

Background

The Technician Commitment, is a university and research institution initiative, led by a steering board of sector bodies, hosted by the UK Institute for Technical Skills & Strategy. The Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines. Universities and research institutes are invited to become signatories of the Technician Commitment and pledge action to tackle the key challenges affecting their technical staff.

The Royal Society of Biology has been a supporting signatory of the Commitment since 2018, and are proposing a refreshed action plan for technicians, building on the actions we have already put into practice. This plan will showcase support for technical staff, and put the RSB in a driving position as a lead professional body for the technical community within the biosciences.

Technician commitment: Royal Society of Biology action plan for technicians and technical staff

The Royal Society of Biology is committed to providing dedicated support to technical staff across both academia and industry. This action plan outlines key deliverables under the four key pillars;

- Visibility
- Recognition
- Career development
- Sustainability.

The action plan will also aim to support the vision set out in the Society's 2025 – 2030 strategy:

Our Vision is a world that values biology's contribution to understanding and improving life for all. Through Our Values of Integrity, Objectivity, Leadership and Curiosity we will embrace diversity and foster an inclusive environment, promote learning and collaboration, and champion the effective use of bioscience knowledge.

Timeline: By the end of 2030 we will have achieved a series of activity showcasing the RSB's ongoing support for technical staff. This activity will include raising visibility, improving recognition, supporting career development and ensuring sustainability for technical roles.

Key Areas of the Technician Commitment action plan and objectives:

Visibility

1. **Continue to highlight the importance of technical roles** - RSB platforms such as the Biologist through member profiles.

This objective will raise the profile and awareness of technical roles to the bioscience community and in turn provide inspiration to others wishing to pursue technical careers.

2. **Presence on the new RSB website** - to include technician case studies.

This objective will support technical staff by providing an opportunity to showcase their work and inspire career pathways for those wanting to follow a technical route.

3. **Increase visibility at events** - highlighting technical routes in the annual awards ceremony.

When resource allows, have an RSB presence at events for technicians. By highlighting the achievements of technical apprentices at the awards ceremony this objective is intended to inspire the next generation of technicians. By having RSB presence at relevant events, we can support technicians working towards professional registration by offering guidance and advice.

Recognition

1. **Highlight and celebrate technicians** achieving professional registration in the Biologist. Periodically also highlight registrants on social media.

By highlighting the achievements of technical staff to the wider bioscience community and within the technical community. This objective will inspire the next generation of technicians to work towards registration. This improves the profile of the registers (RSciTech, RSci, CSci) to technicians so that they can see it as a benchmark for acknowledging skills, knowledge and experience in the workplace.

2. **Publicly visible professional registers on new RSB website**

Public recognition enables verification of any technician's registration standing. This gives an employer confidence in an individual's credentials.

3. **Accreditation** – The availability and quality of technical staff within Higher Education is considered as part of the wider learning environment during Accreditation Assessments.

By ensuring that technical roles are considered as part of the accreditation assessment then this sends a message that the RSB sees the role they play of high value and this in turn will effect a changing attitude towards technical staff in the HE sector.

Career Development

1. **Technical skills development** – continue to offer and develop a training offering which helps technicians and those new to the technical workforce gain key skills. This objective will support skills development for technicians and highlight the Society's dedication to supporting their continuing professional development. Investing in the skills development of technical staff will make a difference to the industries they work in by improving expertise and talent.
2. **Diversity and inclusion (DI) policy** – ensure continued representation of technical staff on RSB Committees such as Membership and Professional Affairs (MPA) and Education Science Policy (ESP). The society is keen to ensure a broad representation on its committees; achieved by including a voice from the technical community. In having this the RSB can ensure that in its operations, this sector is represented, in turn creating opportunities to influence the RSB at a strategic level.
3. **Careers activity** – Ensure technical staff have opportunities for participating in our careers work. This presents the opportunity for technical staff to inspire the next generation of technicians. This will be achieved by hosting technical speakers at careers events and other fora such as online conferences/webinars/videos.

Sustainability

1. **T Levels and apprentices** - RSB is actively participating in working groups and consultations relating to technical education pathways. The Society is continues to be responsive to this growing area of development. If we are active in this area, we are able to seize opportunities to engage with a potentially new group of members. This objective showcases our commitment to technical development from an early career stage.
2. **Apprentices and professional registration/membership, and celebration of apprentices** - The Society offers a reduced membership for those currently undertaking an apprenticeship and supports the shortened application routes for recognized apprentices. By doing so, we highlight apprentices as a career path and this in turn ensures sustainability of future technical roles. The Society will continue to offer and promote the Apprentice of the Year award, which again highlights this career path and may encourage or inspire younger generations to take up this route.
3. **Accreditation of degree apprenticeships** - The Society has begun accrediting degree apprenticeships to recognise these as a valuable form of study developing both on-the-job experience and academic learning. As more of these become accredited this supports future generations to seek out these degrees and builds the technical workforce.