

Background

The Technician Commitment, is a Science Council initiative in which universities and higher education institutions sign up to delivering to support their technical staff and their career journeys. Institutions propose their own individual action plans when signing up to the agreement. As a member body of the Science Council the RSB, is proposing to deliver its own action plan for technicians, building on the work we already are doing in support of technicians. This action 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 areas of the technician commitment.

The action plan will also aim to support the four themes of the Society's Business plan:

Inspire - **communicate the true value of biology and inspire the next generation of biologists**

Influence - **providing a unified voice to influence policy and affect positive change**

Support - **the Society supports 18,000 individual members in the UK and abroad and almost 100 Member Organisations.**

Evolve – **ensuring we are representative of modern bioscience and responsive to the evolving needs of the sector.**

Timeline: By the end of the Business Plan (in September 2021) we will have achieved a series of activity which showcases RSB support for technical staff. This activity will include raising visibility, improving recognition, supporting career development and ensuring sustainability for technical roles. Together it is hoped that this will highlight the RSB as a key professional body which technicians can engage with to support them on their career journeys.

Key Areas of the Technician Commitment action plan and objectives:

Visibility

1. Include articles on RSB platforms which highlight the importance of technical roles

Theme: (Inspire) – this objective will raise the profile and awareness of technical roles to the wider bioscience community and in turn provide inspiration to others wishing to pursue technical careers. Case studies and showcasing technical roles will provide evidence of the wide ranging roles technical staff play and the career trajectories that are possible.

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- 2. Presence on the website: (provide a dedicated area on the website which is clearly defined and easily accessible by the technical community)**

Theme: (Support)/ (Inspire) – this objective will support technical staff by providing a dedicated area on the website where key information can be accessed. This area will provide access to resources which technicians can use to further their careers and read about the work of other technicians to inspire career pathways.

- 3. Increase visibility at events: Highlight technicians to the wider bioscience community as part of the 10-year anniversary celebration and the RSB awards ceremony event in Biology Week**

Theme: (Inspire) – by highlighting the achievements of technical staff registering as RSciTech to the bioscience community this objective is intended to inspire the next generation of technicians. We can highlight technicians to the bioscience community and advocate the role they play.

Recognition

- 1. Biology Week awards ceremony event to include recognition of technical staff professionally registering**

Theme: (Inspire) – 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 event will improve the profile of the register (RSciTech, RSci, CSci) to technicians so that they can see it as a benchmark for acknowledging skills, knowledge and experience in the workplace.

- 2. Highlight MRSB or FRSB technicians – In *The Biologist* magazine**

Theme: (Inspire) – MRSB members have established their career paths and FRSBs are RSB members who have had an influential impact within the bioscience community. By highlighting MRSB/FRSB technical staff to the technical community this objective is intended to inspire the next generation of technicians to work towards these status'. Signaling that technical roles can lead to influential careers.

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

Theme: (Influence) – 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 – develop a training package for technicians

Theme: (*Support*) – 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. This will support a more efficient workforce as skills shortages can be addressed through training and development.

2. Diversity and inclusion (DI) policy – ensure representation of technical staff on RSB committees (Membership and Professional Affairs MPA/ Education Science Policy ESP)

Theme: (*Evolve*) – The society is keen to ensure a broad representation on its committees; this can be 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 large.

3. Careers and Outreach activity – Ensure technical staff have opportunities for participating in our careers work and outreach and engagement activity

Theme: (*Inspire*) – This presents the opportunity for technical staff to inspire the next generation of technicians. They will have the opportunity to chat to younger audiences about their career roles.

Target:

- Recruit a technician speaker for the RSB Bioscience Careers Day 2019.
- Technical careers highlighted as part of the Reddit event (part of 10-year anniversary special)
- Volunteering opportunities and awards (including branches/ ambassadors scheme and outreach and engagement) better highlight the need for technical staff to apply for them.

Sustainability

1. T Levels (RSB is actively involved in T level development)

Theme: (*Evolve*) – The Society is keen 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 also showcases our commitment to technical development from an early career stage.

2. Apprenticeships (RSB is actively involved in apprenticeship development)

Theme: (*Evolve*) – The Society is keen to be responsive to this growing area of development. If we are active in this area, we are able to seize opportunities to provide support for a potentially new group of members. This objective also showcases our commitment to technical development from an early career stage.

3. Event – launch action plan at the RSB awards ceremony event in Biology Week 2019.

Theme: (*Support*) – The objective showcases the RSB wide support to technical staff and the community within the biosciences. The RSB presents itself as a leading professional body for life science technicians where they can access support and give back to their community.