

2 August 2021

FAO: Colin Baines
Head of Technical Skills and Development
University of Manchester
Sackville Street
Manchester M13 9PL

Re: Technician Commitment – Self-Assessment & Action Plan

Dear Colin,

We are delighted to write to signatories of the Technician Commitment following the recent stage two 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 Manchester submission.

1. Approach to the Technician Commitment since becoming a signatory

Since becoming a signatory, the University of Manchester have undertaken various activities of which some significant highlights are indicated below:

- *2 Technical Services reviews in both the Faculty of Science and Engineering and Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health. The aim of the reviews is to re-set a vision of how Technical Services are delivered at the University of Manchester*
- *13 new posts have been created for Technical Services including a Head of Technical Skills and Development*
- *It was encouraging to see cost recovery of technical roles and skills is being explored*
- *It was fantastic to see wellbeing support being drawn upon from technical staff*

Manchester is looking to modernise the profession of technical staff by moving away from teams of technical staff embedded in group/department structures to a more agile workforce that can support the whole university. The panel advises that consideration is given to the opportunities new structures can bring to the career development of the technical community.

2. The RAG Analysis provided

The RAG analysis showed some progress, only two are green, the rest are amber or red. It would be good to see information with regards to work undertaken on the amber statuses. There was also concern on lack of elaboration on the progress, the panel would have appreciated more information on this.

3. How the action plan is having impact

It was pleasing to note that there is clarity in terms of grade differentials and career progression. The importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in the technical community is recognised. There were also ten good explanations of where Manchester's plan has had the most impact and was making headway. It was good to see that Manchester has now incorporated Technician Commitment principles into their technician apprenticeship programme. The development of the Head of Technical Skills and Development post is excellent practice and follows examples in other Russell Group institutions. The panel looks forward to seeing how this work progresses.

4. Additional Initiatives/programmes/activities aligned to the Institution's Technician Commitment that is not covered in the action plan

It was pleasing to note that the technical apprenticeship programme now incorporates T-Level entry. There has been some great work undertaken in this area which should be commended. The panel were very pleased to see that Manchester have established technical staff on faculty level committees. This is excellent practice and ensure voice and representation for the technical community.

5. The 36-month action plan

It was good to see action points against each of the four strands of the Technician Commitment. There were question marks on ownership of activities and timeline with activities, i.e., who is responsible for these activities and when will they be undertaken. Timelines and success criteria would be helpful. Some of the action points look very similar to the previous plan which suggests that there may not have been much progress as initially hoped. However, the panel recognises that the

Technical Services reviews have been the initial focus of Manchester's activity and the panel looks forward to seeing the progress of Manchester's action plan over the next three years.

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 University of Manchester to further increase visibility, recognition, opportunity and sustainability of this vital community.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Pain CSci CChem FRSC

Chair of the Technician Commitment Steering Board



Kelly Vere MBE

Technician Commitment Lead