

## **Technician Commitment Steering Group**

Thursday 23 January 2020

11:00 – 12:00

Meeting Room 504, Level 5 Sherfield Building, South Kensington

### **Minutes**

Meeting #9

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## **1. Welcome and apologies**

### **Present:**

Nazia Hirjee	Faculty Operations Officer, Natural Sciences (Chair) (NH)
Paul Brown	Mechanical Workshop Instrumentation Manager, Physics (PB)
Ailish Harikae	Apprenticeships Manager, Secretary to the Steering Group (AHR)
Allison Hunter	Technical Operations Manager, Life Sciences (AH)
Gareth Hyde	NHLI Safety & Technical Services Coordinator (GH)
Ken Keating	Technical Operations Manager, Bioengineering (KK)
Russell Stracey	RSM Workshop Supervisor, Materials (RS)

### **Apologies**

Joel Abrahams	Biological Research Officer, Department of Surgery & Cancer
Lindsay Comalie	Organisational Development Consultant
Rakesh Patel	Contracts Manager, Estates
Angela Williams	Learning and Development Officer, Estates Division

## **2. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting (NH/AHR)**

- The minutes of the last meeting were deemed to be an accurate record of discussions. RS needed to be added to the list of attendees.

**Action: AHR**

- Actions from the last meeting were considered. It was noted that:
  - Career pathways for technicians: KK has continued to engage with Okan Kibaroglu (ICT) on the use of Lexonis competency management software to host the National Technician Development Centre's Higher Education Technical Taxonomy.
  - Naming of technicians in research papers: Steering group members should share examples of instances where technicians in their areas have been named in research papers, to help inform the development of a policy on this.

**Action: All**

- Awards for technicians: AH suggested that a writing workshop on making an award nomination for technical staff and managers should be held to coincide with the next cycle of internal award schemes.

**Action: AHR**

- Survey of core facility managers: There was agreement that it would be helpful to run a survey of Facility Managers at Imperial, like the one carried out by Institute for Cancer Research. AH and AHR should look at drawing up a list of recipients based on their networks and data from the HR systems and information team, seeking input as necessary from Faculty Operations Officers.

**Action: AH/AHR**

### **3. Technician Commitment: Stage 2 Self-assessment & action planning process (NH)**

- NH reported that the second self-assessment and action planning process for the Technician Commitment asked for reflection and progress on past action plans (which would take the form of a 'Red, Amber, Green' status report), as well as a further 36-month action plan. Imperial's deadline for submitting this was 1 September 2020. In addition to the Technician Commitment submission, NH proposed that a glossy celebratory publication should be created to showcase work done, as well as an event to recognise achieving the plan; these suggestions were supported by all.
- There was agreement that it was crucial to keep the Technician Commitment 'out there' in people's minds and to give technical staff and managers an opportunity to input to the new action plan. Input on the plan could be sought through the Technicians' Network summer event 2020, technical managers' forums and through the Technicians' Network e-newsletter. In addition to reporting on progress against actions, there was agreement that the impact report should touch on unplanned activity such as Imperial's involvement with the Science Museum's Technician Gallery and Lord Sainsbury's visit.
- AHR would start to gather data and write the report, with a view to sharing this for discussion at the next steering group meeting.

**Action: AHR**

### **4. Technician Commitment EDI research – *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: A Technician Lens* (AH)**

- AH told the steering group about a recent research report on the EDI challenges facing the Higher Education technical community by the STEMM-CHANGE programme, an EPSRC-funded Inclusion Matters' project. The research drew on data from HESA returns in 2017-2018 and qualitative data from a number of workshops held with HE technicians between April 2018 and June 2019. The key findings were as follows:
  - 58% of HE technicians in the UK are male.
  - In Physics and Engineering, only 11% of technicians are female.
  - The majority of technicians with managerial positions are male, even in subject disciplines where the majority of technicians are female.
  - Just 10% of HE technicians are of BAME ethnicity.

- 30% of technicians in the sector are aged over 51. In Physics and Engineering, 45% are aged over 51.
- AHR mentioned that the report made a number of recommendations, including: succession planning; increased investment in apprenticeships; initiatives to increase diversity; and technical staff representation on institutional committees like Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter, etc.
- In response to the report, AHR proposed that a similar analysis of EDI data on Imperial's technical community should be undertaken, to better understand the technical profile at the College and whether this reflected the picture at sector level. She also planned to meet with colleagues from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre to get their insights on the report, as well as data on technical staff participation in programmes such as Calibre, IMPACT and Springboard. On this basis, she hoped to include some EDI-related actions in the next 36-month plan.
- There was support for this approach. It was suggested that AHR could draw on similar analyses already completed for initiatives like Athena SWAN. It was also suggested that she reach out to other organisations to find out what they were planning to do in this space.

**Action: AHR**

## **5. Technicians' Network Summer Event 2020 (AHR)**

- AHR said that she hoped to have some support with the arrangements for the summer event from Egle Januleviciute, who was joining the Learning and Development Centre on secondment. Her suggestion was that there should be a change of venue (170 Queen's Gate was overly hot) but that the event should remain at South Kensington.
- There was agreement that holding the event at White City would impact on participant numbers, although there was support for a White City campus tour to be made available to technicians at a different time. Venue suggestions for South Kensington included Sir Alexander Fleming Building (level 1 mezzanine), the new lecture theatre in Blakett Building and RSM level 3.
- Suggestions for themes and speakers included talks on professional registration and mentoring, mini tours of facilities at South Kensington, a talk by Professor Tim Horbury (Physics) on the Solar Orbiter, a talk by Terry Croft (National Technician Development Centre), and a talk by Imperial's Provost on the Academic Strategy.

## **6. Update on NTDC Partner Affiliate Event (AHR/AH)**

- AHR told the steering group that she and AH had attended the National Technician Development Centre's inaugural Partner Affiliate event on 13 November 2019. This was an opportunity to share with other Partner Affiliate organisations and to hear about the NTDC's suite of toolkits. AHR and AH had attended workshops on the NTDC Technical Audit Tool (its skills survey), the Career Pathways tool, a new online tool called CPD Central (an online platform for technicians to record their professional development), an update on the new level 3 HE Technician apprenticeship standard and a new 'distance mentoring' initiative.

## **7. De Montford University visit (NH)**

- NH told the steering group that a delegation of Faculty and Department Operations Managers from De Montford University had visited Imperial on 17 January 2020. One of the initiatives they were interested in hearing about was the Technician Commitment. De Montford were also a signatory but were a year behind us on their journey. KK, AH, AHR and Adam Davis (Teaching Laboratory Manager, Chemistry, and a recent professional registrant) had spoken about Technician Commitment activity at College. The delegation also visited facilities at White City. Hosting the visit could be included in our Impact report.

## 8. Update on professional registration (AH)

- AHR reported that the most recent programme of support for science technicians to become professionally registered had come to an end, with eight participants due to submit applications in February, with assessments to follow in March.
- AHR added that she was in the early stages of planning an event, to be held before Easter, for engineering technicians who would like to become professionally registered. This would most likely involve the following licensed bodies: BCS – the Chartered Institute of IT, IET and IMechE.

## 8. Any Other Business (NH)

- Cross-institutional job shadowing
  - AH reported that members of the South East Technician Commitment Institutional Leads Group were in the process of planning a series of pilot 'job swap' opportunities for technical staff, to take place in February or March. She was planning to host a technician within Life Sciences.

## Summary of Actions

### New:

- *AHR to add RS to the minutes of the last meeting.*
- *AHR to consider organising a writing workshop on award nominations for technical staff and managers.*
- *AH and AHR to draw up a participant list of facility managers to be surveyed.*
- *AHR to draft the Technician Commitment Impact Report, with a view to getting input from the steering group at the next meeting.*
- *AHR to undertake an analysis of EDI data on technical staff at Imperial, to be shared at the next meeting.*
- *AHR to move forward with arrangements for the 2020 summer event.*

### Ongoing:

- *KK to continue to engage with ICT / Lexonis for the career pathways project.*
- *Steering Group members to share case study examples of technicians being named on publications with NH / AHR.*
- *KK and AHR to meet to discuss the Technical Academy initiative.*