

IMPERIAL

Technician Commitment Steering Group

Wednesday 30 April 2025

14.00 – 14.30. MS Teams

Minutes

Meeting #25

Present:

Tim Venables	Institutional Lead for the Technician Commitment (Chair, TV)
Naweeda Ahmad	People & Organisational Development Coordinator, POD (NA) <i>Minutes</i>
Ailish Harikae	People & Organisational Development Consultant, POD (AHR)
Paul Brown	Technical Operations Manager, Physics (PB)
Allison Hunter	Technical Operations Manager, Life Sciences (AH)
Dr Sharron Stubbs	Head of Infrastructure Operations, Faculty of Medicine Centre (SS)
Joel Abrahams	Biological Research Officer, Surgery & Cancer (JA)
Rakesh Patel	Head of Maintenance, Property Division (RP)
Aneesha Bhumber	Teaching Laboratories Technician, Faculty of Medicine Centre (AB)
Russell Stracey	RSM Workshop Supervisor, Materials (RS)
Angela Williams	Learning and Development Officer, Property Division (AW)
Kenneth Keating	Technical Operations Manager, Bioengineering (KK)

Apologies:

Ellen Pengelley	Interim Head of Business Operations, Bioengineering (EP)
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Agreed Actions

From this meeting:

- Progress plans for celebratory event and report back at the next meeting (AHR/NA)

Outstanding from the previous meeting:

- Continue to engage with efforts to reintroduce face-to-face assessments for Professional Registration (SS/AH/AHR)
- Review communication channels and establish a mailing list (AHR/NA)

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies (TV)

The Chair welcomed everyone to this additional meeting, which had been scheduled specifically to discuss the feedback received on Imperial's Technician Commitment Self-Assessment and Action Plan. Apologies were received from Ellen Pengelley.

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

(Paper 1: Minutes – 26 February 2025)

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of discussions. The Chair confirmed that any outstanding actions would be reviewed at the next meeting in June.

3. Technician Commitment Submission: Peer Review Feedback (TV)

Paper 2: Feedback on TC Self-Assessment & Action Plan

The Chair noted that, overall, there had been a positive response to Imperial's Self-Assessment and Action Plan. Some points had been raised, however, that we could learn from and implement. A discussion followed on each of the points.

Comments on technical staff structures

The peer reviewers had commended Imperial on its understanding of the technical workforce but recommended including a diagram or organogram in future to enhance clarity, outlining reporting lines and the distribution of technical staff across different areas. Members felt that this would be a complicated and time-consuming task, given the size and complexity of the organisation. Using pathway descriptors was suggested as a possible solution. It was agreed that the Steering Group would consider, ahead of the next Technician Commitment submission, how best to represent and incorporate this.

Comments on governance, resources and engagement

The peer reviewers had been encouraged by the governance structure but were unclear on whether Steering Group meetings were an opportunity for genuine two-way engagement and discussion. Members felt that they were but recognised that the Group's membership was slightly management heavy. It was noted that the Action Plan sought to address this through the creation of non-management Technical Representative roles. Imperial's external engagement was good, which was led externally by AH, SS and AHR.

A discussion on resources followed. Members were informed that following the recent restructure of HR and People and Organisational Development, the importance of retaining specialist roles to support technical staff development and apprenticeships had been recognised, and that AHR and NA had been confirmed in their posts.

Comments on the RAG analysis provided

The Chair noted that the peer reviewers had commended Imperial on the progress demonstrated in the RAG analysis. They had flagged, however, that not all technicians were engaging with the offer, and members acknowledged that this was an ongoing challenge. It was noted that AB, currently on secondment with People and Organisational Development as Technical Staff Specialist, was actively working on initiatives to widen the reach of Technician Commitment activities. The Chair noted that work on career pathways was progressing, and that the peer reviewers had commended Imperial's work on recognition and award nominations. The submission included plenty of data, which had been seen as a specific strength. Members recorded thanks to AHR, who had put a lot of work into the data collection and analysis.

Comments on how the institution is enacting the recommendations of the TALENT Commission

In their feedback, the peer reviewers had encouraged Imperial to critically reflect on the possibility of introducing a Strategic Lead for Technicians. The Steering Group felt that Imperial's Faculty structure did not currently facilitate a centralised leadership structure. It was noted that alignment

with other TALENT Policy Commission recommendations had been clearly articulated in the submission.

Comments on the Institution's 36-month action plan

Feedback on the action plan was that it was positive and deliverable. The inclusion of success measures had been commended. The Chair made the point that the Steering Group subconsciously aligned each action to the TALENT Policy Commission Recommendations, but that this could have been explicit in the submission. The point *on 'providing more detail on an internally facing living version of this plan to monitor progress and ensure delivery'* was acknowledged, but it was felt by the Group that the living document was used regularly to steer conversations. It was noted that the Action Plan was published on the Technicians' Portal and available to all, as were details on networking events.

JA expressed concern that technicians were being missed (e.g. within CBS) and that suggestions to engage different populations were not always followed up. AHR reminded the Group that there had been limited resource to manage Technician Commitment activity until NA's role was introduced in January 2025. NA's post would allow a more systematic approach to comms and engagement. She would be ensuring, for example, that all new technicians were added to the circulation list, etc. AH flagged that she had reached out to CBS directly to include their technicians but was told that they were unable to participate due to capacity issues. It was agreed that the Steering Group would follow up again in relation to future events.

Other discussions

The Steering Group congratulated AHR and NA on the positive progress made. AHR mentioned that the Self-Assessment and Action Plan had been shaped by technicians participating in Focus Groups in Autumn 2024, so the feedback that technician voice was absent was disappointing. In future, it would be advisable to include a summary of Focus Group discussions as an appendix.

It was noted that Imperial would receive an award of submission in recognition of its progress, but that nobody could attend the upcoming Technician Commitment signatory event in Belfast to receive it. The Chair anticipated that the award would be sent to us.

AW suggested holding a celebratory, in-person event to share the feedback and new Action Plan with the technical community. After some discussion, it was agreed that this could be hosted as part of the Technicians' Network Summer Event on 17 June at Scale Space, White City. The event would precede the final Tech's Today event of the year, also being hosted by Imperial.

Action: AHR and NA to progress plans for the event and report back at the next meeting.

4. Close

The Chair thanked the Steering Group and closed the meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday 4 June 2025, 14.00 - 15.30, South Kensington