

Technical Career Pathways

Newcastle University is one of 65 HEI's are now signatories to the Technician Commitment.

<https://sciencecouncil.org/techniciancommitment/>. The Technician Commitment is a sector-wide initiative led by the Science Council, supported by the Gatsby Foundation to help address key challenges facing technical staff working in research.

Within the Technician Commitment, five target areas have been identified, which universities and institutions will work to improve to safeguard vital technical skills. The commitment will ensure greater visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians across all disciplines.

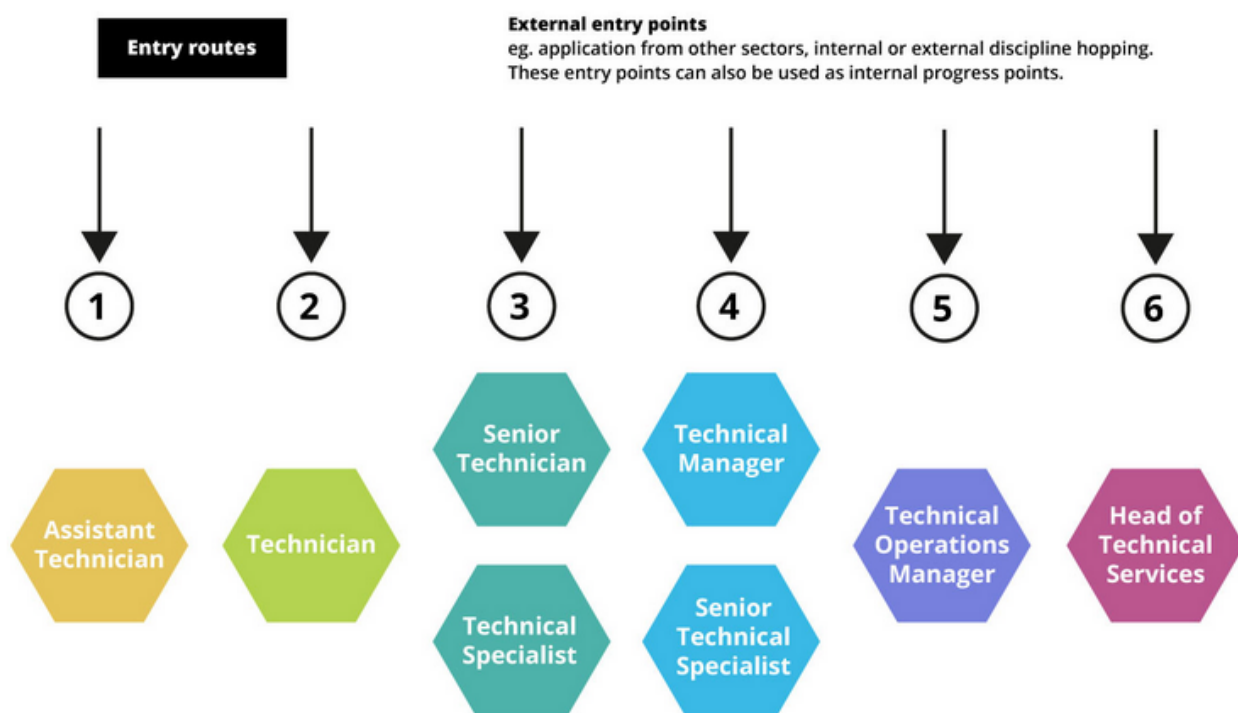
Technical staff are typically highly skilled in science or engineering. They often have diverse roles and this is reflected in the number of different technical job titles within the organisation. Furthermore, many Technician's salaries are funded from grant income and this results in almost constant change. There are also large inconsistencies between HEIs which can make progression for individuals difficult.

Pledging to support the Technician Commitment is easy however delivering on the objectives is more challenging, especially for such a diverse workforce. Under the Technician Commitment, the broad objective Career Development has been defined as **'Enable career progression opportunities for technicians through the provision of clear, documented pathways'**.









At Newcastle University we are starting to look at career pathways for technical staff. Specifically we are considering:

- Technician specific professional career paths/frameworks which clearly document progression opportunities
- Professional development opportunities, signposted to technicians and aligned to career pathways
- Expansion of technician specific job families in recognition of high level technical specialists

It is noteworthy that the National Technician's Development Centre (NTDC) has a number of toolkits which can be used to support the Technician's Commitment. One such toolkit is the HE Technical Career Pathways tool <https://nationaltechnicianscentre.ac.uk/tcm/uk-hett/>, which shows entry points and progression for Technical Staff. Crucially it recognises Technical Specialists and Technical manager pathways, which is often overlooked and has clear definitions for each role.



A number of routes into the service exist. The Assistant Technician role could provide a convenient entry point for those completing apprenticeships or traineeships etc.

| HETT Band | HETT Role Title | Entry Qualifications/Experience | Professional Accreditations | Role Overview |
|-----------|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 |  | Expected QCF level 3 or previous relevant work experience | Working towards RSciTech or EngTech | Typically an entry level role, possibly by way of an apprenticeship or trainee programme. The role holder works primarily under supervision and possess the ability to solve simple problems. A full and detailed description is presented in the full Toolkit. |
| 2 |  | Expected QCF level 4 or considerable previous relevant work experience | RSciTech or EngTech | Reflecting a higher ability and skill level the role holder can work autonomously and solve complex problems. A full and detailed description is presented in the full Toolkit. |
| 3 |   | Expected QCF level 5 or considerable previous relevant work experience | RSci or REng | Senior Technician: With a management focus, the role holder possesses the ability to manage and plan work and resources. A full and detailed description is presented in the full Toolkit. Technical Specialist With focus on a technical specialism, the role holder possesses detailed and highly refined technical skill and knowledge in a particular area. A full and detailed description is presented in the full Toolkit. |
| 4 |   | QCF level 6 or 7 or demonstrable track record with extensive relevant work experience | Working towards CSci or CEng | Technical Manager: Typically having a wider remit than a Senior Technician, the role holder would operate at a Department or School level leading, managing and planning the work of a large and multi-faceted team. A detailed analysis is presented in the full Toolkit. Senior Technical Specialist: With focus on a technical specialism, the role holder possesses advanced technical skill and knowledge in a particular area. A full and detailed description is presented in the full Toolkit. |
| 5 |  | QCF level 7 or 8 or demonstrable track record with extensive relevant work experience | CSci or CEng | Typically having a wider remit than a Technical Manager, the role holder would operate at a Faculty or College level leading, managing and planning the work of a number of large and multi-faceted teams. A full and detailed description is presented in the full Toolkit. |
| 6 |  | QCF level 7 or 8 or demonstrable track record with extensive relevant work experience consistent with level of seniority | CSci or CEng | This represents the most senior technician role within the institution. The role holder leads the service and drives university level technician strategic planning. A full and detailed description is presented in the full Toolkit. |

Newcastle University are starting to explore this option and are particularly interested to hear about experiences from other HEIs.

In this session we would like to explore:

- Where other HEIs are on the technical career pathway journey;
- how do they intend on approaching it;
- anticipated challenges;
- timescales;
- are they doing any work to tackle the cultural barriers;
- do they have organisational values and how did they roll them out/embed them;