Sheffield Hallam University Technician Commitment Action Plan and Tracker

April 2019

Theme	Action Ref. no.	Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsible for delivery	Accountable for delivery	Measures of success and other key metrics
1) Visibility	1.1)	Showcase the diversity of the University's technical community widely within the Institution.	Use the internal communications channels and networks to promote Technical Services more widely, particularly new initiatives and achievements.	Ongoing from April 2019	Asst. Heads of University Technical Services and Internal Communications Team.	Head of University Technical Services.	A minimum of two University-wide comms pieces exclusively related to Technical Services per annum.
	1.2)	Create a single, unified and unified Technical Services team delivering to the institution as a whole.	1) Clearly identify all technical staff working within the organisation and ensure that all individuals and teams are reflected on an up-to-date organogram 2) Hold regular Technical Services Leadership Team meetings (monthly or as business need dictates) and larger all-staff meeting (quarterly or as business need dictates). 3) Organise team-building events and activities and actively	Ongoing from April 2019	Head of University Technical Services, Asst. Heads of University Technical Services, Technical Managers and Team Leaders, supported by Human Resources and Organisational Development.	Head of University Technical Services and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.	Creation of an up-to-date organogram for technical services. Communicate this among the team and make available alongside other relevant documentation related to Professional Services business units on the intranet. Commence and maintain ongoing leadership and all-staff meetings with tracking and regular monitoring of actions.

			encourage and promote participation at all levels.				Delivery of specific team-building events and activities for both discrete groups within Technical Services and the wider technical team.
	1.3)	Showcase technical skills, knowledge and experience more widely within the Institution.	1) Create a single "home" for Technical Services to create a technical identity. 2) Accurately represent and reflect the role of Technical Services among senior colleagues from other areas of the business. 3) Update and maintain webpages and intranet pages for technical services including the pages dedicated to Technician Commitment	Ongoing from April 2019	Asst. Heads of University Technical Services, Head of Operations for Student and Academic Services, Group Director of Student and Academic Services.	Head of University Technical Services and Group Director of Student and Academic Services.	Access to a small group of offices that are centrally located adjacent to other Professional Services Business units. These will have access to a meeting room and display cases *etc.* in order to create an identity for Technical Services showcasing the diversity of activities/outputs delivered.

1.4)	Establish and promote an annual Technical Services conference and invite all TS staff.	Commit to funding and delivering an annual Technical Services conference and use this as a platform to engage with colleagues from within the wider University community.	Commencing October/November 2019 and then ongoing	Asst Heads of University Technical Services and Chief Finance Officer.	Head of University Technical Services.	An established, well-resourced and attended annual event with an organised programme of internal and external speakers covering topics relevant to technical services but also of general interest within both the sector and industry.
1.5)	Actively encourage PhD students, PDRAs and academic colleagues to attend the annual conference with keynote and other presentations delivered by these groups in parallel with presentations by technical staff.	Secure funding and assume responsibility for arranging and delivering an annual conference hosted and delivered by Technical Services. Arrange keynote and other presentations.	April 2019 and ongoing	Asst. Heads of University Technical Services and Chief Finance Officer.	Head of University Technical Services and Vice Chancellor.	Successful delivery of an inclusive and engaging annual event reflecting the diversity of activities delivered and supported by Technical Services at SHU across teaching, research and commercial activities.
1.6)	Establish a costing mechanism and actively promote the direct costing or technical support on research grants.	1) In collaboration with colleagues in finance, agree a set of costings for technical time at all levels using a fEC approach so that these are acceptable to UKRI and other external funders. 2) Once approved by the University governance, promote these among	January 2020	Head of University Technical Services and Head of Research Services, Pro Vice Chancellors, Heads of Department, Heads of Research Centres and academic colleagues more widely.	Chief Finance Officer and Vice Chancellor.	Measured and sustainable increases in both the proportion and amount of research funding that includes accurately costed technical support over the next 5 years.

			academic colleagues and PVCs, HoDs and HoRCs ensure these are included on all grant applications.			
	1.7)	Raise the profile of Technical Services within the organisation, ensuring that the service has appropriate representation on planning/steering groups at strategic level.	Actively engage senior colleagues and request the inclusion of Technical Services representation on all relevant committees and other groups within the University (including Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Estates and Space Management, IT, Professional Services Leadership Team *etc.*).	April 2019 and ongoing	Head of University Technical Services.	Group Director of Student and Academic Services and Chief Operating Officer.	Appropriate representation of Technical Services on all relevant meetings and committees *etc.* based on business need. Elimination of circumstances where technical leaders and managers are unaware of key information affecting their teams and/or unable to plan for changes affecting service delivery *etc.*
	1.8)	Ensuring that Technical Services has appropriate representation within promotional material including prospectuses *etc.*	Actively engage the Group Director for Recruitment, Communications and Marketing and other relevant senior colleagues in order to ensure that specific successes and the overall strength and diversity of Technical Services at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) is presented externally, in line with the University's	April 2019 and ongoing	Head of University Technical Services.	Group Director of Student and Academic Services, Group Director for Recruitment, Communications and Marketing, Chief Operating Officer and Vice Chancellor.	Inclusion of visual within relevant promotional material depicting activities delivered by Technical Services staff.

			"applied" theme and values.				
2) Recognition	2.1)	Raise awareness of the strength and depth of technical expertise across the entire university	Create a "home" that is reflective of the unified service at SHU. This space will have both physical and virtual representations of the diverse range of activities delivered by technical staff. Using the annual conference and internal and external comms channels, ensure that the diversity and vibrance of Technical Services at SHU is shared both with colleagues and externally.	April 2019 and ongoing	Asst. Heads of University Technical Services and Director of Facilities Directorate.	Head of University Technical Services.	A heightened understanding of what Technical Services at SHU is and the value that this group of staff bring to the student experience and research outputs. Communicate the clear and tangible link between the role and outputs of Technical Services and the "applied" vales and wider theme of SHU.
	2.2)	Promote the use of established institutional reward and recognition schemes/routes to technical managers as a means of recognising excellence and exceptional performance among technical staff.	Actively encourage managers at all levels to nominate members of their team for recognition through established schemes where performance has been genuinely exceptional and sustained.	April 2019 and ongoing	Team Leaders, Technical Managers and Asst. Heads of University Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.	Increased recognition of genuinely exceptional performance among Technical Services colleagues, in line with other Professional Services business units. This is to include non-core activities such as outreach and engagement and environmental sustainability.

	2.3)	Technical staff actively contribute towards formal University outreach and engagement activities.	Technical staff actively involved in visits to external bodies and institutions in support of wider outreach and engagement activities. This is to include local FE colleges, local schools and businesses along with open days and other events.	July 2019 and ongoing	Asst. Heads of University Technical Services and Recruitment, Reputation and Outreach.	Head of University Technical Services and Group Director for Recruitment, Communications and Marketing.	Inclusion of technical staff within key external visits (both at and away from SHU).\n\nActive participation in extramural visits to local FE colleges and Schools to project the "applied" theme and values of the University more widely within the region and beyond .
	2.4)	Communicate and encourage professional registration among all technical staff at all levels as a route to career long CPPD.	Increasing the numbers of technical staff registering with professional bodies and obtaining formal registration/chartered status.\n\nIncreasing levels using this as a means of undertaking CPPD to demonstrate skills, knowledge and experience.	April 2019 and ongoing	All technical staff and managers, Asst. Heads of University Technical Services and Head of University Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.	20% members of technical staff register within the first year and growing this number thereafter.\n\nProviding support for groups of staff to attend annual conferences and other related events.
	2.5)	Nominate technical staff for appropriate external award schemes.	Actively identify exceptional performance both generally and in specific areas and encourage Technical Managers to nominate staff for external award schemes such as S-Lab and The Times HE	September 2019 and ongoing	Team Leaders, Technical Managers and Asst. Heads of University Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services.	Nomination of members of the technical team, ultimately leading to short-listing and winning external awards.

			Awards: Technician of the Year etc.				
	2.6)	Contribute towards the development of external networks and frameworks regionally and nationally.	Actively engage with other institutions and external bodies such as the Science Council and National Technicians Development Centre *etc.* to contribute directly to the development of external professionalisation and other frameworks.	April 2019 and ongoing	Technical Managers and Asst. Heads of University Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services.	Inclusion and active participation in key discussions, workshops and events organised by nationally recognised bodies and other institutions to ensure that Technical Services at SHU and the "applied" theme of the University is captured within these forums.
	2.7)	Technical staff are appropriately and formally recognised within research outputs where the contribution merits.	Actively encourage academic colleagues to include technical staff as named authors or within acknowledgments on papers/journal articles and conference material.	April 2019 and ongoing	Asst. Heads of University Technical Services and Head of University Technical Services.	Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Global Engagement.	A demonstrable increase in the formal recognition of the contributions made by technical staff to research outputs.
3) Career Development	3.1)	Proactively engage in PDRs and Mid-Year Reviews.	All staff are to be actively encouraged to contribute to the PDR process, whether as an appraiser or an appraisee.	July 2019 and ongoing	Team Leaders, Technical Managers, Asst. Heads of Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services, Group Director of Student and Academic Services and Chief Operating Officer.	Both participation levels and the quality of P&DRs improves by focusing discussions on both performance, opportunities for development and future aspirations.
	3.2)	Deliver high-quality meaningful PDRs and Mid-Year Reviews for all staff.	Delivery of a service-wide skills audit to generate outputs for enabling more meaningful discussion	April 2019 and ongoing	All Technical Managers and Team Leaders	Head of University Technical Services and Director of Human Resource	Increasing in the overall quality and effectiveness of PDRs by aligning these more closely with the Professional Services Capability Framework. This

			around developmental needs during reviews.			and Organisational Development.	could be extended and modified over the next 2-3 years in order to develop something more specific to Technical Services.
	3.3)	Develop clearly defined career pathways for all technical staff.	Use structural and operational changes arising from PSOM to create clearly defined career pathways within Technical Services and ensure parity among these.	April 2019 and ongoing	Head of University Technical Services.	Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development and Chief Operating Officer.	Development and communication of alternate, parallel career pathways within Technical Services. Delivery of the necessary structures and enabling framework over the next 3-5 years .
	3.4)	Development and maintenance of specific technical job description families spanning all levels of skill, knowledge and experience within the service.	Utilise PSOM as a catalyst to deliver a coherent job family for covering all levels of Technical Services.	April 2019 to September 2019	Asst. Head of University Technical Services and Head of University Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services and Group Director of Student and Academic Services.	As part of PSOM, collaboratively develop a job description family and associated job descriptions that are representative of the diversity, skill and expertise within Technical Services. Align these more broadly with the Professional Services Capability Framework. Ensure that these are regularly updated (annually or as business need dictates).
	3.5)	Support and encourage staff at all levels to apply	Other than general encouragement at all levels, staff will be	July 2019 and ongoing	All technical staff, with Technical Managers and	Head of University	Increased number of technical staff moving to alternate roles within the

		for roles (both promotions and "sideways moves").	offered more opportunity for informal mentoring, coaching and/or advice in order to improve confidence levels and/or prepare job applications, or for interviews from colleagues in other areas of the service.		Asst. Heads of University Technical Services to facilitate and coordinate.	Technical Services.	service with a target of 5% within 3 years. Ultimately, the aim is a network of colleagues that organise themselves into small informal groups that constitute a self-support network (like Action Learning Sets).
	3.6)	Utilise appropriate communications channels to highlight specific individuals as exemplars of technical career progression and pathways.	Focusing on individuals within the service prepare a narrative around their role and professional and personal "journey".	June 2019 and then biannually (approx.)	Head of University Technical Services and Head of Internal Communications.	Head of University Technical Services.	A series of focused comms pieces highlighting and reflecting the contribution, diversity and expertise within Technical Services. In particular, these should draw attention to the journey that an individual has been in within their career to date, what a day-in-the-life looks like for them and what their hopes and aspirations for the future are.
	3.7)	Work with academic colleagues to increase costing of technical time within grant applications.	Actively engage with the Pro Vice Chancellor of Research and Global Engagement, Directors of Research Institutes and research support colleagues to develop robust costings for Technical Services and ensure that these are included on future grant	April 2019 and ongoing	Head of University Technical Services.	Pro Vice Chancellor of Research and Global Engagement, Directors of Research Institutes and all research-active academic colleagues who	A University Leadership Team-level decision that this approach is to be applied unilaterally other than by specific exception. An agreement regarding the level of baseline support for Technical Services linked to the evolution of the 5-year strategic research plan and how this will likely evolve.

			applications where relevant.			require technical support.	
4) Sustainability	4.1)	Develop a strategic approach to succession planning based around the longer/wider strategic aims of the institution.	Engage regularly with the wider leadership of the University in order to develop effective business partnerships with Technical Services. The aim of which is to clearly understand and translate the strategic aims of the University ensuring that Technical Services is best positioned to support these.	Ongoing from April 2019	Asst Heads of University Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services.	Better alignment of technical resources with the teaching, research and commercialisation support requirements of SHU.
	4.2)	Proactively encourage staff to gain professional qualifications to support their technical skills and experience.	Ensure that staff at all levels are exposed to the various external bodies and opportunities to gain registration and/or professional qualifications (HEaTED, IST *etc.*).	Ongoing from April 2019	Asst. Heads of University Technical Services, Technical Managers and Team Leaders.	Head of University Technical Services.	10% of technical staff attain a relevant professional qualification within the next 3 years.
	4.3)	Monitor, amend and update this action plan and tracker.	Review and revise this action plan on a quarterly basis going forward.	Ongoing from June 2019	Asst Heads of University Technical Services and all Technical Staff.	Head of University Technical Services.	Delivering in the key areas outlined in this plan and ensuring that specific actions remain relevant and are amended in order to ensure that this remains so. Communicate these changes to colleagues using appropriate channels and ensure that the webpage remains up to date.

4.4)	Take corrective action(s) as required to ensure and maintain progress.	Ensure that any corrective actions identified during a review of both the action plan/tracker and/or progress made against this are enacted.	Ongoing from June 2019	Technical Managers and Asst Heads of University Technical Services and all technical staff.	Group Director of Student and Academic Services and Head of University Technical Services.	Significant progress is made in line with this action plan and that interventions are made in order to ensure that this is the case.
4.5)	Take a strategic approach to the maintenance of existing skills and upskilling of existing staff in order to meet evolving business needs.	Create and appoint to a new post to enable Technical Modernisation and Innovation. This will oversee the holistic development of the entire technical team.	September 2019	Head of University Technical Services.	Group Director of Student and Academic Services.	Conduct a skills audit involving all technical staff in collaboration with the NTDC. Using the Qualtrics-based tool create a detailed "map" of all skills within the service and use this information to conduct regular monitoring to ensure that these are maintained such that they align with current and future business needs at SHU.
4.6)	Develop a sustainable business model for Technical Services.	Work with academic colleagues and the research support team to develop costing and pricing models for technical time and where appropriate, equipment/facility charge-out rates.	Ongoing April 2019	PVC Research and Global Engagement, Pro Vice Chancellors, Directors of Research Institutes.	Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Global Engagement and Chief Operating Officer.	Increasing the proportion of technical time funded directly by grant and other external income. Grow support for Technical Services by engaging and developing commercialisation and revenue generation. This is a longer-term strategic aim of the organisation as a whole

						and is related to the strategic research plan.
4.7)	Encourage technical staff to engage directly with opportunities for commercialisation and revenue generation.	Establish a dedicated resource within Technical Services to develop and exploit opportunities for commercialisation. Work with colleagues in the Directorates of Finance, Estates and Knowledge Transfer to facilitate develop opportunities for commercialisation and revenue generation, including access to equipment and technical spaces, particularly where this is associated with conferencing/ events.	Ongoing April 2019	Technical Modernisation and Innovation postholder and Technical Managers.	Head of University Technical Services, Director of Corporate Services and Chief Finance Officer.	A minimum of 10% increase in revenue generation for the next 5 years. Development and exploitation of 2 significant pieces of IP related to Technical Services over the next 3 years. A growing commercial awareness among Technical Managers and all technical staff resulting in new and innovative ideas for further exploration.
4.8)	Utilise the apprenticeship levy to train and ultimately recruit apprentices to the Technical Services team.	Work with the Group Director of Business Engagement, Skills and Employability to establish a partnership with a local college to recruit apprentices at an appropriate level to meet the business needs of SHU going forward.	January 2020	Technical Modernisation and Innovation postholder and Asst. Head of University Technical Services.	Head of University Technical Services.	Develop level 3 and higher-level apprenticeships as a sustainable route to recruit to Technical Services and better enable succession planning. Four full-time level 3 apprentices recruited and trained over the next 2-4 years and generate new opportunities for Technical Services to recruit directly

							from higher apprenticeships.