

Appendix 1: University of Exeter Technician Commitment Progress Update against 2018 Action Plan

Theme (Why)	Ref.	2018 Action Plan Objective (What)	Example Planned Action (How)	Progress (RAG)	Evidence of Impact
Visibility	1	Showcase our technical skills	Develop individual website profiles for technical staff	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed a Technical Services people directory on our TS SharePoint which includes TS staff bios, key skills, role profiles and key projects. This is visible to all staff at the University. • Annually more than 100 technical staff attend our Technical Services conference. This is a fantastic networking event and opportunity for staff to showcase their and their team's skills – either through posters or presentations. • In January 2020 we hosted HEaTED Southwest regional network event, which was attended by over 100 technical staff from across the SW and during which eight technical teams at Exeter presented.
	2	Communicate changes in technical staff to academics	Monthly technical bulletins contributed to academic staff meetings/newsletters	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Services Business Partners work closely with Heads of Department, Directors of Education and Directors of Research to develop local staffing plans. For most positions academic staff are present on TS recruitment panels and subsequent changes in staffing communicated through departmental management groups of which senior TS staff are members.
	3	Build a sense of community	Develop opportunities to better understand work environments across the service with work-shadowing and lab-exchanges	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that TS at Exeter is all under one professional services home we regularly encourage and move staff to support other areas of the institution. This has built resilience, developed mutual understanding and knowledge among staff of other areas of the service, and in several instances has led to staff developing new skill sets

					that have allowed them to successfully apply for roles in other areas of the service/departments.
	4	Increase visibility of Experimental Officers	Build an EO network across the University	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Experimental Officer network meets termly and our EOs now have visibility of their peer group and where they can go for mutual support and advice. This especially came into its own when research came out of lockdown in summer 2020, whereby EOs were able to support each other in developing COVID-secure SOPs and practices.
	5	Promote the Technical Services Conference more widely	Invite academic staff and PhD students to the annual conference	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our annual Technical Services conferences in the last two years have been well supported by senior academic staff with keynote addresses from our Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Deputy VC Research & Impact, Associate Deans for Education and Pro-Vice Chancellors.
Recognition	6	Improve the name 'technician' from the perspective of students	Actively promote technical career pathways to students – outreach events, open days, careers events	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Services staff have been working in partnership with colleagues from Student Development to offer laboratory internships to our undergraduate students under a scheme called “Pathways to Scientific Laboratories”. The scheme attracted over 100 applicants of which 40 were shortlisted. Due the COVID-19 pandemic, the internships were replaced this summer with an online training session with technical staff from a range of roles invited as guest speakers to talk about their careers and their technical specialisms. • Our technical staff are regular fixtures at University open days showcasing our teaching and research facilities and providing practical demonstrations. • Our team in Digital Humanities provide work experience opportunities to students through our Student Campus Partnership initiative, allowing students to get involved in the daily operations and delivery of DH research facilities. • Technical staff have joined the Science Council stands at the Big Bang Fair and New Scientist Live events to promote technical careers.

	7	Improve transparency around contribution and authorship on peer-reviewed articles.	Develop a policy on co-authorship of Technical staff on papers with the DVC Research and Impact	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This action has been rolled forward and will form part of the Head of Technical Services continuing partnership working with Research Services to develop and implement the University's Research Concordat.
	8	Continue to promote reward and recognition schemes widely in the University	Promote A&B and the PSRAs to academic supervisors, particularly those of research technicians on fixed-term contracts	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 120 technical staff received Above and Beyond financial rewards for their exceptional contribution in the last academic year. • Annually technical staff are nominated in numerous categories of the Professional Services Award. • Our technical staff are regularly nominated by the student community in the annual Teaching awards.
	9	Recognise Technical Services potential to contribute to the University's international profile	Engage with international partnerships established to promote research and teaching links	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Services have been actively involved in the University of Queensland – University of Exeter (QUEX) partnerships since its inception 2017. Lizzy James (TS Business Partner) was the keynote speaker at TechNet Australia 2018, hosted by UQ where she spoke about Exeter's participation in the Technician Commitment. In 2019 the Head of Technical Services was also awarded a QUEX fellowship travel bursary to visit UQ's Director of Research Facilities. This has led to valuable insights in the operation and research facilities and ongoing connections with research facility managers at UQ. • Technical staff continue to play a vital role in funded research programmes and international partnerships and where possible Technical Services funds participation at international conferences through our annual travel application fund.
	10	Increase the University's technical services profile in the SW and nationally	Expand skills networks and EO networks beyond Exeter.	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Exeter is part of the regional GW4 network - a research focussed collaboration between the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter. We have been working closely with our partner universities developing the new GW4WARD initiative that is focused on

					<p>the professional development of technical staff at these institutions. We were really pleased that technical staff from Exeter applied to and were successful in both the professional registration scheme, where GW4 paid for the first year of membership fees and staff joined a cohort of GW4 technical staff on the scheme to help support their longer term professional development, and the technical staff travel bursary scheme, for technical staff at GW4 Universities to visit other GW4 institutions to share best practice, gain experience with equipment or resources, or to develop technical skills through work shadowing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We also represent Exeter Technical Services on the GW4 Talent and Skills Infrastructure Group that discusses and plans for the strategic management and development of core facilities, equipment and technical staff across the partner institutions.
Career development	11	Develop professional networks external to the University	Implement a transparent and visible mechanism within TS to apply for funds to attend conferences	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018/9 Technical Services ran a travel application fund twice for staff to apply to attend external training events and conferences. Over the course of the year 22 grants were awarded to enable technical staff to attend training events or conferences. • Technical staff at Exeter have also taken advantage of remote networking events for example many staff have joined #TechsConnect Friday meetings enabling networking with colleagues across the UK.
	12	Provide an excellent PDR experience for every member of staff	Adopt ePDR in summer of 2018	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the ePDR system has been welcomed by Technical staff at UoE and has provided much greater visibility of completion rates and quality. In 2019 95% of TS staff completed their PDR with their TS or academic manager.
	13	Get the most out of the TS training budget	Consolidate training needs across the service through the ePDR system to provide	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018 we started to invite applications to our training budget so that training needs identified in the PDR system could be met where possible.

			an overview and enable the service training budget to be targeted the most effectively		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have also used the TS budget to subscribe to HEaTED.
	14	Support staff to apply for roles at higher grades	When vacancies become available consider the advertisement of development roles – with clear progression from one grade	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% of our current staff have moved up one or more grades. We have also successfully brought in development roles to move from Technical Manager to Technical Business Partner. • We now actively promote vacancies in Technical Services through our new-look newsletter.
	15	Better prepare technical staff to apply and interview for new roles	Establish job application workshops and interview preparation sessions.	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019 we brought in external coaches to run an interview skills workshop at our Technical Services Conference.
Sustainability	16	Address single points of failure in skills and expertise	Use the EO network as a model to expand 'skills networks' across the service	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have worked hard to develop horizontal networks of staff with specialist skills. For example, we now have a networks of Biological Safety Officers; Biological Services staff; imaging specialists and an integrated team of scientific stores staff. These staff are actively engaged in cross training and are able to provide resilience to our structure when required.
	17	Encourage increased numbers of staff to acquire professional qualifications	Work with the University's apprenticeship team to enrol staff on CPD thus taking full advantage of the apprenticeship levy for technical staff	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight staff have successfully enrolled on/completed apprenticeships in the fields of engineering, laboratory skills and business management. • 12 staff have achieved either registered scientist or chartered status with professional bodies. • Nine Biological Services staff have achieved a range of Institute of Animal Technology (IAT) qualifications. • Six additional staff have achieved professional accreditation as Biological Safety Officers.
	18	Ensure that this is a live action plan with progress monitoring and regular updates	Form a Technician's Commitment Committee	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technician's Commitment Committee launched and active.

	19	Develop opportunities for our students to gain experience in our working environments	Establish a programme of paid internships - promoting Technical Services as a career pathway	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Services have been active participants in the 'Pathways to scientific labs' programme for undergraduate students and have also provided work placement opportunities in the field of digital humanities.
	20	Make the most of our skills	Establish peer-to-peer training, particularly focused on research technicians on fixed term contracts	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our core technical staff provide regular induction and training on specialist equipment and techniques to a large number of postgraduate researchers and research technicians who need to acquire new skills to fulfil their research tasks. This includes our specialist facilities e.g. cytometry, imaging and in Biological Services. • Our new Technical Services staff directory will enable improved visibility of staff and specialist skills so that those in need of support can find where to go for help.