We hope you are well in these extraordinary times. As we commence a new academic year, we’re delighted to bring you the latest update from the Technician Commitment.

This newsletter includes details of the next Technician Commitment Signatory Event, information on a new opportunity to join the pool of Technician Commitment peer reviewers, news on our response to the Government’s Research and Development Roadmap, our report on the impact of COVID-19 on the sector’s technical community, details of the shortlisted nominees for this year’s Times Higher Education Outstanding Technician of the Year Award, an invitation to join the Science Council at an Employer Forum and a reminder of key dates for forthcoming institutional Technician Commitment Self-Assessment and Action Plan submissions.

As ever, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with the team with any queries on techscommit@gatsby.org.uk.

You can also follow the Technician Commitment on Twitter at @TechsCommit.
Autumn 2020 Virtual Signatory Event

A key strength of the Technician Commitment is the community of practice that has developed through the biannual signatory events. We are therefore delighted to announce that the next Technician Commitment Signatory Event will take place on Thursday 5th November 2020 at what will be our first virtual event. The meeting will be shorter than our previous events but will still include a series of short presentations from signatory and stakeholder organisations and further opportunities to network and share best practice.

As per previous events, this is free to attend. Registration is available at https://techniciancommitmentvirtual2020.eventbrite.co.uk using the password virtual. A full programme will be circulated to attendees in due course.

We look forward to seeing you online in November for what promises to be another exciting and stimulating event.

Opportunity: Call to join the Technician Commitment Peer Review Pool

Technician Commitment Self-Assessments and Action Plans are peer reviewed by the Technician Commitment community and the current pool of reviewers consists of both signatory leads and technical colleagues. Given the rapid uptake of the Technician Commitment across the sector, we are looking to expand our current pool of reviewers. This offers an excellent opportunity to understand progress and activity related to the Technician Commitment across the sector.

Full support and guidance will be provided. Reviewers should be available to attend a virtual training session on the morning of the 13th October 2020 (9.30am – 12.30pm) and available to undertake a small number of assessments electronically in December and January.

Please note that existing reviewers are also requested to attend this training as a refresher.

If you are interested in joining the pool of peer reviewers please contact Carly Dellar (carly.dellar@gatsby.org.uk) by the 9th October 2020.

We would be grateful if you could circulate this opportunity to your colleagues as appropriate.
The Technician Commitment Steering Board welcomed the publication of the Government’s R&D Roadmap in July 2020 and the clear recognition of the crucial contributions of the technical community to UK research and development.

Dr Helen Pain, Chair of the Technician Commitment Steering Board said:

“The Government’s R&D Roadmap makes strong references to the importance of the technical community throughout, focusing on a clear need to ensure greater visibility, recognition and clearer career pathways for technical roles and careers, alongside the need to address skills gaps and retention challenges. The Technician Commitment was proud to welcome UKRI as a signatory earlier this year and we look forward to continuing our work together to advance status and opportunity for the technical community.

The R&D Roadmap provides a clear statement that the technical community will be at the core of UK research and development and key to driving innovation. We look forward to being part of the conversation moving forwards.”

The Technician Commitment submitted a formal response to the R&D Roadmap which will shortly be published on the Technician Commitment website.
COVID-19: The Impact on Technicians in UK Higher Education & Research

A new report from the Technician Commitment and partners highlights the impact of COVID-19 on the technical community in higher education and research.

A collaborative team consisting of the Technician Commitment, Science Council, Institute of Physics, Royal Society of Biology, Royal Society of Chemistry, Wellcome and the Research England funded Midlands Innovation TALENT programme undertook a national survey in order to understand the impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on the technical workforce in higher education and research. Over 1300 responses were collected from technicians across 99 universities and research institutes from all four nations of the UK.

The resulting report, ‘COVID19: The Impact on Technicians in UK Higher Education & Research’ offers unprecedented insight into the impact of the pandemic on working practices for technicians and shines a light on technical contributions at an extraordinary time. The technical community has been at the forefront of the sector’s response to COVID-19, with many technical colleagues closely involved in the rapid shut down of facilities and campuses.

Technicians have also made a significant contribution to the civic response to the pandemic, for example collating, manufacturing and distributing PPE, manufacturing hand sanitiser and enabling and supporting COVID-19 research and the national testing effort. As campuses and facilities gradually reopen, technical colleagues are ensuring a safe return to work, designing and implementing new processes and policies to ensure a safe, and socially distanced working environment for all.

The report offers a number of recommendations in order to ensure visibility, recognition and inclusion of the key roles of the technical community in the safe return to campuses to ensure all involved are fully supported.

We are grateful to everyone who completed or shared this survey with technical colleagues and networks. Many thanks for your support.
Following the success of the inaugural Outstanding Technician of the Year category in the 2019 Times Higher Education (THE) Awards, we are delighted to announce the shortlisted nominees for the THE Outstanding Technician of the Year 2020!

Congratulations to:

David de la Haye, Newcastle University

Paul Driver, Anglia Ruskin University

Jane Hubble, Cranfield University

Matt Lewis, Staffordshire University

Samantha McCormack, Buckinghamshire New University

Áine McGuckin, Queen’s University Belfast

Jan Timms, Sheffield Hallam University

John Waters, University of Liverpool

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, this year’s award winners will be announced during a free virtual event on 26th November. To register, click here.
As a reminder, in May 2020 we communicated that in order to support signatory institutions we were extending the submission date of Technician Commitment Self-Assessments & Action Plans that were due in June and October 2020. Please see a reminder of the revised timescales below.


**Phase 3 (announced April 2018)** - Stage Two Self-Assessment & Action Plan due for submission to Steering Board by May 30th 2021.


UKRI (announced February 2020) - Stage One Self-Assessment & Action Plan due for submission to Steering Board by March 31st 2021.

Phase 7 (announced June 2020) - Stage One Self-Assessment & Action Plan due for submission to Steering Board by July 31st 2021.

If you have any questions/queries about Signatory Phases and the revised dates of submission or need anything clarifying please don’t hesitate to contact us. The templates for Self-Assessments and Action Plans can be found here.

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Science Council Online Forum Invitation – The Employer Champion Programme

Date: 7th October 2020

Time: 2pm

Location: Zoom; https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAoduuuqjMrHtGZzWZ0m2w5Zz4sCnQjX0y4

The Science Council warmly invites you to an online event showcasing two Science Council Employer Champions. Join us to learn more about:

- The benefits of the Employer Champion programme;
· Expanding your programme of activity through peer learning;

· Gaining recognition for championing professional development in science.

We will be joined by Stephen Franey, Technical Staff Development Manager at Kings College London, & Amanda Rogers, Quality Assurance Manager at Welsh Water, who will present their experiences of holding the Employer Champion status. Click the zoom link above to register your attendance. You will receive an email confirmation.

The Science Council very much look forward to welcoming you on the day.

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