

Technician Commitment Steering Group

Wednesday 03 February 2021
14.00 – 15.00
MS Teams

Minutes

Meeting #11

1. Welcome and apologies (NH)

Present:

Nazia Hirjee	Faculty Operations Officer, Natural Sciences (Chair) (NH)
Joel Abrahams	Biological Research Officer, Surgery & Cancer (JA)
Lindsay Comalie	Organisational Development Consultant, LDC (LC)
Ailish Harikae	Apprenticeships Manager, LDC (AHR)
Allison Hunter	Technical Operations Manager, Life Sciences (AH)
Ken Keating	Technical Operations Manager, Bioengineering (KK)
Stephanie Ludwig	Learning and Development Administrator, LDC (SL) (Minutes)
Russell Stracey	RSM Workshop Supervisor, Materials (RS)
Dr Sharron Stubbs	Senior Laboratory Manager, Infectious Disease (SS)
Angela Williams	Learning and Development Officer, Estates (AW)

Apologies:

Paul Brown	Mechanical Workshop Instrumentation Manager, Physics
Okan Kibaroglu	Head of Business Operations, ICT
Monica Suarez	Learning & Development Lead, ICT

2. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting (NH)

- The minutes of the last meeting were deemed to be an accurate record of discussions.
- Actions from the last meeting were considered. It was noted that:

AHR and NH to submit impact report / action plan to Provost's Board for approval

The impact report and action plan were approved by the Provost's Board on 24 November 2020 and submitted to the Science Council on 11 December 2020. Feedback on the submission is expected by the end of March 2021. AHR will plan some comms after this to celebrate the renewal of the Commitment.

AHR/AH/SS to hold a Technicians' Network event on EDI

A Technicians' Network Forum was held on 10 December 2020, with a focus on the EDI challenges affecting the technical community. There were three speakers: Christopher Bamikole (Laboratory Manager and Section Safety Coordinator, Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction) spoke about his experience of the IMPACT Programme; Desmond Samuel (Head of Digital Communications Services and Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team member) gave an overview of the Race Equality Charter; and Grace

Adeyemi (Recruitment Adviser) spoke about her *Shifting the Lens* campaign. The event was well attended and there was lots of in-depth discussion but not enough time. AHR suggested that EDI could be a theme to revisit for the summer event.

AHR to ensure better communication of ongoing professional registration costs

Not actioned yet - when AHR promotes the next programme, she will ensure greater clarity.

AH and AHR to draw up a participant list of core facility managers to be surveyed

AH and AHR have met to discuss this but did not feel it was the right time to run the survey. They may tie this in with the summer event. Only a few small changes are required to the original survey. Pat Evans (Department of Life Sciences) will provide support with identifying core facility managers to include through the PPMS system.

KK and AHR to continue to engage with ICT / Lexonis for career pathways project

KK and AHR have a session with Okan Kibaroglu (ICT) on 9 February to be trained on Lexonis, so that they are able to make edits to the system directly. The first part of the National Technician Development Centre framework has been added and they need to add the second part.

Steering Group members to share further case study examples of technicians being named on publications with NH / AHR.

Keep on agenda as an ongoing item.

KK and AHR to continue work on the Technical Academy initiative.

No update at present.

3. Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (AHR)

- The Faculties of Natural Sciences and Engineering have agreed to fund two apprenticeship places on the new Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship scheme, due to start in September 2021.
- AHR has been working with the Departments of Bioengineering and Chemistry, who will host the two apprentices. She will also be reaching out again to the Departments of Life Sciences, Physics and Chemical Engineering (who were involved in the initial scoping) just in case they would like to participate in the pilot.
- The training provider is likely to be Kingston College and the apprenticeship will be a 28-month programme.
- National Apprenticeships Week runs from 8 to 14 February 2021. AHR will be running three briefing sessions on apprenticeships and sharing news stories and *Imperial People* profiles on social media.

4. Estates Maintenance Technicians (AW)

AW shared an update on recent Technician Commitment activity within the Estates Division:

Visibility

- A Communications Officer was appointed in 2019 and Estates have since launched a quarterly magazine called *People, Places and Space*. Under *People*, there are regular interviews with staff within the department, including technicians.
- Some technicians have engaged with the Science Museum Technician Gallery.
- Shenice Lalor, Technical Assistant (Estates Projects), was featured in the *Women@Imperial* campaign.

- The Estates Operations Staff Forum has been launched. This is an opportunity to celebrate successes, talk about awards, long service, etc.
- A regular Maintenance Forum has also been launched.

Recognition

- Staff can apply for professional membership under the annual sponsorship scheme.
- Four technicians have been Employee of the Quarter.
- Estates Long Service Awards will be launched this year. These will celebrate service of ten years and above. A Member of staff who has worked at the college for 35 years will be celebrated at next Estates Operations Staff Forum in March.

Career Development

- 12 maintenance supervisors and technicians have completed supervisor's training.
- Three maintenance managers completed a management development programme.
- Nine technicians have been sponsored to complete technical qualifications through the Estates sponsorship scheme.
- In 2019, Estates sponsored 20 technicians to do the City & Guilds 18th Edition Wiring Regulations course.
- 40 technicians completed Microsoft Teams training last year.
- One technician has trained as a Mental Health First Aider.
- The Estates Lunch and Learn Programme launched four years ago.
- Estates would like to introduce shadowing opportunities with external contractors.
- Vijay Patel (Maintenance Technician) completed the Building Management Systems System Controls Qualification.

Sustainability

- The Maintenance staff training budget for 2020-21 is £32,000 (which covers City & Guilds training for ten staff members).
- Technicians are Health & Safety Representatives.
- Two of the four apprentices trained by Estates since 2016 have secured permanent positions at the College.
- A two-week work experience programme for school students has been launched.
- Recruitment is planned for two new Maintenance Apprentices for 2021.

5. Update on Science Museum Technician Gallery (AHR)

- AHR reported that work is ongoing, with the Technician Gallery expected to open to the public early in 2022.
- Curators are rethinking some of their concepts in light of COVID-19 and planning has been challenging.
- AHR was approached in the Autumn to support with some pilot filming for interactive exhibits. The curators were particularly interested in apprentices and mentors. However, the filming idea had to be paused due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- More recently, AHR coordinated a series of interviews/focus groups for the Museum involving 20 engineering technicians. AH and the Department of Life Sciences were also approached, as the curators wanted to speak to teaching technicians.
- There have been some initial discussions between the Museum and the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering about filming some of their destructive testing machines.
- No further advisory board meetings are planned at present but AHR expects that there will be as further plans develop.
- The Museum are running a survey to help with their research for the Gallery.
- **Action:** AHR to circulate the survey link to the Technicians' Network.

6. Update from Institutional Leads Group (SS & AH)

- SS attended an Institutional Leads Group meeting at the end of January 2021. She reported that 17 of the 22 phase one Technician Commitment signatories had submitted their impact reports on time. The others had extensions that they were working towards. There had been a lot of discussion on progress against institutional Technician Commitment action plans.
- SS also reported that a regional network event planned for December 2020 had been postponed to 10 March 2021. It was suggested that rotating events at different intuitions was a good way to get more technical staff involved in the network.

7. Technicians' Network summer event 2021 (AHR)

- AHR invited suggestions on an appropriate time to run the 2021 event, ideas for possible themes/speakers and format. It was agreed by all that there should be a series of mini events over a week, rather than a one-day conference.
- The video created by technicians in the Department of Life Sciences for last year's event had been well-received; AHR encouraged Steering Group members to consider creating videos in their areas to be shared this year.
- AHR suggested creating a filmed advert to help promote the event. This could include a few words from some of the speakers and technicians who had attended the event before.
- **Action:** It was agreed that AHR and SL would move forward with plans and report back at the next meeting.

8. Update on professional registration (AHR)

- AHR is working with Stephen Franey (Science Council Applicant Support Mentor) on plans for a programme of support for Science Technicians, to launch after Easter.
- Engineering technicians met in October with their mentors from the IET. Support has been rather patchy and AHR is considering ways to improve this. Professional registration applicants benefit from a clear structure with deadlines, to help them to complete the process.
- **Action:** AHR to provide an update at the next meeting.

9. Reminder about College award schemes (AHR)

- Applications are open now for the College's various award schemes. AHR encouraged Steering Group members to consider technicians to nominate in their areas.
- The Papin Prizes, a national award scheme for technicians in Higher Education, are also open now. Individuals or teams can be nominated and there are a number of categories available, including contribution to research, contribution to teaching, newcomer, core research facility, Covid-19 recognition, outreach and technical team.

10. AOB (NH)

NH congratulated AH on being awarded an IST Fellowship.

Summary of Actions

New

- *AHR to circulate the survey link for the Technician Gallery to the Technicians' Network.*
- *AHR and SL to move forward with plans for the summer event and report back.*
- *AHR to update on professional registration at the next meeting.*

Older/Ongoing

- *Steering Group members to share further case study examples of technicians being named on publications with NH / AHR.*
- *AHR to ensure better communication of the ongoing costs related to professional registration.*
- *KK and AHR to continue work on the Technical Academy initiative.*
- *AH and AHR to draw up a participant list of core facility managers to be surveyed.*