

24-month action plan – IBERS Technician commitment

Visibility

We will ensure that the contributions of technicians to research at IBERS are visible internally and externally.

Intended outcome	Action
Increase external visibility of technicians in our media presence	Highlight technicians in webpage and social media articles including re-posting
Increase visibility of technicians at external events	Include images of technicians on publicity and stakeholder engagement materials
Increase visibility in internal staff communications	Include specific technician section in IBERS Newsletter
Encourage and support technicians to present their work	Include technicians in internal seminar series (IBERS Science Forum) as presenters as well as audience. Explore opportunities to fund technicians to attend and present their work at conferences
Presentation of the Technician journey	Produce Case Studies of a variety of technical career stories to promote role of technical career internally and with students (UG and secondary School).

Recognition

We will encourage and support technical staff to be recognised through professional and external events and schemes

Intended outcome	Action
Promote inclusion of technicians as authors on research publications	Encourage academic staff to ensure technicians are named on research publications. Include Good Practice Guidelines for Publication to be included in IBERS Staff and Student Information Booklet incorporating Credit and Fair Attribution guidelines
Appreciation of continued contribution to IBERS	Recognition of career progression and long service. Spotlight articles in IBERS newsletter and social media posts
Celebrating achievement of technicians	Recognition of career progression and long service. Spotlight articles in IBERS newsletter and social media posts
Internal visibility	Include specific technician section on IBERS Newsletter to widen appreciation of diversity of technical roles in IBERS
Encourage and support technical staff gaining external accreditation	Promote information about professional recognition schemes, provide peer and mentor support during the application process

Career development

We will strive to enable career development pathways.

Intended outcome	Action
Wider understanding of governance and strategy	Encourage and include technician representatives on appropriate committees (e.g. Athena Swann, REF, H&S, Biological and GM safety)
Appreciation of goals and targets of individuals	Regular review of work and training needs with line manager
Wide appreciation of available opportunities	Encourage all technicians to sign up to UK ITSS (Uk institute for Technical Skills and Strategy) newsletter
Skills sharing	Develop a framework in IBERS to enable up-skilling through job shadowing, develop a process to enable short term secondment to explore alternative career routes or gain new skills.
Increased training opportunities	PIs to include technical training as part of grant development. Actively promote options available to all staff including CPD and LifeLong learning.
Technical leadership development	Support opportunities for technical staff to undertake external leadership training to develop skills in team management and strategic planning.
Promotion	Work with Aberystwyth University HR to develop promotion or similar route for advancement of technical specialists
Advancement through mentorship	Identify staff who would benefit from mentorship for career and personal development goals (technical staff to be mentors/mentees)
Career development workshops	Establish regular career development workshops aimed at technical staff. Internal and external speakers, disseminate information about networks and opportunities
Support apprenticeships	Work with regional partners to identify opportunities for technical apprenticeships and training schemes

Sustainability

We will implement processes to ensure sustainability of current and future technical skills in IBERS

Intended outcome	Action
Strategic development	Establish an IBERS Technician Forum (expanded Voice Group activity), that reports to IBERS Exec
Increased peer to peer support	Initiate informal social events for IBERS technicians, similar to that currently operating by the ECR Network
Skills sharing	Establish Standard Operating Procedures for key equipment. Encourage cross-research group training to distribute technical skills and build resilience
Mentorship pairing	Pairing junior technical staff with experienced external expert technicians utilising access to other BBSRC and NERC Institutes.
Engaging with external networks	Encourage technicians to participate in networks, with research collaborators and professional organisations to maintain knowledge and emerging skills needs.
Technician led R&D projects	Develop internal opportunities to encourage technicians to apply for funding where appropriate.

Evaluating impact

We will assess our actions against a planned timeline to ensure they are realistic and effective.

Intended outcome	Action
Technician voice groups	Consult with Technician Voice group to gain their perspective on impact of proposed strategies
Establish measurable outcomes	Establish baseline data and develop appropriate metric to evidence progress of actions highlighted above, ensuring the responsible use of metrics.
Reporting	Progress against Action Plan objectives will be reported to IBERS Executive, PVC-R, Technician Voice Group on a 6 th monthly basis. Reports to include success, challenges, planned changes.
Staff Surveys	Conduct anonymous staff survey for IBERS Technicians. Data and comments to be reviewed by voice group and fed back through that mechanism

Appendix A: Examples of activities and initiatives to address the themes of the Technician Commitment

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, it intends to demonstrate example activities to support institutions in action planning.

Theme	Example Activities
Visibility Ensure that technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution	- Organisations can identify how many technicians they employ - Technician roles have clear job descriptions - Technicians to feature in organisation prospectuses and marketing materials - Technicians to sit on decision making committees where appropriate - Technicians visible in costing mechanisms for research grants - A mechanism for celebrating technician achievements across the organisation - Organisation strategy documents to include technicians where appropriate - A vibrant 'Technician Network'
Recognition Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration	- A consistent policy that where technicians have contributed to research outputs and grants, they are named as authors - Organisation communicates the opportunity to become professionally registered to technical staff (Science Council, Engineering Council). Conferment of the organisational level Science Council Employer Champion award in recognition of the support given to technical staff to gain professional registration and engage in continued professional development - Recognition and support of the teaching aspect of many technician roles through the accreditation of teaching practice through the Higher Education Academy - Internal award schemes recognise the contribution of technical staff - Nominations to external award schemes that recognise the contribution of technical staff (Papin Prizes, Times Higher Education Awards, Institute of Physics Awards)
Career Development Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways	- Technician specific professional career paths/frameworks which clearly document progression opportunities - Professional development opportunities, signposted to technicians and aligned to career pathways - A dedicated webpage showcasing case studies of technician careers - Expansion of technician specific job families in recognition of high level technical specialisms
Sustainability Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised	- Appropriate succession planning for technical roles including the analysis of technician profiles to ensure future sustainability of skills within the organisation - Secondment/placement programmes for technical staff to develop new skills - A technician trainee/apprenticeship programme - Utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy to train and upskill existing staff