

Technician Commitment: Universities UK action plan

Universities UK (UUK) is a formal supporter of the Technician Commitment. The initiative aims to make sure there is visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research.¹

Many of our 140 members have already signed the Commitment individually, underlining the sector's efforts to enhance and promote technical skills while supporting staff development.

“Technicians and their skills are crucial to the success of the UK’s research and teaching activities and its right that their contributions are recognised. The Technician Commitment gives universities both a platform and the tools to do so.

“As the UK government’s Research and Development People and Culture Strategy recognises, the ability of universities to attract, retain and grow a skilled and diverse workforce is vital. We must acknowledge and support the role of every member of staff in making research and development successful, and technicians are a key part of that success.”

Professor Paul Boyle, Vice-Chancellor of Swansea University and Chair of the Universities UK Research and Innovation Policy Network

This document outlines how UUK will support the values of the Technician Commitment.

¹ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/we-support-technician-commitment>

Meeting the values of the Technician Commitment

Visibility

We are committed to facilitating discussions on the importance of technicians as part of our events and engagement activities. This includes discussions as part of our:

- Research and Innovation Conference.
- Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research Seminars.
- Research and Innovation Policy Network.
- Research Culture and Practice Forum.
- Wider discussions with the stakeholders on research and innovation policy.

We will signpost the work of the Technician Commitment to our members through communications channels, including member updates and social media.

When analysing higher education staff data, we will ensure we are inclusive of technicians where data allows.

Recognition

We will ensure that our work on addressing skills challenges and supporting talent recognises the important role of technicians. We will also discuss technicians as part of our work to help implement the [R&D People and Culture Strategy](#), which aims to ensure that we broaden the range of experiences and accomplishments in R&D that are recognised.

UUK also chairs the [Alternative Uses Group for the R4R-like narrative CV](#), developed in co-partnership UKRI. This group explores alternative applications of the Royal Society's [Résumé for Researchers \(R4R\)-like CV](#) in the assessment of people. For example, through hiring or promotion. Where possible, the group wants to agree aligned approaches to the resources, evidence and training which support its wider adoption and use in alternative application. Several resources have already been

produced by the group and will be made publicly available for other organisations in due course.

Career development

UUK acts as the secretariat of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. In this role, we encourage the adoption of the Concordat's principles, of which one is Professional and Career Development. While the primary audience for the Concordat remains research staff, we encourage institutions to apply the benefits of the Concordat to staff who actively engage in research, including technicians. In our role, we also work with the Concordat's Strategy Group to:

- Report on progress the sector has made in terms of key activities relating to career development.
- Set up working groups on topics where there are systemic challenges.
- Facilitate better understanding of career pathways.

Sustainability

It is important that we stay informed of and help drive developments relating to technicians and the Technician Commitment. We are committed to convening and supporting active discussions, events and workshops with the community on technicians and related topics.

We will also work with the Technician Commitment on its alignment with the outcomes of the Concordats and Agreements Review, which looks for potential future alignments to increase influence, capacity, and efficiency across the landscape.

We are a partner to the recently announced Research England funded UK Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy which aims to ensure the UK has the technical capability and capacity to deliver world leading education, research and innovation.