

# HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL SERVICES INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN

Our community of technical services colleagues are dedicated to supporting the delivery of high quality teaching and research across a range of disciplines at Heriot-Watt.

We will be implementing the action plan below to help support and enhance the visibility and recognition of this community, as well as address challenges around career development and sustainability.

Theme	Objective	How impact will be evidenced
<b>Visibility</b>  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.
	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.
	Define “Technician” within the institution and have this definition available.	Definition will be published on website
	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.
	Development of technical services social media presence	Technical services colleagues will be featured on the University’s social media channels, exemplifying the

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<p><b>Recognition</b></p> <p>Support technical services to gain recognition through professional registration and awards</p>		broad range and skill-set of our HW technical services population.
	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.
	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.
	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.
	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.
	Work towards Science Council Employer Champion award.	Science Council Employer Champion award will be achieved.
<p><b>Career Development</b></p> <p>Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear,</p>	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.
	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,

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documented career pathways		expand their networks and explore new career opportunities.
	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 &amp; Organisational Development, Learning &amp; 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>
<b>Sustainability</b>  Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised	Ensure that technical services planning is clearly integrated into broader School and institution-wide strategic and operational plans.	<p>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 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>
	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.
	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</p>

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		regarding their experiences throughout their programme.
	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.
	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.
	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.