

September 2025

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Re: Technician Commitment – Self-Assessment & Action Plan

Dear Nicola

We are delighted to write to signatories of the Technician Commitment following the recent renewal Self-Assessment and Action Plan submissions. Reviews were undertaken by a trained peer review panel, consisting of representatives from the Technician Commitment signatory community. All submissions received have now been assessed and the panellists are delighted to see the positive engagement and evidence of impact of the initiative.

Please find below the feedback from the reviewers of the University of Dundee submission.

1. Comments on technical staff structures (to include any changes to these over the past 6 years in response to the Technician Commitment)

It is clear that the University of Dundee have identified the challenges and nuances involved in differences between various disciplines, schools and directorates in the identification of technical staff and finding a definition that fully encapsulates what a technician is and does is a challenge for institutions across the sector. In that context, we commend the progress made on agreeing a definition of a technician and applaud the inclusivity as it welcomes staff from adjacent roles. We were able to find the definition that you are using in a link later in your submission and within your new 36-month action plan but including this at the outset would make the review process simpler and ensure significant accomplishments like this are not missed. In future submissions, could you further elaborate on why you chose the definition you have, the rationale for this choice and if it remains fit for purpose for your technical community.

Your self-assessment is a positive and honest reflection of where you are currently in your journey and demonstrates your understanding of the context and environment in which technical staff are working. This work demonstrates how it allows for the variations highlighted between Schools and Directorates to be factored into your actions and provisions.

As a general point you may wish to add links throughout future submissions to help reviewers identify significant achievements. As reviewers we would be keen to celebrate your achievements with you. Externally facing websites and news items make for a great way to evidence the incredible work you are doing.

2. Comments on governance, leadership and reporting lines of the Technician Commitment at the institution, along with details on how it is resourced, and information on how the organisation has engaged with the wider community within and beyond their institution. How has this developed since they became a signatory?

The panel felt that there is a strong governance structure with a varied membership of professionals and a well-thought-out Terms of Reference for both the Steering and the Leads groups. It is wonderful to see that there are technical staff within both providing a strong voice within these groups and at each level. It was good to see Trade Union and Head of Talent and Development included in this steering group. It was positive to hear about dedicated FTE for those leading on Technician Commitment activities and that there is administrative support allocated. We were pleased to see a list of members for the steering group but thought there was a missed opportunity to include a list of the leads group too.

We would have like to hear more from the people involved about the roles that each group member has and the work they have done. You could consider providing a webpage showing membership and providing testimonials from representatives about their role within these groups, what they have worked on and their views on your Technician Commitment activities.

Involvement and engagement with events within and beyond the University of Dundee is inspiring to hear about and showcases sector best practice. These events are great for technical networking and have value in the added benefit of providing opportunities for collaborative working across disciplines and through the sharing of best practice. There is impressive delivery and variety of events being held for, and with the inclusion of, technical staff. News items and images of the events happening help the panel to fully appreciate the impact of these events and showcase the wonderful work that you are doing for your technical community. Such materials serve as powerful evidence of the excellent work being undertaken and provide a compelling narrative of your commitment to the technical community. We believe these initiatives deserve to be celebrated more widely.

3. Comments on the RAG analysis provided

The University of Dundee have done a lot of amazing work on their action plan which is evident by the fact there are fourteen green, eleven amber and only three red actions. The three actions classified as 'red' are large-scale projects that will take a considerable amount of time and input but will provide substantial value. We are pleased to see that you have rolled these over into the new action plan.

The twenty-eight tasks within your action plan are clearly identified and have been investigated with a couple of items noted as 'not suited' or having already been included in practices at your institution. This shows how you are constantly evaluating the appropriateness of your action plan which is pleasing to see. You may wish to consider providing an overview of the RAG analysis prior to the details to provide holistic oversight. There is a lot to celebrate, and we hope that you have internally celebrated your successes as there is a lot here to both shout about and to be proud of. Especially the institutional and

local impact of annual leave and benefits becoming harmonised across the whole institution. We look forward to hearing more about career development opportunities that are available and tailored to your technical workforce. We would be keen to hear about your approach to generalised job descriptions and how this works for and is received by your technical community. There is a lot of caution and concerns surrounding this subject to get the balance right so that key specialisms and talent is not lost or compromised. We look forward to seeing the impact of this work in your future submission.

4. Comments on how they have evidenced how their action plan has had/is having impact

The panel acknowledges the breadth of significant work undertaken, which is undoubtedly having a positive and lasting impact on your technical workforce and the wider institutional community. We encourage you to use this momentum as an opportunity to further showcase your achievements—particularly through externally facing news stories and future submissions—as a means of sharing best practice across the sector.

It was encouraging to see comments from technical staff referenced within the careers fair section of your submission. You may wish to build upon this by offering more detailed insights, for example through case studies that illustrate how technical staff have applied their learning, the resulting impact on their roles, and how this has been cascaded within their teams, departments, or broader communities. We would also be interested to learn more about the bespoke training being offered, including its design, delivery, and the outcomes it has generated for both technical staff and the wider university. Capturing and sharing these experiences would provide valuable evidence of the effectiveness of your approach.

Looking ahead, we are keen to understand how you currently capture, or plan to capture, the technician voice, and how this feedback will inform future activity. The “We Are Technicians” project appears to be a promising initiative with potential for sector-wide influence, and we look forward to learning more about its development and impact potentially through a blog or presentation at a national conference.

Finally, we extend our congratulations to the previous nominees and winners of the Dundee Difference Awards, whose contributions clearly merit recognition. We eagerly anticipate hearing more about this year’s nominees and winners in due course.

5. Comments on of how the institution is enacting the recommendations of the TALENT Commission (<https://www.mitalent.ac.uk/theTALENTcommission>)

The University of Dundee have shown how the institution’s Technician Commitment plan and activities are successfully addressing and implementing the recommendations from the TALENT Commission Report. You may wish to consider collating data on and providing case studies of the work that has been done and the impact of this on technical staff and the wider community for future submissions.

The panel were particularly inspired by the breadth of grant activity involving technical staff. This is a testament to the proactive and inclusive culture being fostered. We would be interested to learn more about how this success was achieved, specifically, what support mechanisms were put in place and what strategies were employed to encourage and enable technical staff to apply for grants. Furthermore, it would be helpful to understand the institutional impact of this work: what income has been generated through technical staff-led research grants, and how has this contributed to enhancing research culture at the University of Dundee.

We were also delighted to see the vast array of public engagement and conference opportunities on offer to your technical staff. You may wish to consider providing news stories and testimonials about technical engagement from both the perspective of the technical staff but from the event leads too. How many technical staff engaged in these events and what was the involvement of the technical community (e.g. did any technical staff lead on any workshop sessions or provide talks)?

It is great to see that the University of Dundee sees the value in and actively supports professional development of all staff. The offerings, as well as on-the-job learning is great to see. The list of bespoke courses that you have advertised and have had technical staff engage in is clearly shown. To better evidence impact it would be great to hear personal reflections from those that participated in these courses (e.g. how have these courses benefited them, how are they applying this in their roles, have they shared their experiences with colleagues). It was exciting to read about the free practical training courses that you and Angus College are working together to offer for staff. Congratulations to the Technician Commitment champions that were involved in the organisation and delivery of the 2025 Scottish Technical Network Conference although the panel felt it was a missed opportunity not to include news stories, feedback and/or reflections that flowed from that event

The number of technical staff being recognised at institutional and internal directorate awards is truly inspiring to see. This is definitely something to 'shout about'. We are pleased to see that technical representation and voices have been integrated into various local and institutional level committees and groups. Well done.

We are also pleased that you have used the MI TALENT Commission Report as the foundation of your new Technician Commitment Action Plan. We were impressed that you also took the opportunity to write this into and link to it within the document under 'Context Statement'.

6. Comments on the Institutions 36-month action plan

The University of Dundee has laid out the action plan in a bold, clear, concise and accessible format that is easy to identify with. Labelling the measures element of your actions as 'what does success look like for us?' is a great way of understanding your institution's context whilst outlining what you want to achieve. You have clearly stated what pillars of the Technician Commitment these actions address and what TALENT Commission Report employer recommendations they are related to. You should also be commended on having not being tempted to overload your action plan with tasks. It shows that you have taken into consideration the impact of the actions outlined, the realistic timeline allocated to achieve

these (36-months) and been specific about what your goals are for this action plan. This is a great example of an ambitious, strategic action plan.

It was encouraging to see a desire to standardise technical role descriptors whilst retaining recognition of key identifiers of technicians from specific specialisms. Balancing this latter element will be key for attracting new talent for future recruitment activities and sustainability of career development of internal and external candidates of the wider technical community.

7. Additional comments

The team have clearly factored in inclusion of the technician voice through the addition of technical representatives on committees and groups at various levels throughout the institution and this submission is all the stronger for that inclusive approach. The Technician Commitment is treated and utilised as an enabler for technical staff and not something that is done to them aligning perfectly to the ethos of the Technician Commitment itself.

We would like to offer the following advice in support of the incredible work being carried out and to ensure evidence of impact is more easily demonstrated in future submissions. The team should consider creating a technical news blog that could build upon the current provision of the external webpage. The news blog could be displayed on the external webpage and used to celebrate their Technician Commitment activities, evidence their impact, showcase technical staff achievements, share best practice and celebrate technical community successes. We feel that you have a lot to 'shout about' and celebrate, and this is one mechanism to do this: another option could be an active social media account. We also encourage the team to begin collation of engagement data, testimonials and case studies to further evidence the impact of initiatives and the opportunities on offer for technical staff alongside provision of continued honest and robust evaluation evidence. We really feel that you have a lot to share in relation to best practice and are very considerate of providing honest feedback and evaluation.

This is an impressive submission that clearly articulates and demonstrates the wide range of initiatives and activities that have been put into place for technical staff to engage with. It was wonderful to hear how technical staff have been crucial in shaping the institutions Technician Commitment activities and action plan.

The panel extend a thank you for allowing us to share in your Technician Commitment journey and we are excited to hear what the next 36-months brings!

Congratulations on your positive progress. We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the implementation of your Action Plan and to supporting the on-going development of technicians at the University of Dundee to further increase visibility, recognition, opportunity and sustainability of this vital community.

In recognition of this submission, the University of Dundee will be presented with an **Award of Impact** at the forthcoming Technician Commitment Signatory Event, taking place on 18 November 2025 in London. Thank you for signing up to the event, we look forward to seeing you there.



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