

Technician Commitment

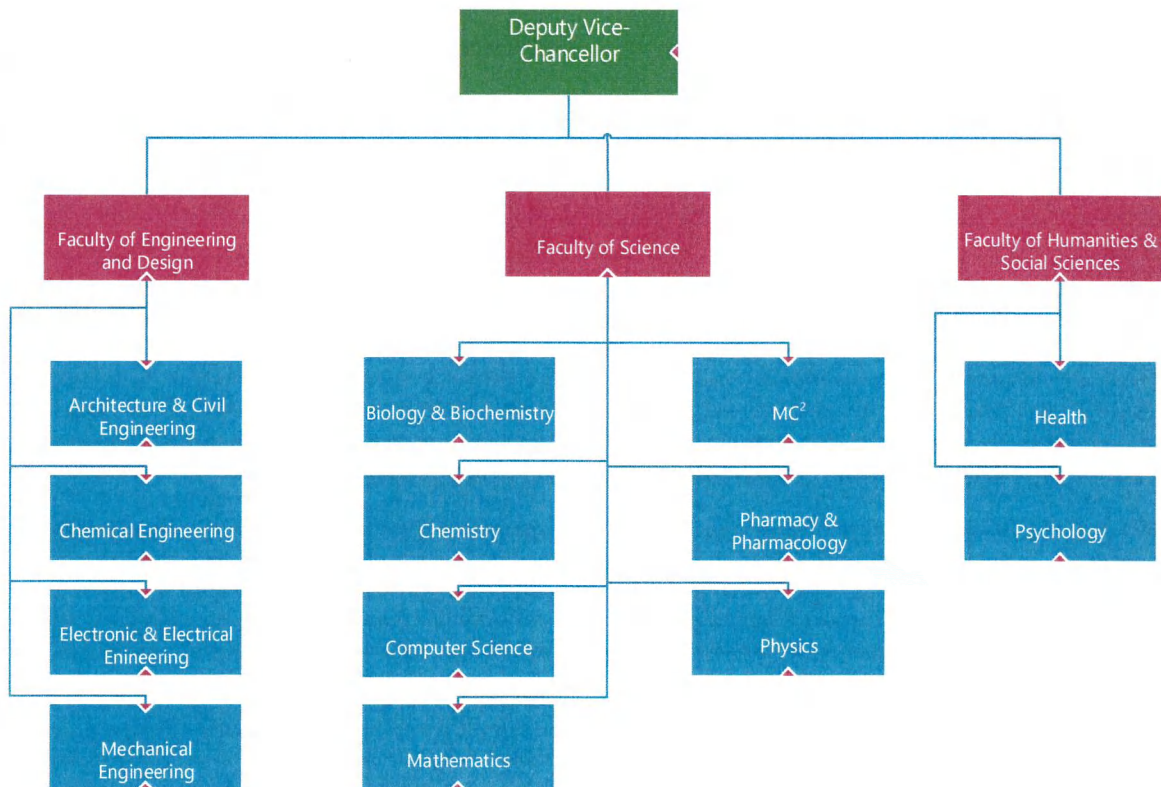
Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: University of Bath

Comments on organisation of technical structures and the internal scope/reach established for the Technician Commitment at this institution:

For the purpose of this project, 'Technical Staff' are defined as all members of staff working to provide a specialist technical support service to others within the University, focusing on supporting and accelerating research and teaching. Examples include but are not limited to: Laboratory, Workshop and Purchasing Technicians, Instrument specialists, Engineers, Scientists, Managers of technical staff and facilities, and Research Technical Professionals.

The majority of our Technical staff are concentrated in and structured under the Faculties & Academic Departments. The remainder are structured within specialist research or service-oriented facilities.



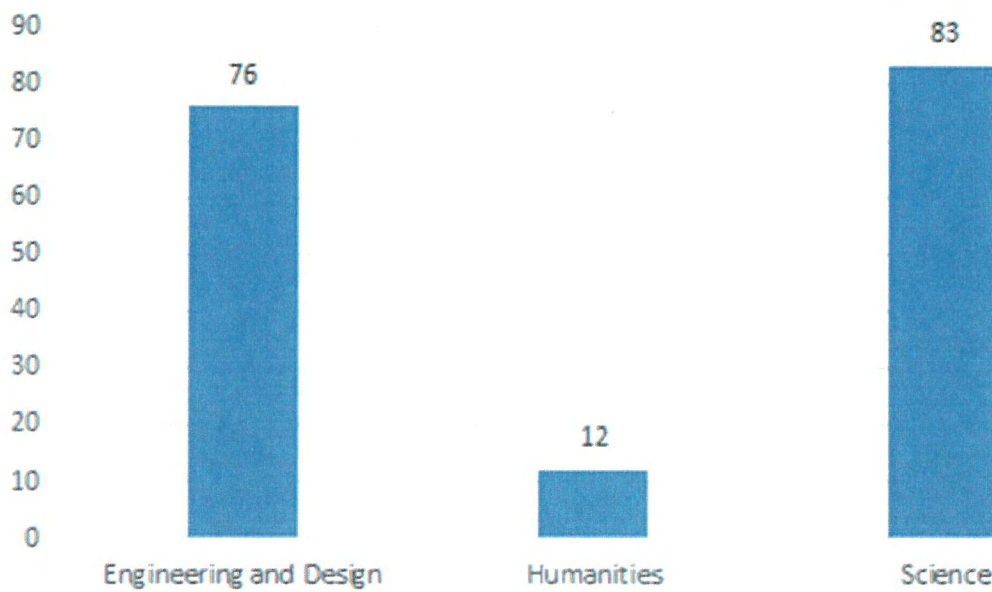
Technical Staff at the University of Bath

The scope of the Technician Commitment at the University of Bath includes all Technical Staff within the Academic Departments and Faculties, and within the Materials and Chemical Characterisation Facility (MC²), a core facility based in the Faculty of Science.

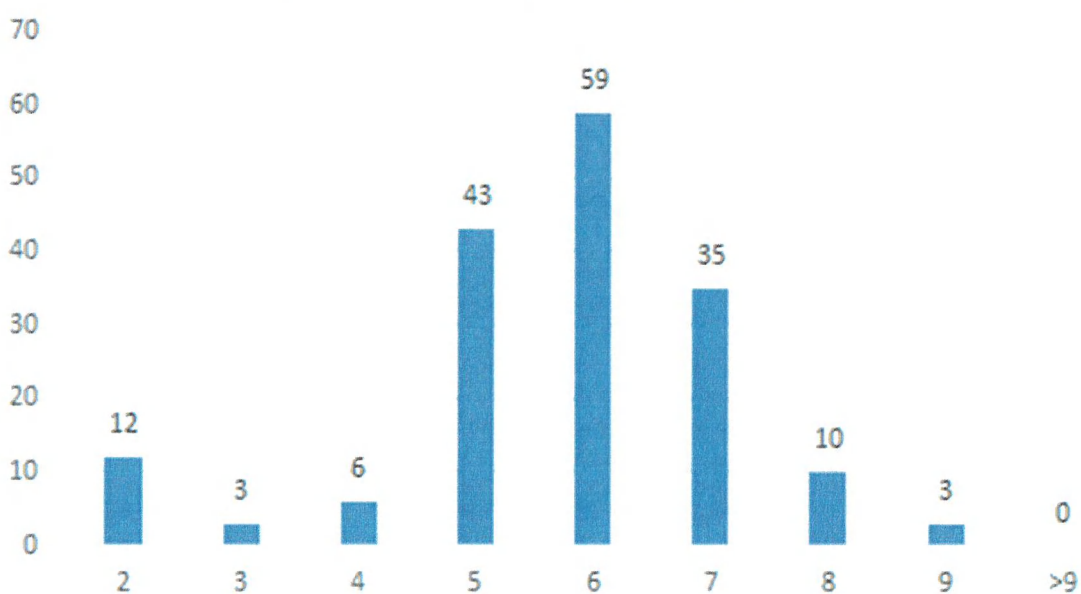
Other University affiliated research and service groups (e.g. Digital, Data & Technology) will not be included at this time.

At the time of writing, there are 171 'in-scope' Technical staff at the University of Bath. This represents 4.8% of the total staff population at the University.

Technical staff distribution by Faculty



Technical Staff grading distribution



Comments on level of initiatives/programmes/activities that were already in place for the technical community within this organisation prior to them becoming a signatory of the Technician Commitment:

Our Technician Progression Project was established following workshops with technical staff in the Science and E&D Faculties. Technical Managers representing the four main technical streams in our Faculties participated, along with our Faculty Technical Directors. The TPP sought to engage with technical staff identified above and focused on a number of themes that were highlighted by staff in technical sessions, including:

- Clarity with regard to job roles, grading and pay
- Progression opportunities and progression routes
- Value as technical staff (appreciation and recognition of their roles, parity of esteem with academic and other professional services staff)
- Recruitment

The first TPP Technical Staff Development Week was held in July 2018, and featured talks, technical and non-technical training sessions and facilities tours.

Comments on initiatives this organisation has put in place to address the themes of the Technician Commitment since becoming a signatory:

Our Technician Progression Project led to us joining the Technician Commitment, and many of the outcomes of the project have started us on our journey to raise the profile of technical staff at Bath. The initiatives below are a summary of the activity that has taken place in the last year at Bath; many will continue into our action plan as longer-term actions, either ongoing or to be completed.

Visibility

- We have initiated the development of webpages specifically for technical staff to promote technical teams and to be used as a resource for technical and non-technical staff
- A blog has been started, as a place to share news and stories from technicians, and feature profiles of different technical staff around the University.
- We will shortly be starting 'a day in the life' regular feature for the staff homepage to feature different operational and technical teams.
- There has been a push to include and engage with technical staff in all streams of university life.
- The first Technicians' Conference at the University of Bath was held in June 2019.
- A Technical Leaders' Network has been established to share best practise and development needs.
- We are working with Human Resources to develop generic job titles and job descriptions for technical staff, to create consistency across the institution
- We have developed a draft 'Technical Working Charter' to clarify the role of technical staff to academic colleagues in response to values sessions held.

- We have ensured there are varied and continued opportunities for staff to give feedback, through 'Town Hall' sessions, regular communications by email, via the blog and through Technical Managers, surveys and at the Technicians' Conference.
- A communication plan has been put in place to support technical managers in raising the profile of their technical teams.
- We have developed links with our social media colleagues and the internal communications team to promote technical events and/or successes.
- A push to share news within our own teams and technical networks – email updates/ website sharing.
- We have been encouraging contribution to Faculty Newsletters and Departmental publications, for example, through regular technical updates in local newsletters.

Recognition

- It was identified that although open to technical staff, most were unaware that our in-house accredited route to HEA Fellowship/Associate Fellowship was available to them (the "Bath Scheme"). A workshop was developed for technical staff as an introduction to this and a number are now working on their applications, with the first member of technical staff awarded Fellowship in July 2019.
- A member of technical staff has been appointed as Bath Scheme Champion for technical staff to promote this to technicians.
- We are proactively encouraging/promoting nominations of technical staff to University prize/award schemes. Technical staff have been well represented in both nominations and winners this year, which is very positive as they are a relatively small proportion of the staff body.

Career development

- We have been publishing career profile case studies on the Technicians' blog to show the diversity of career paths followed by technical staff.
- A career framework is in development covering an appropriate range of posts.
- Technical Leaders' Network established to share best practise and development needs
- The possibility of using the apprenticeship levy to fund technical apprenticeships to upskill existing staff has been discussed with Workforce Development. At this stage, the available apprenticeships did not meet our needs, but will revisit this in the future to see if the situation has changed.

Sustainability

- A review of recruitment strategies was undertaken with a view to better attract a diverse range of suitably qualified candidates to roles. Job advert text has been revised and greater use of social media made in advertising positions.

Please provide a 24-month action plan, detailing future plans to ensure your organisation addresses 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 see attached action plan.

Please evidence how the 'technician voice' was present in the development and formation of the institutional action plan:

We engaged with technical staff at various points in the development of this action plan. Before we signed up to the Technician Commitment, initial workshops with technical staff in the Faculties of Science and Engineering & Design set the direction for Technician Progression Project. In July 2019 at our first conference (attended by 100 technical staff), feedback was collected from all technical staff around the four themes of the commitment, and this feedback has informed our action plan.

Our institutional steering group also includes technical staff representatives from across the University who have been involved in the formation of this action plan.

Feedback from values sessions, one-to-one meetings and focus groups held as part of the Technician Progression Project also influenced the final action plan.

Please confirm that your Technician Commitment status and action plan is published on your organisation website and provide the relevant URL here:

<http://go.bath.ac.uk/technician-commitment/>

Signed..........(Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead)

Date: 26/11/2019

Signed..........(Technician Commitment Signatory – Leader of Institution)

Date: 26/11/19