

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL SERVICES INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN (2022-2025) REPORT

The initial Heriot-Watt Technician Commitment action plan spanned the period 2022 – 2024, extended through to end 2025. A narrative report containing more detail is enclosed as appendix (ii).

Theme	Objective	How impact will be evidenced	RAG	Achievements against plan
Visibility Ensure that technical services colleagues within the organisation are identifiable and that the varied contributions made by this community are visible within and beyond the institution	Creation of an internally facing Technical Services Hub intranet site for technical services colleagues – and the HW community more broadly - to use to find information regarding technical services resources, events and training opportunities.	A Technical Services Hub on the HW intranet was launched in Oct 2021 and plans are underway to expand this resource to encompass useful resources and promotion of training and career development opportunities. Impact will be demonstrated through page hits and feedback from technical services colleagues.		The Technical Services Hub has been established as a key tool for promoting the visibility of technical services at HW and providing technical services colleagues with information and guidance. The Hub includes the various technical services profiles that have been published, a list of technical services colleagues, details of the technical services professional registration scheme and details of learning and teaching training opportunities. It provides a gateway through to the technical services job card system and access to the matrices of estates responsibilities, as well as sharing notes/presentations from technical services quarterly meetings. The Hub is used to promote events to the technical services community and to celebrate winners of the Technical Services Excellence awards.

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				Number of users who have viewed the Hub since creation - 530 Hub hits – 3.7K
	Ensure that clear and consistent job descriptions are in place for technical services colleagues	The University will have a clear set of job descriptions for all technical services roles, built on the standardised job descriptions that are already in place. Feedback from technical services colleagues regarding the job descriptions will be gathered.		Work was undertaken as part of our technical services programme to develop updated generic job descriptions with extensive technical services input and support from HR. A suite of updated job descriptions was published in 2024, along with exemplar HERA job overview forms for each. This has had a significant impact on clarity around expectations attached to the different roles and grades. 77% of respondents in the 2025 technical services experience survey confirmed that the job descriptions are clear. The RAG rating is amber because there is further work required to update job descriptions for Apprentice, GR4 and research technical professional roles. This forms part of the next action plan.
	Define “Technician” within the institution and have this definition available.	Definition has been published on the HW external-facing website		The definition is published on the University’s external-facing website

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	Feature Technical Services colleagues in University newsletters	Profiles of technical services colleagues to be included in staff newsletters and on the Technical Services Hub. The first profile was published in September 2021 with a number planned from all 5 campuses. Survey of technical services to confirm that technical services colleagues feel represented through the University's newsletters, social media channels and marketing materials.	Green	15 profiles of technicians have been published alongside other technical services news items, featuring colleagues from across Schools, Global Research Institutes and campuses. Feedback through the most recent technical services experience survey confirms that technical services colleagues feel there is greater visibility institutionally.
	Development of technical services social media presence	Technical services colleagues will be featured on the University's social media channels, exemplifying the broad range and skill-set of our HW technical services population.	Red	This objective is classed as red because limited progress has been made with technical social media presence. This is largely because the focus has been on developing an image bank and producing profiles of technical services but we have plans in place to boost technical services visibility on social media going forward.
	Technical services colleagues to feature in HW prospectuses and marketing materials.	Evaluation of marketing and promotional materials will confirm that technical services are being represented appropriately.	Yellow	An image bank of technical services images has been created with the aim of capturing imagery of technical services colleagues within our different Schools, GRIs and campuses. This is now a repository for MRAC to draw on when populating websites and prospectuses. An audit has confirmed greater technical services representation on marketing materials but further work is required to ensure that this is more comprehensive going forward.

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Recognition Support technical services to gain recognition through professional registration and awards	Recognition and support of the contribution to teaching made by technical services roles through supporting colleagues to achieve Higher Education Academy accreditation.	Opportunities to achieve Higher Education Academy recognition will be promoted through the Technical Services Hub intranet site and support will be offered through the HW Learning & Teaching Academy. An evaluation will be carried out to identify the number of individuals who have secured a status with the HEA.		Opportunities for technical services colleagues to apply for Associate Fellow/Fellow status with Advance HE (formerly the Higher Education Academy) have been promoted and 5 members of the community have been successful in securing a status to date. Further members of technical services are planning to submit applications.
	Establishment of the Technical Services Excellence Awards	Annual awards programme for technical services was established in spring 2021 covering technical services contributions to research impact, inspiring learning & teaching and collaborative engagement. The awards are promoted on the University intranet and the achievements of colleagues through these awards are recognised at celebration events.		Our annual awards programme recognising both technical services individual and team contributions has been successful since its inception. The Technical Services Excellence awards are an established part of the annual HW Celebrating our People Awards.
	Promote opportunities to become professionally registered to technical services colleagues (Science Council, Engineering Council, BCS)	Information about opportunities to become professionally registered will feature on the Technical Services Hub intranet site. Surveys of technical staff will demonstrate an increase in individuals becoming professionally registered and individuals with professional registration will be profiled on the Technical Services Hub.		Professional registration funding scheme for technical services was launched Sept 2023, supporting members of technical services with the costs of applying for professional registration. 8 members of technical services applied for and secured funding and 3 have secured professional registration status to date.
	Work towards Science Council Employer Champion award.	Science Council Employer Champion award will be achieved.		This was to be explored once the professional registration funding opportunity had been better established. The Science Council

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				Employer Champion scheme has now changed so this objective will be revisited when the new scheme is clear.
Career Development Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways	Develop technical services specific professional career paths/frameworks that clearly document progression opportunities.	Clear information will be in place defining and promoting career pathways and explaining progression routes. When surveyed, technicians will confirm that they understand the career pathways and routes for progression within HW.		Work has been completed to map career pathways at Heriot-Watt, with input and consultation from across technical services. Technical services experience survey in 2025 confirmed that 64% of respondents feel the pathways are clear but identifies that further work is required to clarify progression
	Provide opportunities for mentoring and job shadowing	Technical services colleagues will have opportunities to be mentored or undertake a job shadowing placement. Feedback will be gathered to assess the impact of this initiative. It is hoped that these opportunities will help enable technical services colleagues to build knowledge and confidence, expand their networks and explore new career opportunities.		Through the Edinburgh Technical Collaboration HW has been part of establishing a mentoring and job shadowing scheme for technical services. 15 HW staff have participated to date and 80% of respondents surveyed after the first cohort described the experience as 'Satisfactory' or 'Very Satisfactory'.

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	Create a training and development programme for technical services colleagues	<p>A training matrix will be developed to capture the mandatory training needs of different types and levels of technical services roles.</p> <p>Clear information will be provided to technical services colleagues regarding the training opportunities available to them across the institution – including support offered by Professional & Organisational Development, Learning & Teaching Academy, Research Futures Academy. Clarity will be provided around how to access to funds for training.</p> <p>Surveys of technical services will confirm that colleagues are clear on the mandatory training required for their roles and understand how to access training from a range of internal and external sources.</p>		The training matrix of mandatory training has been developed and rolled out across School technical services. The majority of respondents in the 2025 Technical Services Experience Survey confirmed that they were clear on training requirements for their roles and can access training.
Sustainability				
Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that	Ensure that technical services planning is clearly integrated into broader School and institution-wide strategic and operational plans.	The Technical Services Programme Management Board was established in May 2021, providing a forum for the delivery of the technical services programme but also for		The Technical Services Programme Management Board offered a very positive space for institutional discussions and planning around technical services, something that has hitherto been siloed in Schools.

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technical expertise is fully utilised		<p>institution-wide technical services planning more broadly.</p> <p>Executive Deans, Directors of Learning and Teaching and Directors of Research will work with Senior Technical Services Managers to ensure that technical services requirements are integrated into broader strategic and operational plans for learning and teaching and research.</p>		<p>There has been success in ensuring greater technical services involvement in Boards of Studies and in planning future taught programmes.</p> <p>There have been specific areas of improvement in the School of Textiles and Design where the role of technicians in supporting teaching was reviewed and clarified, and technical services are now more clearly integrated into teaching teams. There have also been improvements in the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences where technical representatives are now invited to all teaching group meetings, and through the creation of the Technician-Academic Liaison Group (TALG).</p>
	Create a Technical Services network to share knowledge and best practice	The aim is to have informal fora in place where technical services colleagues can share knowledge and ideas and network across the institution. Feedback will be gathered regarding these networking opportunities.		Initially the focus was around one network but over the course of the Action Plan we have evolved a range of networks. There is a network focused on bringing together technicians who teach, and the Senior Technical Services Managers now have a supportive technical services management network. An early career technical services network was trialled but appetite for this was limited.

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	Development of technician trainee/apprenticeship programme.	<p>An apprenticeship scheme will be established, to help grow our technical services workforce across different disciplinary areas.</p> <p>Impact will be evidenced through the appointment of apprentices and feedback gathered from apprentices regarding their experiences throughout their programme.</p>		<p>The University supported the introduction of 4 apprenticeships, starting in 2022. These consisted of 2 x Graduate Apprenticeships and 2 x Modern Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Two Apprenticeship Coordinator roles were introduced to provide additional support to the apprentices. This has been a valuable way to engage experienced members of technical services in supporting apprentices and is providing insights around how we can better shape and plan the apprenticeships going forward.</p>
	Develop a plan for sharing assets and access to facilities across the University	An asset register will be established that is accessible to technical services and academic colleagues, along with clarity around how to access equipment/facilities across the institution. Impact will be evidenced through utilisation of the asset register and through records of cross-School usage of equipment/facilities.		The asset register was launched in 2023, with the development undertaken by representatives from the different technical services teams and Procurement. The asset register has proved a valuable resource, with further work now planned to enhance it.
	Provide training in procurement processes and scope for sharing best practice across the institution regarding purchase and maintenance of resources.	Procurement training sessions are being rolled out with encouragement to technical services colleagues to attend. A Procurement forum for technical services colleagues has been established where best practice is discussed and shared. Feedback will be gathered on the above to assess impact.		A regular Procurement Forum was introduced to build understanding and share information with technical services. Training sessions on procurement processes have been provided specifically for technical services colleagues, alongside Lab User Group sessions. A Procurement webpage for technical services

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				has been developed. Feedback on the support and engagement opportunities around procurement has been very positive.
	Create a system that utilises work time and equipment of technical staff	There will be a single job card system in place across the different Schools and there will be greater clarity around costing facilities (e.g. through Small Research Facilities). Staff surveys will confirm that new systems are operating effectively.		A common job card system was developed and launched in 2023 and has been operating effectively. This was evolved through cross-campus collaboration, drawing on expertise in Dubai and Edinburgh technical services.