourced materials, and created the University's first cross departmental manufacturing centre. Pooling equipment from around University and recruiting technical staff across a variety of departments, the operation at its height produced over 250 visors a week. In recognition of the work being undertaken, donations were received from alumni, local business, with a large donation of £20,000 from Santander. Although this project had significant positive impact on the local community the legacy of this work has gone on to reinforce change in the University's strategic approach to cross departmental working and visibility of technical staff. This project was the first time that technicians from across multiple departments within the University had come together, utilised facilities and resources in a collaborative approach. The Technical Services strategy includes projects to enhance collaborative technician working, to make technical skills, resources, and facilities more available to the wider University and to further highlight the positive impact technical staff have on the University's activities.



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Please provide a RAG analysis on your institutional 24-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.

Technician Commitment Action Plan – University of Kent – October 2018					
Visibility					
Action	Reference	Owner	Timescale	RAG	Status
Identify and appoint a Technician Commitment Champion.	V001	HR	Summer 2018	Green	Mark Ellis, Director of University Operations was appointed as the founding champion, with Paul Sinnock, Head of Technical Services taking over the role of Technician Commitment lead in August 2020.
Create a Technician Commitment Working Group (TCWG).	V002	HR	Summer 2018	Green	The Technician working group was established in the summer of 2018. Members consisted of technicians from across a wide range of subject areas, including commercial services. HR and the Athena Swan and EDI teams were represented.
Consult on and agree the definition of “technician” amongst the TCWG and more widely.	V003	TCWG	Autumn 2018	Green	Consultation with technical staff has taken place. The agreed definition has been adopted: “A person who is trained, experienced and skilled in techniques, tools, and technology and who draws upon these, exercising ingenuity, creativity and inductive/deductive methods. Using specialised instruments/equipment, in practical applications, including hands-on support and problem-solving, technicians contribute to education, research, and

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					enterprise activities.”
Identify current technician reporting lines and consider the case for harmonising.	V004	O4S Strand 3	CY 2020		In March 2021 the University completed a full restructure of technical service staff across its 6 divisions. This restructure was supported by the implementation of the first ever Technical Services Career Path, setting up a consistent set of modern job descriptions and reporting lines. The career path enables greater transparency of opportunities across the University and provides more aligned personal development to career ambitions. All technicians included in the restructure were slotted into these new roles. Further work around linking CPD activity is planned.
Create a Technician Commitment website / portal and identify content creators / editors.	V005	Gary Samson / Paul Sinnock	Christmas 2019		An externally visible technical services website has been created. https://www.kent.ac.uk/technicalservices .
Create a Technician Commitment blog on https://blogs.kent.ac.uk to pull together news stories regarding technician events / work / publications etc. and to feed the new website.	V006	Gary Samson / Paul Sinnock	Christmas 2019		A technician commitment blog was created to pull news stories together from across the University. Marketing teams now simply have to add the technician commitment category to any University wide news story and it will automatically be displayed on the technical services webpage. Several TCWG members have been made news editors and can create their own news articles.
Host the regional Technician Symposium in May 2019 and widen participation in this event to all technical staff.	V007	TCWG Sub-group	Spring 2019		The University of Kent hosted the first all day Kent Technician Symposium. Technicians from the University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Greenwich attended. The event consisted of external speakers, networking events and

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					interactive activities. The symposium was opened by the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
Scope the viability of establishing a regular Kent technicians conference or event to showcase technical work, discuss and present on issues relevant to technicians and facilitate networking.	V008	TCWG/ PS	Spring 2020		Further technician conferences were planned to follow the 2019 Technical symposium however the impact of COVID-19 and the significant restructuring activities within the University has meant that this has been put on hold. Feedback was received from technical staff that annual conferences bringing together all technical staff would be welcomed. As such this now forms part of our stage 2 action plan. It is anticipated that the next conference will take place in the summer of 2021.
Work with senior staff and Heads of School / Department to raise awareness of the Technician Commitment. Consider presentation at Senior Leaders Forum.	V009	TCWG Chair /Champion	Spring 2019		Mark Ellis, University Director of Operations has championed the Technician commitment at the University Executive Group level. The role of Head of Technical Services was established and recruited to in November 2020 to continue the senior representation of technicians across the University. The Head of Technical Services has presented to the senior leadership teams of several academic divisions. A joint professional service and technical service “meet the teams” event took place and gave an opportunity to talk to all staff about the Technician Commitment. As part of the technical services restructure programme the Head of Technical Service presented to all staff across 3 divisions setting out future strategy and providing information on the Technician Commitment.

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<p>Ensure that University planning and strategy considers technicians. Review planning templates to ensure technicians are involved/represented.</p>	V010	TCWG	Spring 2020		<p>In July 2020 the University of Kent undertook a project entitled Organising for Success which saw the restructure of the University academic Schools into 6 new academic divisions. Each division had a new operations team consisting of both professional service and technical service staff. As part of this work a new strategic role, IT and Technical Service manager was created. This role is a member of the senior operations team reporting directly to the Director of operations. The new structure has recognised the important of having IT and Technical staff represented at a senior level within the division. Those new role holders are responsible for shaping strategic plans and ensuring technical staff are represented.</p> <p>In August 2020 the role of Head of Technical Services was also established which leads technical services across the University, supporting the new IT and Technical Services Managers at divisional level. This role undertakes representation of technical staff at the highest level in the University and ensures the technical commitment is implemented consistently throughout the University.</p>
<p>Create/facilitate an informal series of visits to Schools / Departments for technicians to see what goes on, what equipment is available, what skills exist etc. to better understand each other's roles.</p>	V011	TCWG	Spring 2019		<p>A number of Tech Tours have taken place including a visit to the School of Archaeology and the School of Sports and Exercise Science. Completely led by technicians for technicians these tours have enabled a</p>

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					greater understanding of the roles of other technical staff across the University, a greater visibility of resources and an opportunity to network with other technicians. Unfortunately, further tours have been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. When possible, these will resume.
Recognition					
Action	Reference	Owner	Timescale	RAG	Status
Research professional registration / membership of professional bodies and promote professional registration if seen to be beneficial.	R001	TCWG with Technicians	Summer 2020		Information regarding professional membership has been disseminated via email to technicians across the campus. The new job descriptions created as part of the new Kent Technical Career Path will include professional membership as a desirable criterion and this has been include as an action to follow in the stage 2 action plan. This is to recognise those staff who are professionally recognised when applying for internal vacancies. Further to this Paul Sinnock, Head of Technical Services has been accepted as a member of the Institute of Science and Technology and will be demonstrating the importance of professional registration. It is recognised that further work is required to increase engagement of technical staff in the area of professional registration.
Promote and encourage technicians to apply for University awards eg. Barbara Morris prize for learning support / technical research prize.	R002	TCWG/HR	As appropriate		Several internal awards have been circulated to the technician mailing lists. Events page is now live on the technicians

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					website detailing awards. Uptake to date has been low. It is believed that following the University restructure and creation of clearer technical teams that this will improve. A more proactive strategy of ensuring technical managers nominating staff is needed.
Investigate and promote the availability of national and international technical prizes and encourage applications where appropriate.	R003	TCWG/HR	As appropriate		<p>Awards are now publicised to IT and Technical Services Managers to ensure staff are aware.</p> <p>Nominations for the Papin awards were made alongside other subject specific awards.</p> <p>Events page now live on the technicians website listing awards opportunities.</p> <p>Further work is required to facilitate applications for external awards.</p>
Review published teaching /research webpages to ensure that the work of technicians is visible and reflects their input.	R004	TCWG	Spring 2020		The new Marketing teams within the University are now working with the Head of Technical Services to appropriately consider technical staff when publicising the University. The has been continued in the stage 2 action plan.
Promote the inclusion of technical staff in published articles either as acknowledgements or where input has been fundamental as co-authors.	R005	TCWG / Champion	Starting 2019		Initial discussions have been held with the Director of Operations. Further work has been listed in the stage 2 action plan to move this forward.
Tap into the review of the Kent Reward Strategy as a mechanism to investigate a number of issues including skills-based job evaluation.	R006	TCWG / Chair	Starting Autumn 2018		The creation of the Kent Technical Career Path has enabled a clearer understanding for those non-technical staff involved in the Kent Reward Strategy and re-grade applications. Working directly with HR the

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					<p>Kent Technical Career Path has been modelled on the HAY framework which is utilised throughout the University. The career path roles are matched to the HAY Technical job family to ensure a consistent set of accountabilities and skills for each grade. The restructure of the technical services staff across the campus and alignment to the roles in the career path has greatly reduced the complexity of role types and simplified the role evaluation and grading process. Unfortunately, the re-grading process has currently been suspended due to changes within the University and as such it has not been possible to fully measure the impact of these changes. It is hoped this work can continue once the process has been re-enabled.</p>
<p>Discuss and review how the evaluation of technical roles and the technical role families under the Hay framework is completed to ascertain how technical skill and experience are measured.</p>	R007	HR with Technicians / TCWG	2019		<p>In the creation of the Kent Technical Career Path significant work was undertaken with the HR department to ensure role types were matched to the HAY Technical role family. This work has created a consistent set of roles, with accountabilities and skills aligned across all grades. The career path was also based on the National Technical Development Centre Career Taxonomy to ensure a national approach. Meetings were undertaken with representatives of the University of York and Manchester Metropolitan University to compare approaches. Job descriptions were shared with the University of Kent and used to</p>

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					compare the Kent's new career path roles.
Following the review (R007), identify any changes that could be made (legally and within the parameters permitted within the Hay system) to the local Hay Evaluation process for technical roles and make recommendations to the appropriate committees.	R008	HR/TCWG	2019		The creation of the Kent Technical Career Path which is aligned to the HAY Technical family has ensured consistency in recognition of accountabilities and skills at a job description level. Furthermore, for the first time the Career Path embeds the principle of recognition of both technical specialists and people management. There are two routes through the career path. These include roles with a people management focus and another with a focus on subject specialisms and expert skills. All new technical roles created in the University will be aligned to the framework. This will deliver a consistent process for the future. The Kent Technical Career Pathway was introduced in November 2020 and will remain in constant review to ensure the process remains effective.
Look at practices within Schools / Departments with regard to technical staff engagement in teaching and research decisions. Establish areas of good practice and best practice and promote these. Work towards a culture that embraces partnership in the delivery of education and research.	R009	TCWG	Starting Spring 2019		Prior to the restructure of technical staff in the University it was established that a small number of technical staff were part of the senior management team (SMT). These staff were able to provide input and influence to teaching and research decisions. By being part of the SMT staff could influence the proactive and forward planning of technical facilities and forthcoming teaching/research. It also promoted a culture of partnership and team work across the school. As such as part of the Organising for success project the role of IT and Technical Services Manager was

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					created and formed part of the senior operations management team. Further to this the role of Head of Technical Services was created to establish consistency across the University. The Divisional IT and Technical Services Management group was formed in January 2021 with an aim to provide consistent, technical focused strategic decision making around the delivery of technical services and the management of technical staff.
Look at methods for technical representation at higher levels. For example, University Committees / management.	R010	O4S	CY 2020		The role of Head of Technical Services was created in August 2020 following feedback from technicians. It was requested by technicians that there should be a role that represented Technical staff at the highest levels within the University. Further to this the role of IT and Technical Services Manager was created at a divisional level to ensure appropriate representation and oversight. IT and Technical Managers are now represented on the Information Services board, which provides oversight and governance of Information Services operation and strategy. Further work is needed to ensure the Head of Technical Services is represented on University committees and boards.
Consider how technicians can be represented at faculty level and whether a named, nominated person should exist in this role.	R011	O4S	Autumn 2019		As part of the Organising Success project which reshaped the University's structure faculties were replaced with divisions. Within the new divisional structure, the role of IT and Technical Services Manager was

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					created and formed part of the Divisional Operations Management Team.
Career Development					
Action	Reference	Owner	Timescale	RAG	Status
Consider applying for membership of the National Technician Development Centre and create budget bid if necessary.	C001	HR / TCWG	Winter 2018		The University of Kent is now a partner affiliate of the National Technician Development Centre.
Consider applying for HEaTED membership and create budget bid if necessary.	C002	HR / TCWG	Winter 2018		The University of Kent is now a member of HEATED.
Establish a small group to look at career pathways for technical staff including how this relates to the technical family of the Hay framework.	C003	TCWG Group / O4S	Starting Spring 2020		Completed following the implementation of the Kent Technical Services Career Pathway.
Review the training requirements of technical staff and how these can best be delivered across the organisation.	C004	HR / TCWG	Summer 2019		Discussions have started to establish a portfolio of training activities which align to technical staff. This includes teaching development, management, and specialist. Further work is required, and this is included in the stage 2 action plan.
Following action C004, look at whether a training needs analysis is appropriate or not and if so, whether the toolkit created and supported by the Technician Commitment initiative can be utilised at Kent.	C005	HR / TCWG	Spring 2020		A new action in the stage 2 action plan has been created to undertake a skills audit of technical staff which will support further the CPD design for technical staff.
Look at professional qualifications available to technicians and promote these.	C006	TCWG	Spring 2019		More work is required in this area and will be informed by future actions.
Establish what training opportunities and funding are available to technicians both centrally and from their host Schools / Departments and look at promoting training opportunities.	C007	TCWG / HR / Schools / PSDs	Autumn 2019		New technicians events page has been created listing opportunities for Technical training and awards. The Head of Technical Services has been supporting divisional technical leads to establish specialist divisional level training. Further work to create a CPD framework is listed in the stage 2 action plan.

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Sustainability					
Use agreed technical staff definition to profile age and skills broken down into School / Department level.	S001	HR	Summer 2019		Technical Staff have now been identified in greater detail across the 6 new academic divisions. Structures are now published. Technical staff have also been aligned to the roles in new Kent Technical Services. Further surveying to establish the demographic and skill set of technical staff has been added to the stage 2 action plan and will support sustainability planning.
Promote apprenticeships scheme for new staff and training existing staff.	S002	HR / TCWG	Spring 2019		Presentations were held at TCWG by Scott Wildman (Centre for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships) and Loretta Izod (HR Apprenticeships Manager). Members of the TCWG disseminated the information to colleagues across the University
Establish how technicians are involved in primary / secondary school outreach programmes and look at how these might be used to promote technical careers.	S003	TCWG	Summer 2019		In SSES the technical team organise the hosting of visiting schools. This falls within SSES outreach activity. Within these visits the technical team provide a number of sport science activities that are targeted to the national curriculum age range of the visiting pupils. The technical team liaise with the schools leading up to the events and also run the activity sessions. During the sessions the technical team explain to technicians their roles within the school. The technical team have an open invite to other school technicians to come along and be involved. The Director of Outreach has kick-started a yearly inside sport science competition which is open to lots of local schools. The day to day running of this 6-week

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					competition is organised by the technical team. The technical team have also been heavily involved in organising activities and the SSES marketing stand when we attend off-site outreach events.
Consider inviting local secondary school / further education technicians to the Kent Technician Symposium.	S004	TCWG / Org Committee	Winter 2018		This action has not yet started. Interaction with non HE technicians remains a priority and has been included in the stage 2 action plan.
Establish what the Centre for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships at Kent can offer and how the group could work with CHDA to help recruit and train technicians.	S005	TCWG / CHDA	Spring 2019		Presentations held at TCWG by Scott Wildman (Centre for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships). Further work required.
Explore non-standard methods of attracting technical staff – staff benefit of fee remission (reduced fees for part-time, postgraduate qualifications) has been successful in at least one area.	S006	TCWG / HR	Summer 2019		The technical service restructure utilised a UK wide framework which provides a more consistent set of roles and aligns to potential future employees who are moving from one higher education institution to the University of Kent. The University of Kent offers 50 % of the cost of tuition fees for staff members and this is published on the University website. The University also offers apprenticeship training for staff, free of charge (with agreement from the line manager). Employment benefits have formed part of offers made to staff when taking up roles within the University of Kent.
Promote and consider opportunities for adding to the portfolio of initiatives such as TECH31 at the Gulbenkian theatre which trains 13-18 year olds in theatre tech.	S007	TCWG	Autumn 2019		Divisions and PSD's are actively setting out their recruitment and outreach strategies including promotion of STEM and Arts subjects. Technical Services staff have actively supported these events. A recent example includes the Engineering, Education

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					<p>Scheme (EES) which was led by technical staff and alongside industrial partners and supported secondary school pupils to design, build and pitch innovative engineering solutions.</p>
<p>Clarify and promote technical opportunities to our student cohort using initiatives such as the work-study scheme.</p>	S008	TCWG / Schools / PSDs	Starting Spring 2019		<p>The technical team within the School of Engineering and Digital Arts pioneered the creation of a new fixed term role Student Technician. Utilising the University's work study scheme, students could apply for Student Technician roles which enable them to work flexibly within the technical services team whilst maintaining the commitment to their studies. This role has enabled students to learn new skills, often aligned to their study area, whilst providing timely support to technical teams. This initiative was commended by the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) at the School of Engineering and Digital Arts degree accreditation.</p>
<p>Invite the institutional lead on apprenticeships to attend a working group meeting and the Kent Technician Symposium.</p>	S009	TCWG / HR	Spring 2019		<p>Presentations were held at TCWG by Scott Wildman (Centre for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships) and Loretta Izod (HR Apprenticeships Manager). Members of the TCWG disseminated the information to colleagues across the University. The Institutional Lead for Apprenticeships was also invited to the Kent Technician Symposium where she spoke to a number of technical staff about the apprenticeship levy and training opportunities.</p>

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<p>Evaluate the current recruitment landscape in the region for technical staff and whether there is a material risk to the University in the supply of suitable skilled staff – noting the proximity to London</p>	S010	TCWG / HR	Summer 2019		<p>It has been challenging to specifically measure the impact that the London University staff market has had or is having on the University of Kent's staff recruitment activities. The University's focus and strategy has therefore been on improving of recruitment of high-quality technical staff through effective marketing and promotion activities.</p> <p>Further to that the University has delivered a new Career Path and technical staffing structures which offer improved clarity of roles, responsibilities, and opportunities. By collaborating with the National Technician Development Centre, University of York and Manchester Metropolitan University the career path is aligned to that of many other Universities in the UK and therefore understandable by potential applicants.</p>
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Evaluating Impact					
Action	Reference	Owner	Timescale	RAG	Status
Review the action plan on a regular basis (at least quarterly) ensuring input from the TCWG and publishing progress.	I001	TCWG	Ongoing		The technician commitment working group review the action plan at each meeting, assigning actions to members. The University has put into place oversight and governance processes. There has been significant change to structures within the University over the period of this action plan. As such the group membership has seen changes. With the staffing changes within the University, and the appointment of the Head of Technical Services it is expected the Technician Commitment personnel will change for the oversight of the stage 2 action plan.
Monitor statistics relating to the technician section of the website once established.	I002	TCWG / IS	Ongoing		There was an expected peak spike of over 135 views of the home page in the first month of launch. This slowly declined to around 15 to 20 hits per day. The subpage news and updates saw an increased daily hit when compared to the home page. It is expected that the more static nature of the home page reduced return visits whereas the news page changed frequently as its content was dynamically fed from the central news pages. Feedback from technical staff indicated that the page offered a good externally facing presence however more focus on an internally facing site with more targeted information for technicians would be preferred. On the back of this feedback an internally facing SharePoint site has been commissioned and is expected to be live

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					mid-2021.
Run a technician survey in the near future and in two years' time to measure any improvement in experience, particularly in the themes embedded in the Technician Commitment.	I003	TCWG / HR	Autumn 2018 & Autumn 2020		Due to significant changes within the University and the impact of COVID-19 it has not been possible to undertake a Technician survey. However, following the conclusion of the University's reorganisation project Organising for Success a survey will be conducted. Following a period of significant change, it will offer a good opportunity to benchmark current feelings of technical staff now and then again in the future.
Measure the take up of quantifiable initiatives such as the take-up of apprenticeships, in-house training courses, fee remission for technicians studying whilst working.	I004	TCWG / HR / Finance	Autumn 2020		Although these activities have been reviewed there is insufficient data at this time to report. As such further work is required to understand the impact of these activities.
Examine the flow of applications for discretionary salary awards and re-grading of posts relating to technical roles to assess the impact of the commitment on recognition.	I005	TCWG / HR	Summer 2020		Due to significant changes within the University the re-grading and discretionary points process was suspended. A new Kent Reward Strategy is being developed by the University. Following the appointment of the Head of Technical Services it is expected that Technical staff will be represented within this process.

The University has made substantial impact in delivering the broad and ambitious Technician Commitment action plan. Some actions have led to significant structural, strategic, and operational changes, enhancing the environment for technical staff and delivering against all key principles of the technician commitment. The University focus has been on setting a solid and stable foundation in which it can build upon for future initiatives and enabling actions which were not possible to be undertaken in the stage 2 action plan.

Total Actions: 44, Completed actions (Green): 32 / 73%, Started and/or continuing actions (Amber): 5 / 11%,

Did not start and/or redefined (Red): 7 / 16%

Technician Commitment

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: (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.

Please find attached the Technician Commitment 36-month strategy (Appendix A) and action plan which was developed alongside technical colleagues. Actions have been based on feedback gathered from staff, and lessons learnt from the wider organisation change activities which have taken place over the duration of the previous action plan. Areas that have not been fully resolved or started as part of the previous action plan have been included for future development.

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:

The Technician Commitment 3 year action plan has been published at the following location
<https://www.kent.ac.uk/technicalservices/technician-commitment>

Technician Commitment

Signed:



Paul Sinnock, Head of Technical Services

(Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead)

Date: 27/05/2021

Signed



Professor Karen Cox, Vice-Chancellor and President

(Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 27/05/2021