



Technician
Commitment

Evaluating Impact through Self-Assessment & Future Action Planning

Organisation: King's College London

Institutional Lead: Stephen Franey

TCI Signatory & Technical Network sponsor: Stephen Large – Senior Vice President – Operations

E-mail: stephen.franey@kcl.ac.uk

Senior technical leads - technicalleads@kcl.ac.uk

The Technician Commitment is a university wide initiative recognising the crucial role of technicians supporting education and research. Technical staff are a large diverse group working across all disciplines and at all levels from apprentice to highly skilled professionals. The Technical Commitment acknowledges the wider role of technical staff supporting efficient operations, keeping staff and students safe, engagement activities and community building which make them an important part of the team. Their commitment to staying up to date with the latest developments and ability to work both independently and collaboratively are key assets to universities and research institutions. King's College London is proud to support the Technician Commitment.

Stephen Large
Senior Vice President – Operations
King's College London
Melbourne House
44-46 Aldwych
London WC2B 4LL

Introduction

The term ‘technical staff’ is used to describe one of the most wide-ranging and diverse employee groups within the university. Classified as ‘Professional Services’ staff, most of them directly support our strategic priorities of delivering world-leading education and research.

The range of professional expertise across the community is especially wide, covering semi-skilled, skilled, academic and expert level staff. Their roles are funded by both core and research award funding, with roles existing across research, education, specialist facilities, professional services, Directorates, workshops and other specialist areas. The members of technical staff who are included within the remit of the Technicians’ Commitment are defined as those who are engaged directly in supporting academic related work.

When King’s initially collected staff data for the Technicians’ Commitment self-assessment review in Stage One, we were unable to accurately identify the number of technicians employed across King’s due to the disparate and non-standardised nature of their job titles, locations and role definitions. We relied on accrued information from data collection surveys and HR data, which we subsequently used in the Stage One submission.

Since then, we have taken a detailed look at where our technicians are located, their reporting lines, the functions they perform, professional registration status and the specific roles that they fulfil.

King’s currently employs 520 technicians, who work either within one of our nine faculties or a specialist function.

King’s HR departments, including Development, Diversity & Inclusion, are supporting efforts to collect diversity and inclusion data for our technical services community. It is clearly evident that, since initially making our Technicians’ Commitment in 2017 as a founding signatory, King’s has greatly improved the diversity of our technical staff workforce – including on the characteristics of age, gender and ethnicity – therefore broadening our perspectives and collective experiences to more accurately represent our local community in London.

Since the last submission we experienced the CV19 pandemic. During this time, the technical work force were recognized as a key group who kept the University’s research services running, and key technical staff were seconded to high level decision-making groups.

Section One: Technical staff structures

1.1 Technical staff numbers

There are 520 technical staff at KCL working across multiple faculties and functional areas (Figures 1 & 2). Technical staff support and deliver university operations (including equipment maintenance and training, finance, purchasing, and health and safety), research and education activities. Technical staff are funded from multiple sources including core university funding, research and education grants and clinical or other organisation recharges.

Figure 1

Faculty	Number
Faculty of Dentistry, Oral & Craniofacial Sciences	15
Faculty of Social Science & Public Policy	10
Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience	56
Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine	309
Faculty of Natural Mathematical & Engineering Sciences	44
Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care (including King's Simulation & Interactive Learning Centres)	15
Research Management & Innovation (including Biological Services)	78 (56 from Biological Services)

Technician numbers across faculties

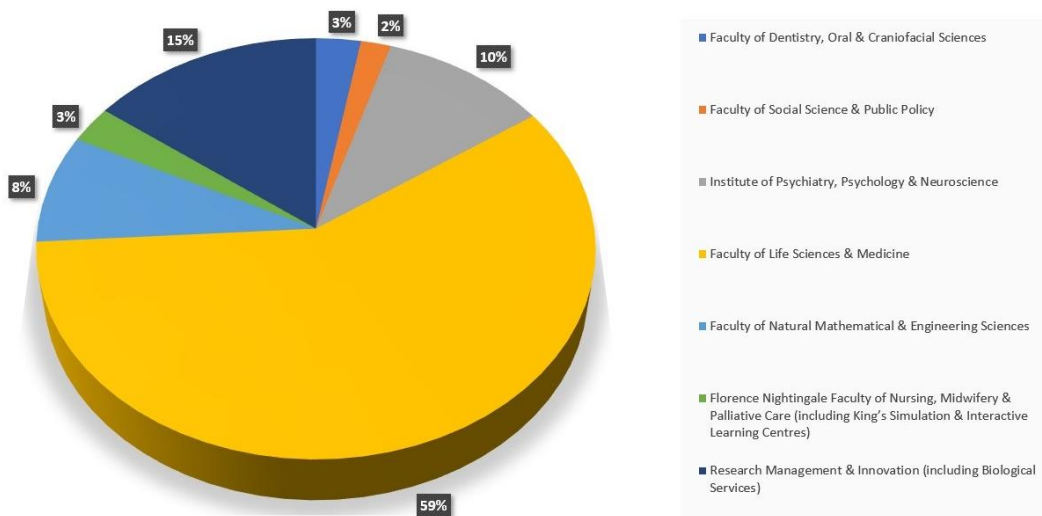


Figure 2

1.2 Faculty structures for technical staff

Each functional area has an individual structure for technical staff.

Faculty of life Sciences and Medicine (FoLSM)

Operational technical staff support the activities of the faculty and the schools. This includes research, health and safety, and estates-related activities. Figure 3 shows the line management structure within technical services in FoLSM. Faculty Technical services supports all activities and consists of campus operations, education services, health & safety (H&S) and finance and purchasing. School technical support is broadly broken down into operations and research services. Operations are directly line managed and support the overall activity of the school. Research services are funded through grants and other sources, are primarily line managed by budget holders and support the research activity as defined by the grant.

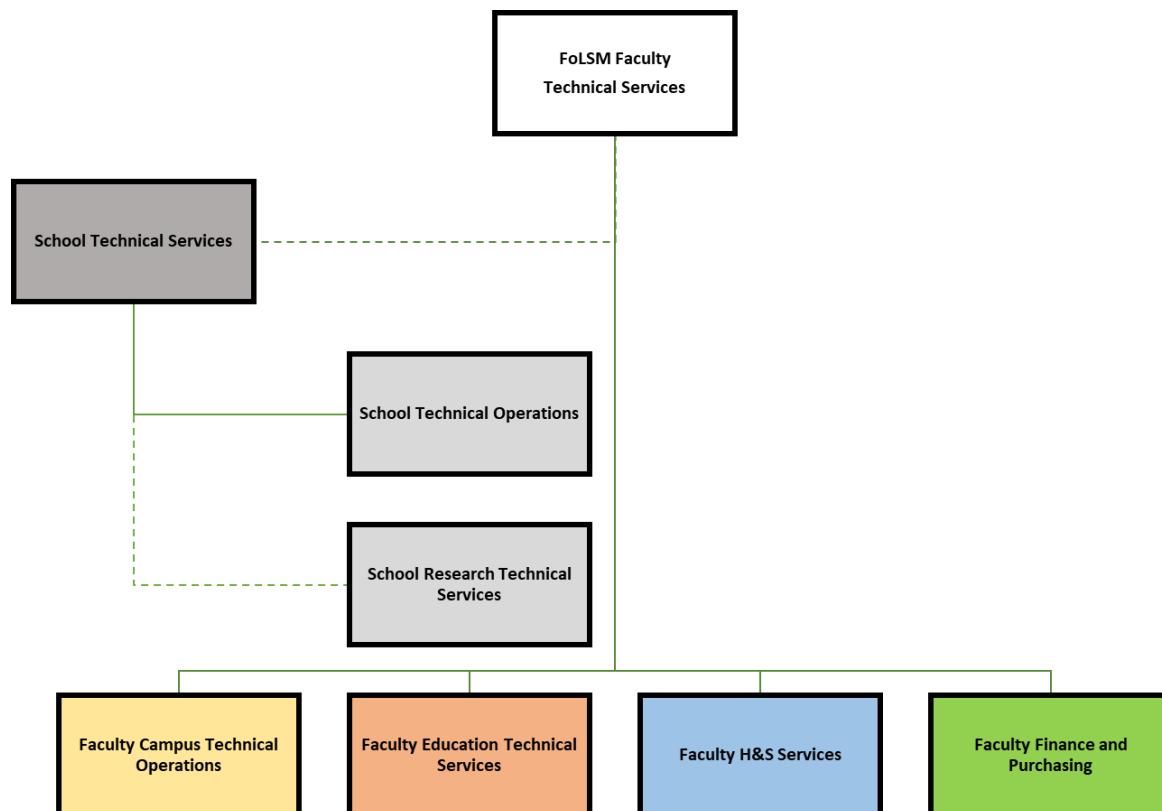


Figure 3a

Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN)

Technical staff services in IoPPN are focused around research activities within schools and departments, except for one technician supporting undergraduate student projects in Psychology. Research funded technicians primarily support individual projects or programmes while core funded technicians provide broader support across research teams at department level.

The School Business Operations team was recently created as part of a wider faculty reshaping of Professional Services and provides support for a range of functions including H&S, space management, education and CEDI (Culture, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion). This team works closely with the Technical Managers as the primary contacts for H&S and space management in their departments.

IoPPN Technical staff also work closely with FoLSM Technical staff, and are supported by FoLSM's Campus Technical Operations Managers and other staff in the Faculty's Technical Services team

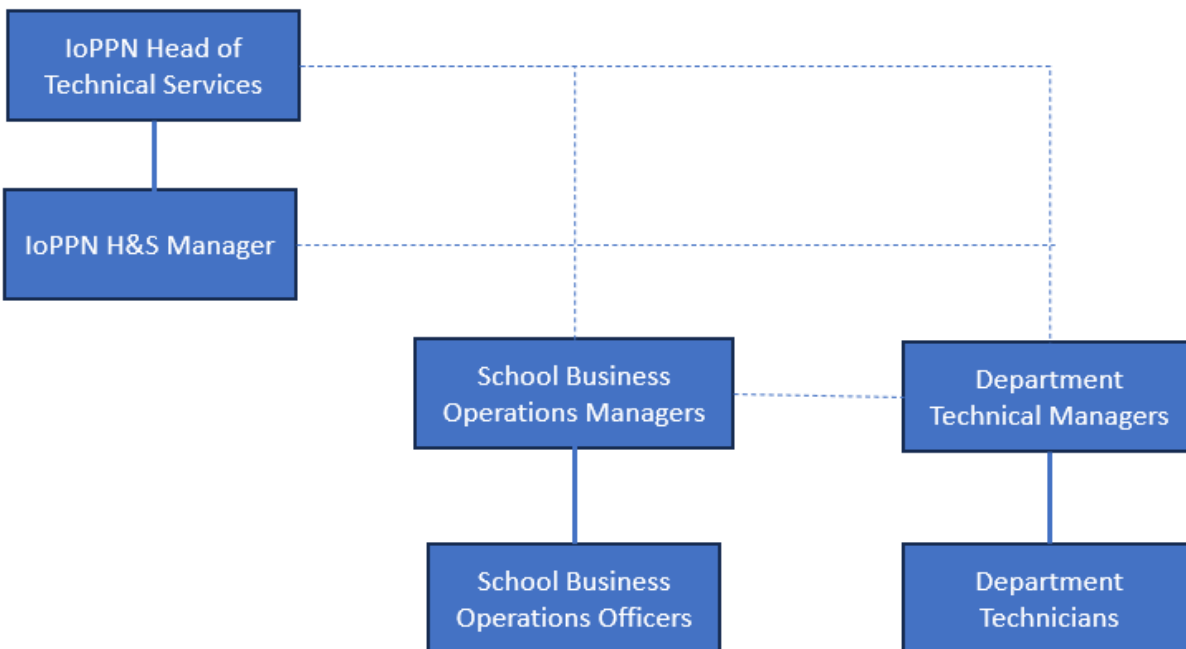


Figure 3b

Faculty of Dentistry, Oral & Craniofacial Sciences (FoDOCS):

The Faculty is arranged as three research Centres and an Education Centre. Operational technical staff support the activities of the Faculty and the Centres. This includes research, health and safety, and estates-related activities. Figure 3c shows the line management structure within technical services in FoDOCS. The Faculty Resource Manager oversees all activities of Centre technical services, Education services and H&S. Centre technical support is broadly broken down into operations and research services. Dependent on the Centre size, there will be a technical operations manager to support the overall activity of one large Centre or across two smaller Centres, with each Centre having the support of a Faculty funded operations technical team. The technical operation managers are directly line managed through the resource manager and will line manage the Centre technical teams. Research services are funded through grants and other sources, are primarily line managed by budget holders and support the research activity as defined by the grant. Education technical teams support the training of dental students (undergrad) or qualified dental professionals undergoing CPD training (postgrad).

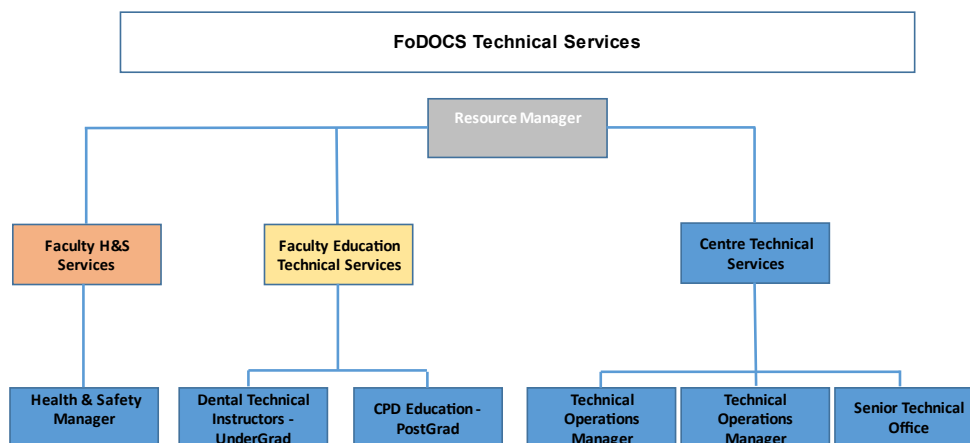


Figure 3c

Social Science and Public Policy (SSPP)

Technical staff within SSPP are divided between two schools, School of Global Affairs (SGA) and the School of Education, Communication & Society (ECS) (Figure 3d).

The technical team within SGA are split between a faculty funded operational, research and education team and a grant funded specialist research support team based at Rothamsted Research, Harpenden. The core funded team supports a broad range of on campus technical services, delivery of field and lab teaching, supporting departmental research, UG, PGT and PGR projects, safety and operations. The grant funded team support research within the King's College London NCEO (National Centre for Earth Observation) research group.

The technical team within ECS are focused on delivery of lab practicals for trainee teachers (e.g. PGCE students) and science education research projects. They operate and maintain dedicated physical, biology and chemistry laboratories for this purpose.

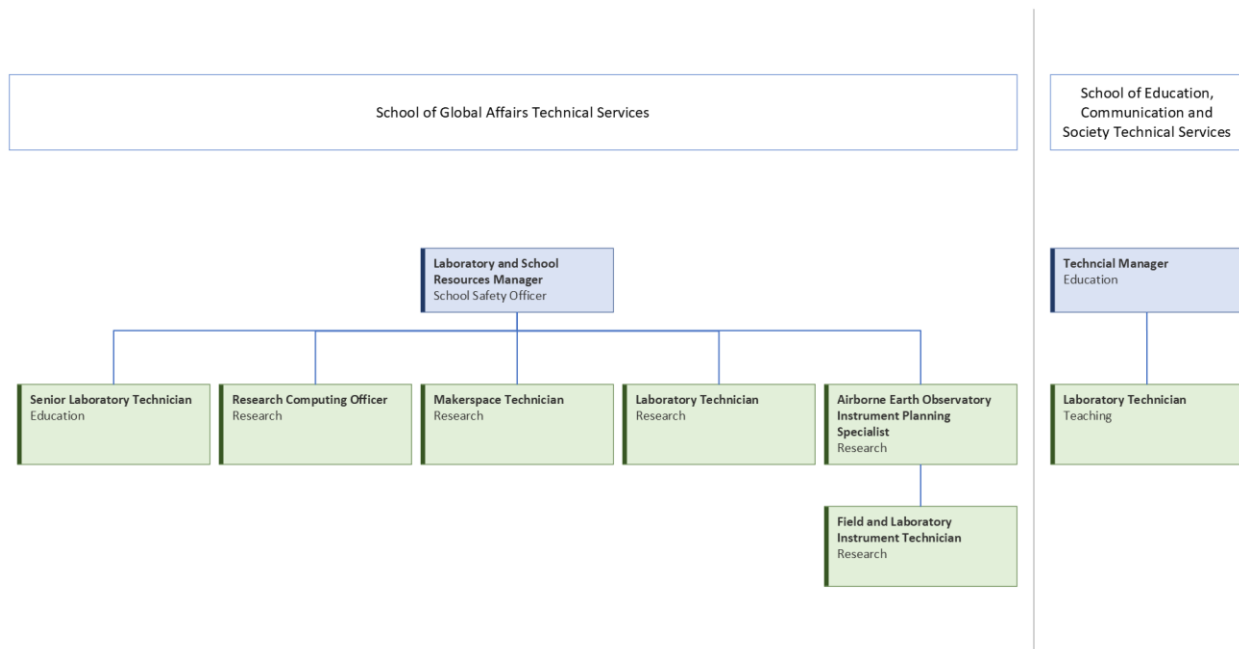


Figure 3d

Faculty of Natural, Mathematical and Engineering Sciences (NMES)

The NMES Technical Services function is currently transitioning from a traditional departmental model to a location-based technical services function. Teams are consolidated at the campus level, jointly servicing all NMES activities at those locations. All aspects of technical services operations are being reconfigured at the location level, with standardisation of roles and responsibilities, in order to improve efficiency and service delivery, promoting a transparent and equitable working culture. The function has a staffing envelope of around 40 full time employees across three campuses, arranged by sub-functions spanning Operations, Education, Research/Specialism, Health & Safety and Faculty Office roles (responsible for space and technical projects).

Whilst the majority of technical roles within NMES are permanent establishment posts, a handful of soft-funded technical specialist posts are active at any given time within the faculty's research portfolio. These roles, whilst fully deployed to work on grant-funded projects, now report into the Technical Services function.

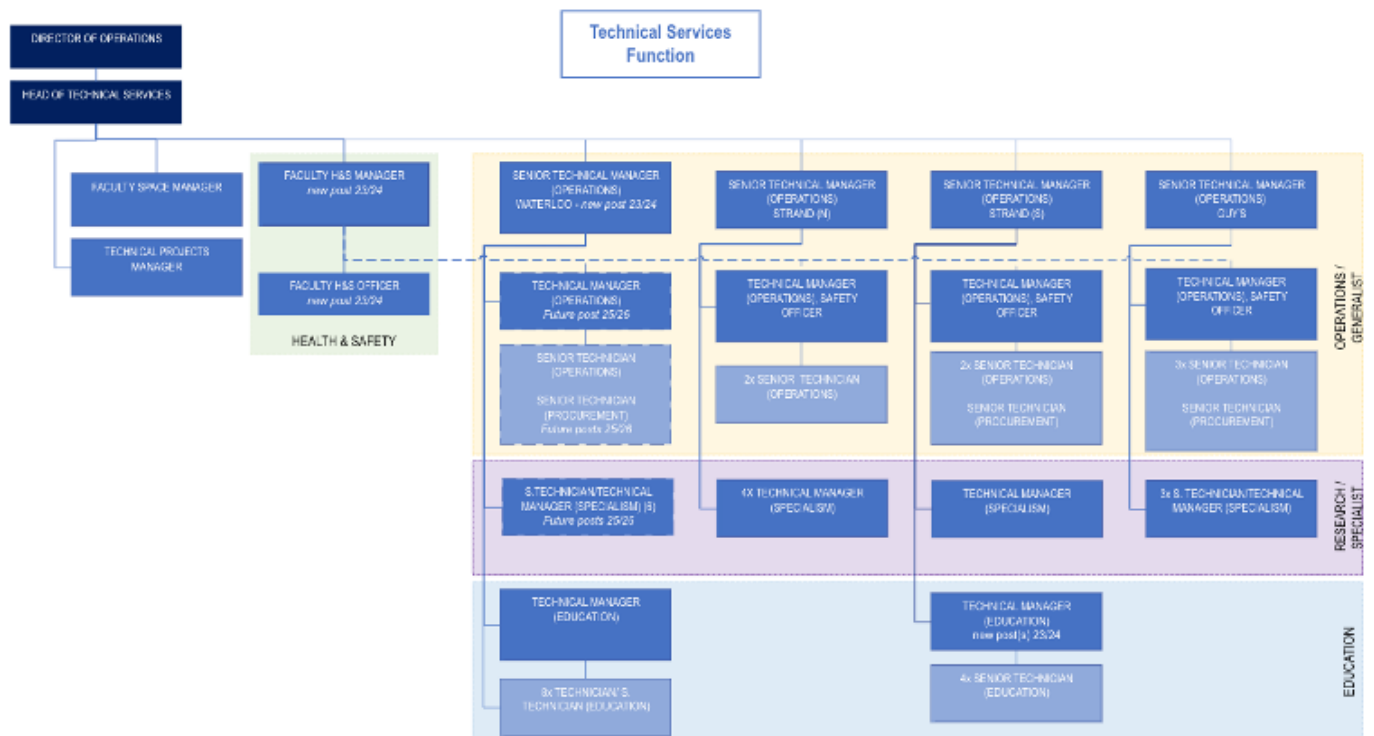


Figure 3e: NMES Technical Services function management structure

Section Two: Governance, leadership and reporting lines

2.1 Management and resourcing of the technician commitment

Implementation of the technician commitment is managed by the Technician lead with the support from the Vice Chancellor and his senior team, together with senior academic and professional service colleges at all levels.

Support for the Technician Commitment is resourced both centrally and at a faculty level. Central funding supports networking activities such as university wide away days with catered receptions. It also supports the professional development of technical staff, through Organisational development and the Centre for Research Staff Development.

Organisational development (OD) - plays a vital role in empowering, developing and supporting the broader staff community at King's. OD provision is centred on three connected strategic priorities that are designed to enable the delivery of King's Vision & Strategy; Leadership, learning and development, Staff engagement and workplace culture, Staff wellbeing and mental health.

Centre for Research Staff Development (CRSD) - Provides targeted support to research staff (including research and teaching technicians) to achieve their potential, before, during, and after their time at King's, with active support from the most senior staff in the university. CRSD facilitates and supports an active, engaged research staff community, encourages research staff to consider and prepare for future career, assists with career plans, delivers professional workshops and events to enhance skills and provides high quality, timely information regarding opportunities within and outside of King's. CRSD's provision is influenced by the Researcher Development Concordat, a national agreement that sets out standards and responsibilities of the university, funders, research staff and managers of research staff. King's aims to exceed these standards.

King's is now providing central funding for professional registration for technicians in perpetuity.

At faculty level, funding is provided for campus events such as social coffee break catch ups, local networking groups, travel expenses to conferences and training opportunities.

Faculty & line management funding is provided for professional development which technical staff have access to.

2.2 Institutional support for the Technician commitment

Technicians are vital contributors to King's research provision and culture. Since we signed the Technician Commitment 5 years ago, the visibility and recognition of King's technical staff has been transformed supported by improved career development and sustainability across all disciplines. I am proud of our reputation in this area making King's a very attractive place to work and of our track record in recruiting a technical community that mirrors our local London population. This unique trend has had a very positive effect and contributes to our position as a golden benchmark. I look forward to seeing even further progress over the next period.

Professor Shitij Kapur, President & Principal of King's College London

In 2017, Kings pledged its commitment to ensuring visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for our technical services staff, who play a vital role in the success of our university. Since then we have transformed the way the members of the technical community at Kings are visible, both internally and externally, and they get the professional recognition they so deeply deserve.

We now have an excellent university wide network that has a vibrant knowledge exchange, along with equipment sharing, and a directory of expert help.

*I firmly believe this achievement has been down to Kings, at the very earliest stages, signing up to both the **Technicians Commitment** and the **Science Council employer champions program**. The commitment from the excellent and dedicated senior technical staff leads, along with strong support from the Vice Chancellor and Vice President Operations (who is also sponsor and institutional lead signatory) has been a key driver to success.*

Stephen Franey MBE, Technical Staff Development Manager

2.3 Restructuring of the technical community in response to the technician commitment

A review of the technician community and reporting lines has been instigated, in direct response to the recommendations of the Technician Commitment. The review identified a lack of clarity in the responsibility for communication across technical services. In technical services there are challenges in communicating changes in processes or opportunities, and barriers to staff providing feedback. These challenges impact other areas of the organisation, as stakeholders in directorates are unclear about the best way to communicate with technical services to efficiently collaborate, seek feedback or inform the community. This has resulted in an action plan to clarify the governance structures across technical services, to streamline and increase visibility of career pathways and to ensure that technicians across the institution have the same experience, access to the same opportunities, information and communication, regardless of the faculty that they are situated in. These initiatives form the **Better Careers for Technicians** programme, detailed further below.

Figure 4, illustrates the on-going strategy to develop clear lines of communication between existing technician committees. New groups have been formulated (**service leads**) and new iterations of existing groups (**technical representative committee**) have been developed. Currently, communication lines exist between faculty senior technical leadership and school/division technical leadership only (**Governance and line management**). The restructuring aims to create defined groups where all technical staff are represented, provide a focal point for the communication of development and engagement opportunities, provide oversight and support of campus technical networks and to provide a focal point of technical staff development to achieve the KCL ambitions related to the technician commitment and the Talent Commission report, as well as KCL strategy 2026. Sub-groups are explained further below.

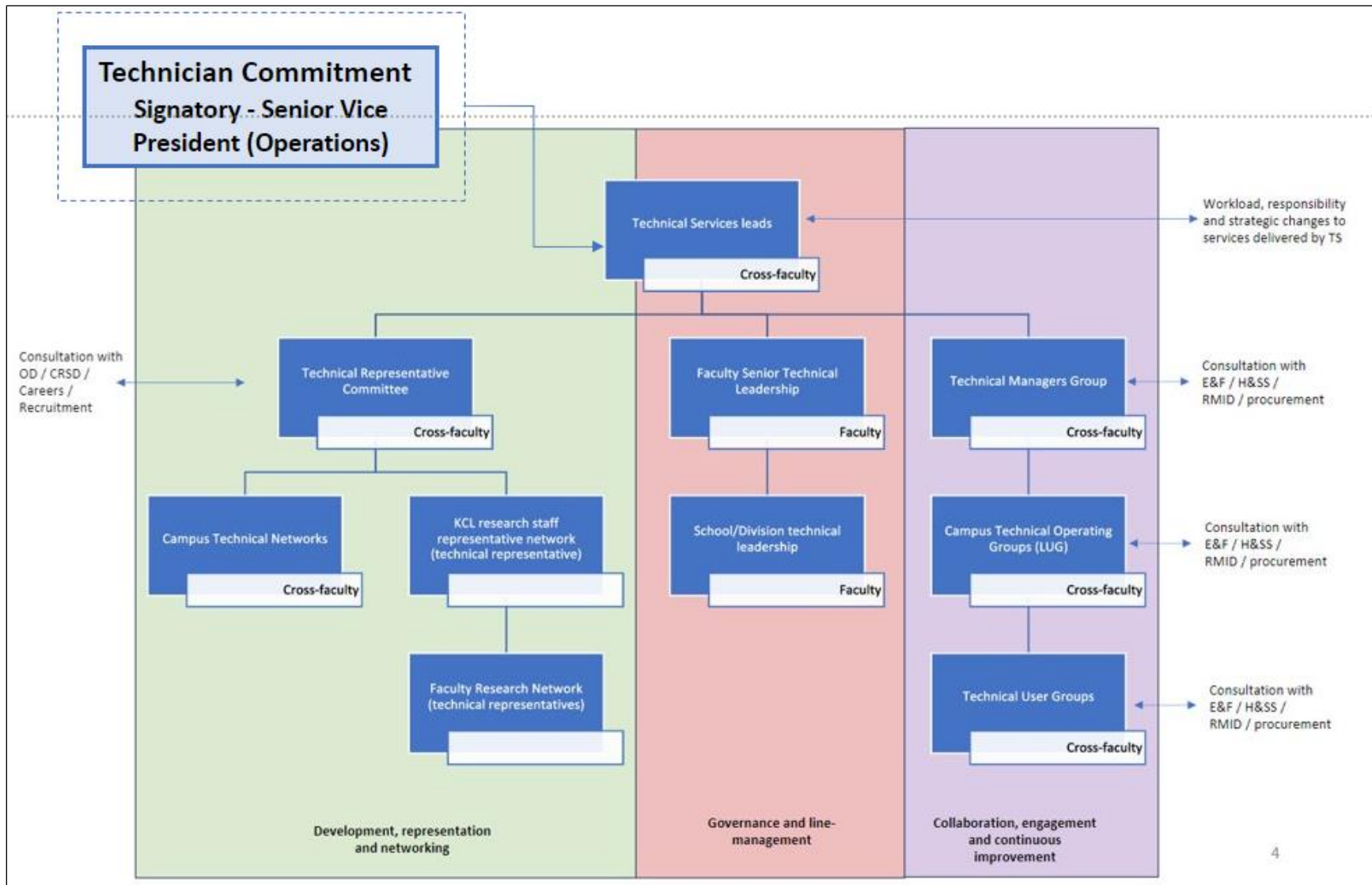


Figure 4: New structure for the technician community

2.4 The technical representative committee

The **technical representative committee (TRC)** is made up of representatives from each campus (**campus technical network**), faculty (**technical representatives**) and research staff, sustainability and EDI networks as well as the technical development manager and head of technical services (**figure 5**). The remit of the committee is to receive updates from representatives, review and support the planning and co-ordination of campus technical network events, produce a quarterly report for technical leadership on outcomes, community feedback and requirements, approve and oversee communications to the technical community, discuss and feedback on sector development, support professional registration, identify gaps in skills and training and to summarise and inform changes to improve careers for technicians. By bringing together representatives that sit on different committees and with representatives from all faculties and every grade, the goal is to encompass a holistic technician voice and enable two-way communication between management and technical staff. These representatives will be voted into position each year.

Campus Technical networks, have been introduced as technician led, working groups at campus level. These networks are central to engaging with the wider community, and attendance and engagement has been steadily increasing. This will continue to be developed in the next stages of restructuring.

Technical user groups (TUGs)(*see far right side of figure 4*). In order to avoid disruptive restructures of existing systems, the next stage of community building will be to bring together teams of technicians, across each campus, by building. The chair & deputy chair of each of these groups will be trained in continuous improvement (CI) methodologies, so that they can empower technicians across user groups to make changes in the areas for which they have responsibility and the tools to assess the impacts of these changes. Chairs and deputies will become champions in CI and able to provide basic training to others. This will enable a localised approach, driven by the day-to-day experiences of technicians and supporting collaboration with other departments at King's. TUGs will feed up to campus groups who will in turn feed-up to technical managers, enabling a bottom-up approach.

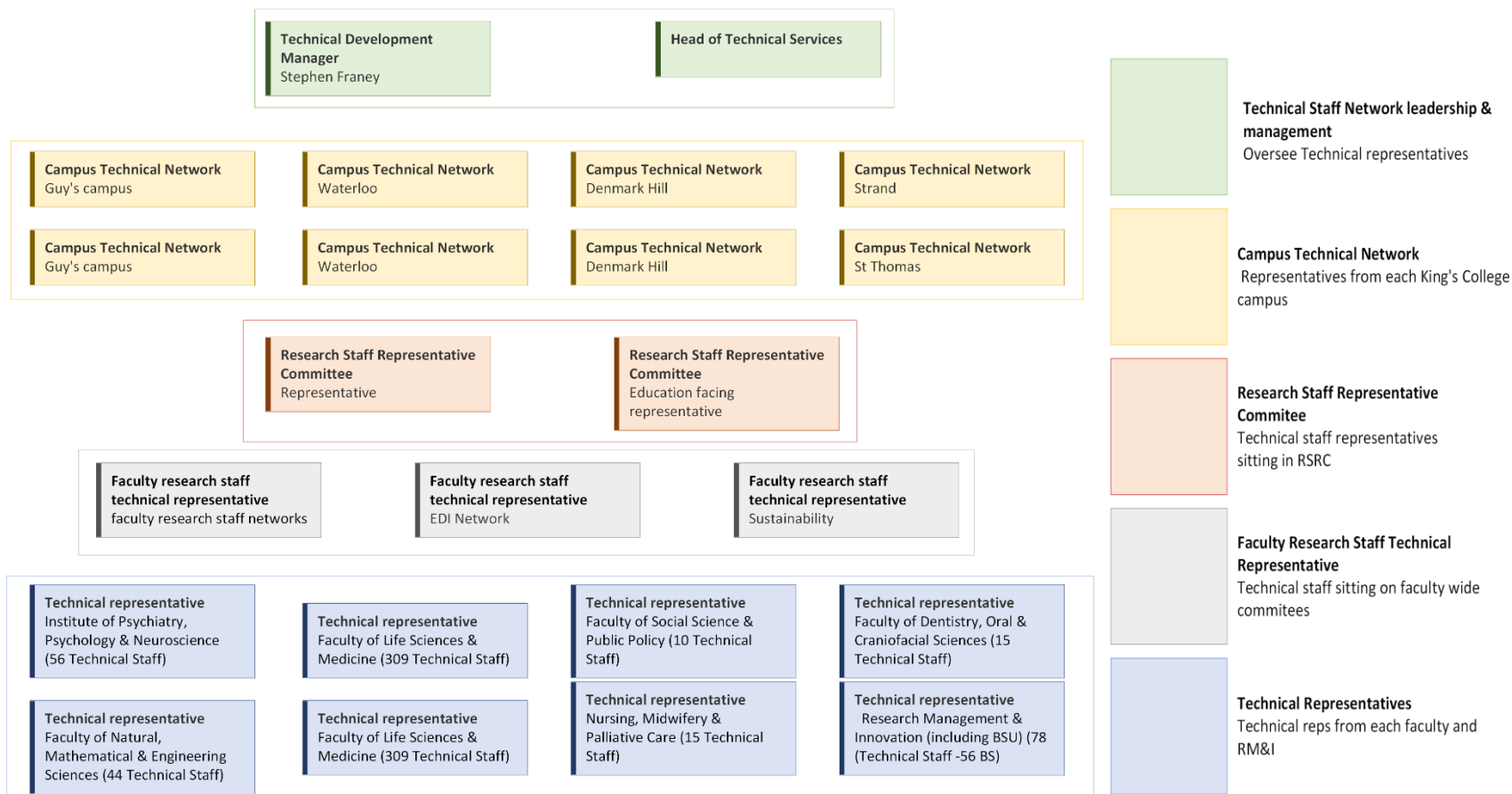


Figure 5: the technical representative committee *This figure indicates the different positions which make up the Technical Representative Committee. This is not a hierarchical structure, each representative provides contributions from their corresponding faculty, campus or directorate. There are two representatives from FoLSM, since 59% of technical staff are situated within this faculty.*

2.5 Engagement with the wider community

A) Unite Technician Forum

The Development Diversity and Inclusion (DDI) Lead sits on the Unite Technician Forum, which has been set up as a sub-committee of the Unite National Industrial Sector Committee for Education and has the role of promoting the role and career progression of technicians in higher education. The first meeting of the Technician Forum took place on 17 November 2023 and the main piece of business was agreeing Unite should sign up as a supporter of the Technician Commitment. To achieve this, an action plan covering Visibility, Recognition, Career Development and Sustainability of technical roles was agreed and will now be submitted to the Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy (ITSS). Having King's representation on this forum will help us drive the TCI agenda across the higher education sector, share best practices and ultimately enhance the visibility of technical roles and increase our impact on negotiation at senior executive level.

B) Herschel Programme

To address the lack of female technical leaders at the university, we have heavily promoted the Herschel Programme for Women in Technical Leadership. This includes nine participants in 2023 and thirteen in 2024. To embed the training and benefits of this programme, we have run a follow up session with all participants asking how they will commit to using the learning in day-to-day activities to achieve their goals. We have also asked them to act as champions for subsequent years. This year workshop was run with prospective candidates that supported them to write their applications and gave inspiring talks to build excitement for the commitment. We have also sought to address the lack of racial and ethnic minorities in our technical leadership position through funding a place on Stellar HE a programme of strategic executive development for diverse leaders in higher education. Several female technical staff have been awarded funded places on The Herschel Programme for Women in Technical Leadership and the Advance HE Aurora Leadership Programme.

C) Engagement with the Executive Programme in Strategic Technical Leadership (EPSTL)

The EPSTL, delivered in partnership with the Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy (ITSS) and the Technician Commitment, is a new programme offering those in or aspiring to technical strategic leadership roles the opportunity to connect with peers across the sector to build a diverse cross-institution professional network. King's was represented at 2023's inaugural EPSTL and will continue to promote the programme to our staff entering strategic roles.

Section three: RAG Analysis

This was a very ambitious action plan and the majority of the aims are now embedded, the amber actions will be prioritised. In mitigation with Covid 19 and King's undertaking a major technical services review, many other initiatives have surfaced as can be seen and evidenced though out this submission. We are very proud this is technical staff led with great support from the Centre for Research staff Development, senior professional & academic staff and well as the Vice chancellors senior team.

VISIBILITY				
Aim	Owner	Tactics	Measures of Success	RAG Rating
Strengthen the Technical Services Network and broaden membership.	Technical Services Network Senior technical group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter articles (departmental, faculty and university-wide) • Direct email campaign • Posters • Annual Technician Away Day • RMID alerts/information • Centre for Research staff devourment (which very positively includes education facing technical staff, Research assistants, Post Docs and Teaching fellows) • Regular Campus champions meeting 	<p>Increased membership of Network (from six members in 2015, to 200 members in 2017, to 300 members by end of 2018/19 academic year currently we have 416 members). Membership has expanded to include other research and academic staff because they recognise the value of the Network.</p> <p>Members receive newsletters from the Centre for Research Staff Development and are actively encouraged to apply for the development training provided. This will ensure they are aware of the more wide-ranging training and development opportunities available.</p> <p>Applications for places very high with technical staff and some places being ring fenced for technical staff if seen appropriate.</p> <p>On going and growing</p>	
Expand networking opportunities	Technical Services Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Away Day • Lunch & Learn sessions • Network now welcomes other research staff (PhD students, RAs, PDRAs and Teaching Fellows) 	<p>Increased and repeat attendance at events, and positive feedback received from attendees.</p> <p>Professional Registration Workshops and one to one mentoring are very popular.</p> <p>High rates of translation to PR</p>	

			<p>Workshops to include Human Anatomy, Microscopy, Histology, Lab Sustainability & Biobanking.</p> <p>Since March 2020, a very active constituency of technical staff, many of whom are on furlough leave, rely on the Network for updates and social events.</p>	
Actively promote technician activities	Technical Services Network Faculty Technical Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leadership events/Fora • Newsletter • Faculty and university wide newsletters • Creation of: Technical Development / TCI Lead Manager 	<p>Ongoing engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Science Council ○ TCI (Gatsby) ○ King's Health Partners NHS Foundation Trusts ○ Centre for Research Staff Development ○ Organisational Development 	
RECOGNITION				
Increase number of nominations of technical staff for King's Awards	Technical Services Network Core Group and Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote King's Awards throughout Network and support colleagues to write nominations • Increase overall nominations for technicians 	<p>In 2017, a senior technician received the coveted King's Lifetime Achievement Award.</p> <p>A Teaching Technician won the 2018 King's Award for Sustainability and several others were shortlisted from the pool of nominations.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, King's Awards 2020 was postponed.</p>	

			<p>Technical manager nominated for THE technician of the year award.</p> <p>Denmark Hill champions team nominated and shortlisted for RMID research support award.</p>	
Recognise role of technical staff in teaching and research web pages	Technical Services Network TRC and senior technical group	<p>Improvements to Research Portal (PURE) to accurately reflect technical services contributions</p> <p>Improvements to teaching web pages to accurately reflect technical services contributions</p>	<p>Visibility and presence remain generally poor for teaching technicians on departmental web pages – working to resolve this</p> <p>Research Schools and Centres tend to represent technical staff more clearly on their web pages and this is set to be enhanced further as part of an ongoing wider web improvement project.</p> <p>Teaching technician profiles are currently being uploaded to the Centre for education pages. and these technicians have been encouraged to request a profile on the external website (FoLSM people).</p> <p>Teaching technicians in NMES have profiles on the department site (new team members need to be added). Other Faculties have technicians visible on their department sites, but do not distinguish between technicians and teaching technicians. More work needs to be done on discovering the role of research technicians in education.</p>	
Celebrate professional registration	Professional Registration Sponsors, Primary Investigators, line managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate presentation • Names on web site 	<p>Certificates have been presented to individuals by senior leadership at Away Days and other events.</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty newsletters • Yearly event hosted by senior management to celebrate the success 	News stories have been published online and in Faculty newsletters.	
Include teaching technical staff in the University's King's Education Awards awards	University-wide Teaching Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with writing nominations and encourage Heads of Teaching Departments to actively nominate technical colleagues 	<p>One senior technical officer has been granted Fellowship status of Higher Education Academy</p> <p>In the Health Faculties, technical staff have yet to be included in departmental teaching excellence awards</p> <p>The entire education technical team in FoLSM was nominated for a FoLSM award, one team member was nominated for a lifetime achievement award and one team member won the outstanding citizenship award.</p> <p>Education awards are nominated by students biasing the awards towards academics, this is being addressed.</p>	
CAREER DEVELOPMENT				
Continue to actively promote professional registration with the Science Council	KCL Employer champions, PI's and technical leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed into the Performance Development Review (PDR) process and Technician Job Descriptions 	<p>Increased take up month on month, with a steady flow of interest and applications.</p> <p>Continued support from senior leadership team, including Faculty leads.</p> <p>Constantly and actively supported by senior leadership</p> <p>Good team of application mentors</p>	

Core competencies framework	HR and technical leads together with individual line managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed (PDR), job descriptions 	This is well on the way to completion, with several faculties (FoLSM, NMES & FoDOCS) having formulated standardised job descriptions.	
New Technical Services career structure to align with national career framework, including generic job descriptions from Apprenticeship level to Head of technical services	<p>HR and technical leads together with individual line managers.</p> <p>It is planned for Senior leadership team, together with senior professional service staff to take ownership and leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff to complete and link to PDR and training records • Person specifications for all grades used in recruitment. • Managed moves of staff to different roles 	Focus and campus working group established which are cross-faculty and lead by Technical staff with representation from other professional networks Hoping to address through the Career Mapping & Progression workstream of the recently established Research Culture Change Management led by Vice Dean of Research for Natural & Mathematical Sciences technical representation on each of the groups	
Work with the Centre for Research Staff Development (CRSD)	Technical representatives and the Leadership of the CRSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network meetings with all research staff who are categorised in this group (post Docs, research assistants / technicians and teaching fellows) sharing best practice 	<p>Active engagement in local and national events.</p> <p>Running workshops and actively engaging with the CRSD.</p> <p>Technical development Manager works within CRSD ensuring the technical team are included and share best practice</p> <p>Inclusion of Technicians in King's interpretation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers</p>	
Engage in the development and delivery of research enhanced education	Education Strategy Delivery Group and Vice Deans of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer alignment of Academic and technical staff. 	This has the support of the Head of the Centre for Education	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical voice/input at the Centre of Education meetings 		
SUSTAINABILITY				
Apprenticeship scheme	<p>Senior technical leadership team, and Technical staff Development Manager</p> <p>University wide apprenticeship group with input to Individual faculties and directorates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a smooth running of recruitment training plan to ensure the University and society in general has a motivated, skilled and professional through- put of skilled and professional technical trainees 	Apprenticeship team recruited to oversee all the university apprenticeship activity's Lab based Science technicians level 3 high priority, funds for the salaries are already ring fenced centralised technician apprenticeship scheme through Centre for research staff development??	
Deploy resources more strategically and proactively manage risks	Faculty management senior technical staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of job descriptions • Review training needs • Identify areas or skill shortage • Replace the institutional knowledge 	<p>Smooth running of the university teaching and research gaining new technical skills and working in a different work environment</p> <p>Working group for this is being established who will look producing a working document</p>	
Expand professional network to include other research staff (research assistance> post docs early career scientists . Colleagues from across our major NHS partner Trusts (Guy's and St Thomas', King's College	Technical Services Network senior Technical group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion across King's Health Partners • Joint initiatives and events • Closer collaboration in outreach activates 	<p>Extended membership of network to include colleagues from across King's Health Partners</p> <p>Engagement in clinical projects across sites There have already been 4 half day meetings/ Courses on bio banking, microscopic techniques, tissue culture.</p>	

Hospital and South London and Maudsley)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities to learn specialist clinical teaching and research methods	There has been a good proportion from Trust areas in attendance.	
---	--	--	--	--

Section Four: Activities and Impact

4.1 Activities and Achievements

Mentorship scheme and professional registration - Established mentorship scheme to assist in professional registration and career development linked into London and Southeast TCI Network, Centre for Research Staff Development Scheme, and King's Professional Services Mentoring Programmes (led by Organisational Development). In this way it gives technical staff the greatest scope to develop in all areas.

Engagement by senior leadership - Fully supported, funded, and with active engagement by senior leadership, examples of this are funding year on year for professional registration and the creation of a Technical Development Manager/TCI lead post (In progress) and Directory of expertise (in development)

Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellowships – Technical staff have been supported to obtain national professional recognition of their teaching practice, by completing a HEA fellowship, supported by King's academy. Learning and Teaching Programme sessions have been held for technical staff, offering professional development opportunities for those with teaching responsibilities. Senior technical staff have formulated and delivered pedagogy workshops for demonstrators to support their career progression.

Representation – The technical staff community at King's now has a stronger voice at a higher level thanks to representation on many high-level network and committees. A strong and influential Technical Representative Committee meets every three weeks and Technician membership of the Research Staff Representative Committee feeds into university-wide influencing and policy-making processes. This was a direct result of promoting opportunities across the Technical Network and specifically the DDI focus group reaching out to colleagues to encourage participation.

Technicians have also been included in King's interpretation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/assets/research/root-assets/2020-to-2022-action-plan-update-kcl-2.pdf>

Recognition - The Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine (FoLSM) hosted the inaugural Faculty Awards ceremony, including an award for 'outstanding technical support' under the People & Culture category. They also have a regular series of interviews with technical staff being promoted across various communication channels within the university and on social media

Kirsty Massetti, dissecting room technical manager was one of 8 nominees shortlisted for **Outstanding Technician of the Year** at the Times Higher Education Awards 2023. The award, recognises exceptional practical skills, commitment and vision and is sponsored by the Technician Commitment. Kirsty was nominated for her exceptional lab services and care for donors, crucial role in teaching undergraduates, offering pastoral support and collaboration with healthcare professionals, academics and support services. This achievement was promoted internally through faculty news digests.

4.2 Technical apprenticeships

A trend towards hiring graduates as technicians has weakened the pipeline of vocational training and, arguably, the quality of the technical career pathway. The skills acquired by a graduate are rarely the skills required of an excellent technician. With a national deficit in apprenticeship schemes the surplus pool of technicians to service commercial startups is simply lacking. Kings faculties are funding 6 Apprenticeship roles from September 2024 with similar numbers in subsequent years, with the expectation in retaining them as part of the technical service team after the apprenticeship. We will be partnering with Kingston College as the Further Education provider. Apprentices will be rotated round the faculties to a clear training and assessment plan and managed centrally by the technical development manager who will also act as “personal tutor for pastoral and educational needs” and the conduit between Kings and the FE college. On-the-job training will be with the various faculties overseen by a local named technical and academic staff member.

We are also working on enabling staff apprenticeships as a means for existing technicians to upskill, broaden their horizons and otherwise engage in lifelong learning as a means of adding value to the individual and the organisation. Faculty technical leads are developing new career progression pathways which will include a framework for supporting staff apprenticeships and non-apprenticeship parallel education pathways (ie. at level 8/PhD) as a new avenue for broadening expertise and knowledge exchange.

4.3 Partnership with our NHS trusts (Guy, St Thomas’s, Kings College Hospital and South London and Maudsley) King’s Health Partners (KHP) Academic Health Sciences Centre and associated NIHR Biomedical Research Centres

This brings together three world-leading NHS Foundation Trusts with our university to carry out health research, education and clinical care. Together, we have nearly 4.8 million patient contacts each year, 40,000 staff, over 30,000 students, and a combined annual turnover of more than £3.7 billion.

Work has been done to ensure that King's technical staff and Trust funded technical staff in the University, irrespective of funding source have the same opportunities for training and development. An excellent example of progress made in this area is technical staff working in the Cancer Centre and bio-banking. These Technical staff are King’s employees and have been clinically recharged to the trust.

It is our ambition to work as part of KHP to identify all technical staff in our partner NHS Foundation Trusts and offer them the same opportunities as their university colleagues. For example, this would include access to our training workshops, professional registration mentoring, King’s Technical Network events and social and networking activities. This has proven to be great success and to encourage much more inter campus collaboration and understanding.

4.4 Environmental sustainability

King's Technicians are uniquely positioned to initiate, maintain and monitor operational sustainability initiatives in alignment with King's stated target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2025 (<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/zero-carbon-by2025>).

This is achieved in part through the implementation of initiatives and standards such as Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF), which the college has successfully implemented in 100% of laboratories. Such initiatives are supported by the Technical Network specialist focus group on environmental sustainability, which in turn feed any proposed initiatives into the KCL Sustainable Science Committee for approval. This offers not only a sustainability opportunity but also an opportunity for leadership from technical staff, as many of our LEAF groups are led by technicians. We will continue to support them with this by developing a programme for LEAF Leads to improve sustainability knowledge.

The integration of sustainability content and operational improvements within undergraduate programmes, postgraduate programmes, and modules offers opportunities for delivery by technical staff. Integration of sustainability criteria within teaching content and operations serves to both improve career visibility, and to upskill those involved. This in turn improves professional development opportunities as sustainability becomes further integrated within the professional research sector.

We continue to advocate for the integration of environmental sustainability into technicians' job descriptions and the PDR process, in line with the objectives of the Sustainable Science Committee, such as uptake of sustainability standards in all laboratories.

4.5 Development, Diversity and inclusion

The past three years have seen a great deal of progress in the Development, Diversity & Inclusion (DDI) agenda for technical staff at King's. Below are several highlights and how they feed into the larger action plan to implement the principles of the Technician Commitment across the technical staff community and beyond.

A senior technical manager has been appointed DDI Lead for the Technical Network (TN) and sits on the TCI core focus group meetings, ensuring the principles of equality and inclusion are embedded in all TN initiatives and positive action is taken to support disadvantaged groups. The DDI Lead also sits as technical staff representative on the DDI Committee for the Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine (FoLSM), which has the largest number of technicians across King's, and co-chairs the DDI Committee for the School of Biomedical Engineering & Imaging Sciences. This ensures alignment of DDI strategies across all institutional tier levels.

The DDI Lead sits on the King's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Forum, which is responsible for providing the Senior Management team, via the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, with insight into staff and student community experiences, to help inform all of King's strategy. Members participate in relevant consultations to inform equality, diversity and inclusion activity and help gauge the impact it is having on the community they represent.

The DDI Lead was elected as the Equalities Officer for the Unite the Union (Unite) branch at King's. Unite has recently signed a new partnership and recognition agreement with King's and the other main unions and has been recognised as the union representing technical staff across the university. The Equalities Officer contributes to the review of all HR policy and guidance, ensuring they are compliant to Equality Law and protect the working rights of all employees at King's, and more specifically of technical staff.

An away day on the theme of DDI was organised specifically for the Technical Network, to inform the technical staff community of the King's EDI strategy, promote available mentoring schemes and mental health awareness training, and increase the visibility of community staff networks. These networks help staff expand their professional involvement with the university and get involved in shaping organisational strategies, particularly to support colleagues with protected characteristics and offer colleagues from underrepresented groups a platform to contribute to areas of policy, strategy, and review.

The TCI core focus group participated in a listening exercise with the new President and Principal of King's, presenting on behalf of the Technical Network to highlight the contributions of technical staff to the success of the university and reporting on TCI activities, with DDI highlighted as one of the pillars of our strategy.

The TCI core focus group contributed to a review of Faculty technical services structure with members chairing multiple focus groups made up of technical staff across the TechNet. DDI was one of the main themes, and several recommendations were made as a result.

The DDI Lead and various members of the DDI focus group have contributed to Research Culture initiatives led by the Centre for Research Staff Development (focus on tackling bullying and harassment) and the Research Governance, Ethics & Integrity Team. The aim of these initiatives was to review current practice, highlight positive examples and make recommendations to feed into the university's Research Culture strategy and to ensure the inclusion of technical staff voices.

Section five: TALENT Commission

The King’s action plan aims to deliver across five themes (communication and engagement, continuous improvement, development, career pathways, and apprenticeships). Each aspect of the action plan meets specific criteria identified through the Technician Commitment, TALENT Commission and KCL Strategy 2026 (figure 6). KCL aims to meet many of the recommendations from the TALENT Commission through the 3-year action plan (see Appendix 1). Figures 6 & 7 map some of the key recommendations from the action plan and other initiatives to the TALENT commission criteria.

Internal & external deliverables map

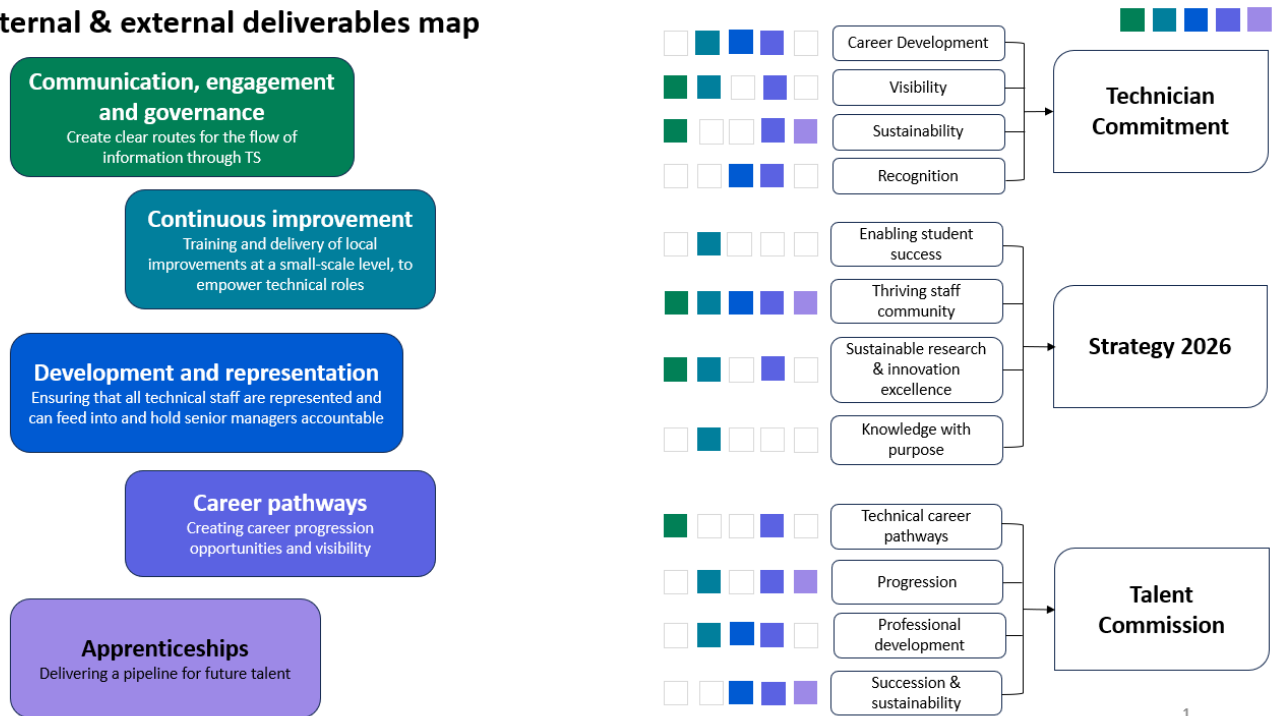


Figure 6

Recommendation	Action
Strategic approach to ensure the sustainability and appropriateness of technical skills and careers, at both a local and national level	Developing operational, education, and research career pathways for technical staff.
Recognise the blurring of boundaries between technical and academic roles. Provide opportunities and mechanisms to move between career pathways and across sectors.	Developing career maps that identify routes into and from technical career pathways.
Collect, report and analyse data on technical workforce	Development of career pathways with three classifications to simplify progression in technical careers.
Targeted and specific action to address the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) challenges facing the technical community	Significant push to promote and embed Herschel Women in Technical Leadership Course with significant success and impact already occurring.
Provide clear and consistent guidance to ensure technical contributions are costed appropriately	Actions currently in development.
Support outreach and public engagement activities regarding technical careers	Actions currently in development.
Broaden access to technical careers in the sector by utilising and expanding entry routes to include both vocational and academic pathways	Apprenticeships and Job Descriptions that do not require formal education at any level.
Ensure inclusion of technical expertise within end to-end recruitment processes when hiring for technical roles	No formal policy, but this happens. We should have an action plan to create a policy
Ensure visibility of clearly defined career pathways and progression routes, with accurate and standardised job descriptions for technical roles.	In place in many areas and part of the action plan to standardise in all areas.
Ensure visibility of clearly defined career pathways	Part of our action plan.
Ensure provision and access to a range of professional development opportunities tailored to technical roles and careers	Technical development manager post and work with CRSD to create tailored programs for technical staff. Good access to courses as shown in the training and dev section. Lots of OD courses and action plan with creation of tailored training will help this
Ensure the contributions of technical staff are visible and recognised	Technical policy for recognition. Researcher concordat recognises technical staff contribution.
Ensure technical staff sit on appropriate institution- and sector level decision-making committees and boards to ensure these groups reflect the community they represent and to provide diversity of views and expertise	Technical staff are on EDI, sustainability, finance review committees and working groups at all levels of the institution. Technical representation currently exists on some committees but not all. Action plan includes

	items to improve technician voice at a higher level
form partnerships with organisations and initiatives that provide technical and vocational training	Nothing in place yet
Technical staff should engage positively with current and future opportunities that are available to them	Action plan needs to address workload issues to enable this activity to take place. Action plan items encourage technical staff to be empowered in their roles.

Figure 7

Section six: Action plan

A 36 month action plan detailing how the themes of the Technician commitment will be addressed can be found in Appendix 1.

Section 7: Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all at King’s College for their support and enthusiasm in the production of this 2024-2027 TCI submission. It has the technical community at the heart, and writing primarily by the Technical staff network and senior Technical leadership group, with advice and encouragement from the senior leadership team

Major Contributions:

Dan Martin

Lindsay Parker

Oli Austen Education and Environment sustainability

Valentina Vitiello EDI

Caitlin Broadbent Environment sustainability

Contributions:

Stephen Shemilt

Ben Gridley

Francis O'Shea

Barry Crook

Kathy Barrett

We, the undersigned, confirm that our Technician Commitment status and three-year action plan is published on our organisation's website at

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/support/facilities/technician-commitment>

Stephen Franey, Technician Commitment Nominated Institutional Lead

Date: 30 January 2024

Signed 

Stephen Large, Senior Vice President – Operations

Technician Commitment Nominated Sponsor & Leader of Institution

Date: 30 January 2024

Signed 