Technician Commitment 2024-2027 Action Plan -Submission January 2024

(1) CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented career pathways

(1A) Professional Development Minimum Allowance: To suggest that Technicians receive a minimum number of career and professional development sessions to attend annually. To evaluate how many days are appropriate by sampling a selection of technical staff, and team leaders, discussing further at TC steering and working group meetings, and career events. To use these groups to define the sorts of training courses, meetings, skills development, conferences and networking events that might be included. To provide a standard and potentially widely adopted mechanism to track all training (not just ICR training) that managers can access. New learning management system (LMS) should help with infrastructure, make sure to consult with relevant groups about whether it can facilitate this. If not to look for other methods to achieve this. To investigate with the HR operations team any potential for formalising by including this in the annual appraisal procedure. If so to include professional development allowance in job descriptions. To enhance guidance for managers on training and career development for technical staff. To provide support and where possible, infrastructure to be able to record this easily.	**Success measures:** An agreed upon set of guidance for staff and managers on a set number of professional development days for Technical staff and how they can be used. Annual updates to guidance. **Risks and dependencies:** Inconsistent uptake from Team Leaders or lack of capacity from HR operations Inconsistency across Teams according to culture. Lack of formalisation making protected days hard to maintain. Danger that desire for set number of days could incentivise staff to take part in unnecessary training activities.	**Owner:** Researcher Development Coordinator (RDC), Chief People Officer **TC Aims:** **Career development** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev
(1B) Technical Career Development Programmes (Wellcome Trust Research Culture): To design and deliver practitioner-led career development programmes delivered by ICR and RITG partners, for existing technical staff across Institutions (30) at HSO level or equivalent, and (~25) Core Facilities Managers and Senior technicians. Equipping individuals to grow into senior roles with management and leadership responsibilities or enhance leadership development and maximise services provided respectively.	**Success measures**: 90% of participants reporting that programme assisted their career development, 80% of participant's managers reporting that the programme assisted the participants performance at work	**Owner:** CPT Programme Manager, RDC **TC Aims:** Sustainability, **Career development** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev
(1C) Encourage uptake of apprenticeship levy funded training for existing staff: To increase uptake of apprenticeships among staff by formalising the process, providing guidance, advertising opportunities more widely and celebrating successes in news stories across the Institute. To track the number of Technicians undertaking apprenticeships. To look at the feasibility of setting up a mentorship programme for successful apprentices to support those who are starting. To collect recommendations of courses and providers across the sector.	**Success measures:** Guidance created and circulated. Interested individuals are given support and guidance needed to enrol. 5 individuals studying via apprenticeship levy. **Risks and dependencies:** Lack of support from managers, low quality apprenticeship providers, time pressures prevent completion of apprenticeship study	**Owner:** CPT Programme Manager, RDC **TC Aims:** Sustainability, **Career development** **MIT Recs:** R09 Career path, R10 Prof Dev

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(1D) Engagement with the wider Technical community: To make more opportunities to open future events out to our RITG partners and other relevant Institutions where possible. This will become easier as we build the programmes and events as part of our Career Pathways for Technicians, Wellcome Trust Research Culture award. To continue to promote events from other Institutions that are opened up to our staff. Aim to create four events that have been opened up to other Institutes over the next 3 years	**Success measures:** Evaluation of events shows that 80% of respondents found attendance valuable. **Risks and dependencies:** Poor interest/attendance from partner Institutions	**Owner:** CPT Programme Manager RDC **TC Aims: Career development** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev, R15 Promoting opportunities
(1E) Enhanced training provision for Junior SO grades: To ensure training provision for junior SO grades, and those not enrolled on Wellcome Trust funded (or other) programmes meet the needs for professional development. Continue to use Annual Career development survey to assess this, along with looking at equivalent provisions from peers. Clearer signposting of opportunities at the start of the career path.	**Success measures:** At least two modules from the Wellcome funded programme to be made available to all staff **Risks and dependencies:** Poor interest/attendance	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims: Career development** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev
(1F) Centralised TC Bulletin: In addition to the emails and Newsletters sent from L+OD, we will generate a central bulletin for Technicians on the ICR training website, or Nexus page, allowing for a convenient central place that all current opportunities, including RITG and other external programmes are listed. Consistently link emails to this site. Make sure managers also have opportunities to access.	**Success measures:** Consistently see traffic/clicks to centralised TC Bulletin, and uptake of advertised opportunities. **Risks and dependencies:** Poor interest/attendance	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims: Career development** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev
(1G) Training Data on Technical Staff: To obtain baseline data for attendance of Technicians on training courses delivered by Learning and Organisational development. To identify job families within Technical staff that are underrepresented in training and therefore could be targeted for more professional development and consult directly with these groups as to what they would require. To present training data for Technicians once a year at careers events, along with Alumni data and the exit survey data. To also present to TCSG and relevant groups.	**Success measures:** Increase in training uptake and satisfaction in underrepresented Technical job families **Risks and dependencies:** Current training website does not collect the standard individual ID, and user data is self-input. Reports don't output emails currently. I,e, we are not enable us to accurately capture and evaluate participation by individuals/ grades automatically). Digital services will have to help with this. New LMS/training website will enable easier access to this data.	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims: Career development** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev, R03 Data

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(1H) Ensuring recruitment requirements (e.g. PhD) are necessary where requested.: For clarity around promotion criteria for HSO and SSO, especially where PhD 'or equivalent' is specified. Look at what experience constitutes 'equivalent'. Investigate whether professional registration is a stand-in for the degree. To work with recruitment team to generate a checklist or method ensuring that when recruiting for Technical roles, degree level of education is only specified in job descriptions when necessary.	**Success measures:** Updated guidelines on SO promotions. **Risks and dependencies:** Pushback from recruiting teams	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims**: **Career development** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev

(2) VISIBILITY

Ensure all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution

(2A) Authorships and Acknowledgments: Promote and raise awareness of the ICRs acknowledgement and authorship guidelines, and therefore enable consistent and fair recognition of technical contributions. Ways to do this should include: -A session as part of the Research Integrity series -Including best practice authorship based case studies to the mandatory Research Integrity training for all new scientific starters -Adding guidelines on acknowledgement when adding papers to Symplectic Elements (the research publication management system that we use to collect the career-long publication record for all our scientists) -Take opportunities to address attitudes towards Technical staff, (i.e) challenging any negatively phrased wording in policies, documents and other texts. -Including additional best practice guidance and relevant links in the Research Integrity Slides provided to Team Leaders -To talk to technical staff about their acknowledgment and authorship experiences. Identify good and bad examples of technical contribution acknowledgement. -Internal and external news stories to highlight and celebrate technician input into recent publications.	**Success measures:** Content added to research integrity workshop and guidelines, celebratory article on technician input into publications, guidance added to Symplectic Elements. **Risks and dependencies:** Inconsistency across Teams according to culture.	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Recognition, **Visibility** **MIT Recs:** R11 Recognised and Visible, R10 Prof Dev

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(2) VISIBILITY Ensure all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution		
(2B) Non journal-based methods of acknowledgement To look at ways of supporting Technical staff, especially in fields where journal papers are not the main output, i.e. for teams which work with patents, are producing clinical papers or work as part of large collaborations. Look at ways of linking staff to projects they are involved in.	**Success measures:** Content added to research integrity workshop and guidelines, celebratory article on technician input into publications, guidance added to Symplectic Elements. **Risks and dependencies:** Inconsistency across Teams according to culture, discipline and journal norms.	
(2C) Authorships and Acknowledgments Benchmarking: To periodically (annually) benchmark the ICRs acknowledgement and authorship guidelines against peer Institutions, sector and funder best practices. To raise at TCSG if there are areas where we are not at the sector standard.	**Success measures:** To review this annually with a view to updating in the 2027 action plan update. **Risks and dependencies:** Poor access to guidelines from other institutions	**Owner:** Researcher Development Coordinator, Academic Services **TC Aims:** **Visibility** **MIT Recs:** R11 Recognised and Visible
(2D) Enable acknowledgement and authorship record keeping: To encourage technicians to maintain their own records of publications and acknowledgements. Encourage and support generation of ORCID IDs. Provide training and infrastructure around this including for Symplectic Elements (if appropriate). Encourage adding ORCID ID, and collaborations to Nexus Profiles. Explore alternative, or more appealing ways of doing this such as the 'mind-map' method used at KCL	**Success measures:** ORCID ID workshop delivered. Overview of Symplectic Elements given to SOA, webinar on usage developed and delivered. Good interest and uptake of training provided. **Risks and dependencies:** Lack of interest from technicians	**Owner:** RDC, Academic Services **TC Aims**: **Visibility** **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev, R11 Recognised and Visible
(2E) Track acknowledgement and authorship data for technicians: To explore feasibility of tracking data on acknowledgements and named authorships for Technical Staff to identify trends and whether some ICR divisions are championing technical authorship, and where other might need support.	**Success measures:** Create an annual report on tracked data **Risks and dependencies:** There is currently no easy way to assess authorships and acknowledgements	**Owner:** RDC, Academic Services **TC Aims**: **Visibility** **MIT Recs:** R11 Recognised and Visible, R04 EDI

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(2) VISIBILITY

Ensure all technicians within the organisation are identifiable and that the contribution of technicians is visible within and beyond the institution

(2F) SO Promotions: Announcement/celebration of SO promotions and professional registrations on Nexus and careers events. Workshop (or other method) reiterating criteria for SO promotions. Earlier advertising of available mentorship in advance of promotion window to enable more development in advance.	**Success measures:** Twice yearly updates on promotions **Risks and dependencies:** Participants not wanting to be involved in promotion. Lack of mentors.	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Visibility, Recognition **MIT Recs:** R11 Recognised and Visible
(2G) Non SO Representation and Support: To work towards better engagement and inclusion of Technical job families not included in the SOA in activities such as TCSG and TCWG. To identify if they want to be included. To make sure training provided addresses their needs. • Analytical Scientists; bioinformaticians, statisticians, epidemiologists, data scientists, computational chemists and physicists, and science-specific software developers. • Research Management; clinical trials, data management and centralised services management • Biological Services Unit	**Success measures:** After consultation, and where there is demand, representation of job families in working and steering groups or other workshops. Ensure all job families are well represented in the Professional Scientist mailing lists (see 2017 action plan point 1a) and communicated to. **Risks and dependencies:** Participants not wanting to be involved	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Visibility **MIT Recs:** R11 Recognised and Visible
(2H) Welcome for new SO Grades: Send a welcome email to all new SO grades from SOA and L+OD with details of the SOA. Include the Technician Commitment Logo and links to our external TC page, that we support professional registration and where to find support, our REF status, researcher concordat and other relevant information.	**Success measures:** Email sent to all SO within 2 months of starting **Risks and dependencies:**	**Owner:** RDC, SOA **TC Aims:** Visibility **MIT Recs**: R11 Recognised and Visible, R08 Recruitment practices
(2I) Create a network for Scientific Project Managers Facilitate a network for Scientific Project Managers, operational managers and those with equivalent roles. These are often distributed as a single individual in a division and roles fall between admin, scientific and technical. **Promote** knowledge sharing with people in similar roles in professional services.	**Success measures:** 3 meetings per year for this group with positive evaluation. **Risks and dependencies:** Individuals not wanting to be involved, time pressure.	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Visibility **MIT Recs**: R11 Recognised and Visible, R08 Recruitment practices

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(3) RECOGNITION

Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration and external awards schemes

(3A) Enhanced Professional Registration Support: Maintain and improve support for professional registration through the Science Council and Engineering Council. • Enhance the current guide with relevant links, examples with costs, case studies, timelines, potential ideas to fund successive fees beyond the first year • Create professional registration Teams group and cohort-based workshops and sessions to raise awareness of career benefits and supplement the work done by mentors. • Promote Science Council, ITSS and other online workshops. • Continue with Professional Registration seminars and events. Make this event annual. • Further explore the feasibility of becoming a Science Council Employer Champion.	**Success measures:** Maintain uptake of professional registration through the Science Council and Engineering Council. Annual meetings with interest and good attendance. Regular cohort meetings (minimum 2x per year). **Risks and dependencies:** Budget pressures where fees are provided, low interested in uptake	**Owner:** CPT Programme Manager RDC **TC Aims:** Recognition **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev
(3B) Professional Registration for non-Scientific Officers i.e. other technical staff: Assess demand for extending support for Professional Registration and internal /external programmes such as Future Leaders, Aurora, Herschel and Vivian Thomas for jobs outside of scientific officer grades such as Analytical Scientists, Staff Scientists BSU and Research Managers. Provide equivalent support where there is demand for professional registration. Explore avenues for financial support for registration of non-SO grades outside of the SOA**.** Explore a way to evaluate where grants already include funding for membership fees and increase uptake this way. Make sure benefits are made appealing to team leaders, i.e. travel bursaries, free training opportunities, and ability to peer review. Look at feasibility/cost of Institution wide membership. Note that often fees are more for Technical staff than students and postdocs. Can this be challenged.	**Success measures:** 3 Individuals applying **Risks and dependencies:** Unidentified funding or budget pressures where fees are provided, low interested in PR, individuals not funding fees beyond first year.	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Recognition **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev, R03 Data
(3C) Professional Registration in Management and Leadership and Development Programmes: Embed professional registration in new WT funded management and leadership development programmes for technicians.	**Success measures:** 60% of participants pursue registration	**Owner:** CPT Programme Manager RDC **TC Aims:** Recognition **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev

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(3) RECOGNITION Support technicians to gain recognition through professional registration and external awards schemes		
(3D) External Prizes: To put forward nominees to internal awards to external awards such as the Papin Prize and RITA awards. Circulate details of prizes across all ICR platforms (Nexus, Email, Bulletins). Continue to celebrate awards	**Success measures:** Identify at least one ICR nominee for each prize per year **Risks and dependencies:** Participants not wanting to be involved. Team leaders/PIs may not see technician awards as priority.	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Recognition **MIT Recs:** R11 Recognised and Visible

(4) SUSTAINABILITY Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised		
(4A) Internal technician exchange programme pilot – placements: Pilot an annual technician exchange programme between ICR divisions enabling work shadowing across two reciprocal days. Use the scheme both as a means of learning and training, networking and to foster idea generation across divisions. Post-exchange evaluation feedback from participants to improve the scheme. Look into the possibility of expanding across Institutions.	**Success measures:** Four individuals take part in a pilot exchange with feedback, evaluation and reflection feeding into a feasibility report for making this an annual programme. **Risks and dependencies:** Pushback from Team Leaders and Inconsistency across Teams according to culture. Lack of interest	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims**: Sustainability more than career development **MIT Recs:** R10 Prof Dev, R09 Career path
(4B) Support for Managers around SO Promotion and PD Programmes: Better support for managers who need to prepare for their staff taking SO promotion rounds and Herschel/Vivian Thomas and other Professional development programmes by allowing enough notice in communications enabling planning for financial forecasts and writing supporting statements.	**Success measures:** Maintain good level of attendance of external Career Development programmes. Managers to be notified in advance where possible or at latest within 3 days of programmes opening. **Risks and dependencies:** Lack of timely information from programme providers	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Sustainability **MIT Recs:** R09 Career path

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(4) SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised

(4C) Recruit Laboratory Technician Apprentices as future SOs: To develop a Level 3 Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship Programme (LTAP) containing core skills such as testing and analysis, quality procedures, laboratory safety, with ICR-tailored Chemistry/Biology/Physics/Engineering, behaviours for a positive research culture, research integrity, team-working, and inclusivity. Delivered on-site via in-person one-to-one and small group training. On completion of their LTA support applications to a Scientific Officer role at ICR, or equivalent at other institutions.	**Success measures:** 50% of apprentices to take SO or equivalent roles within 3 months of successfully completing apprenticeship at ICR **Risks and dependencies:** Pilot programme, dependant on apprenticeship provider and quality of recruitment/ candidates.	**Owner:** CPT Programme Manager RDC **TC Aims:** Sustainability **MIT Recs:** R07 Vocational paths, R09 Career path
(4D) Survey on motivation and ambition [Carried over from 2021 Action Plan]: Add additional questions to the annual career development survey on motivation and ambition. and discuss topic during careers events. Survey incoming SOs about their reasons for pursuing this career pathway.	**Success measures:** Raise survey response rates to 20+% **Risks and dependencies:** Survey fatigue,	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Sustainability **MIT Recs:** R03 Data
(4E) Improve data obtained through leaver questionnaire [Carried over from 2021 Action Plan]: Bring summary of SO grade Leavers and Alumni data to a Careers event in early 2024. Look to make this annual, wrap in with Alumni Data.	**Success measures:** Data presented annually in careers events **Risks and dependencies:** HR info unable to provide data	**Owner:** RDC **TC Aims:** Sustainability **MIT Recs:** R03 Data