

Review of Technical Staff Provision

The University employs approximately 235 technicians which represents 7% of the total staff profile. Technical staff have a vital role to play in supporting research, teaching and a number of other activities of strategic importance across the University, as well as daily operational requirements. The role is clearly recognised by academic staff and senior management throughout the University.

Background

HE Sector continues to change rapidly in response to a number of factors including funding and ever changing technologies. Universities, in keeping with other major employers, are faced with skills shortages and recruitment and retention difficulties. In addition, the University has undergone a significant period of change including a restructuring of academic areas and loss of staff through voluntary severance. In this context the University wishes to undertake a comprehensive review of its current technical staff provision against future support requirements.

A major review of the technician support/structure was undertaken in 2003-4 which resulted in the current structure which is in place in the College Technical teams. At this time harmonisation of the terms and conditions and structures of the support was implemented, this was further augmented when the salary scales for technical staff were harmonised as part of the recommendations from the Framework Agreement in 2006. No further formal review of the structure or support provided by technicians has been undertaken since this time.

Proposed Terms of References for the Technical Services Review

Aims of the review:

1. To review and define a Technician structure which;
 - is appropriate in composition and skills for the University and will continue to provide the highest quality of Technician support for Research and Teaching in a sustainable manner across the University.
 - will enable the best process for Technician deployment and development of career pathways.
 - will provide better clarity, visibility and accountability over cost recovery and cost management.
2. To identify improvements around aspects of Technician staff management.

Scope of the review: All staff who fall under the University Technical Staff Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Achieved through the following Methodology:

- Work in partnership with the recognised TU Unite.
- To develop an understanding of the current technical staff provision and future core technical support requirements within the Colleges, Schools and other central functions. Taking account of specific requirements for teaching & learning, research and other essential activities and opportunities of collaborations and sharing resources across Colleges.
- Work closely with senior management including UMG, Heads of Colleges, Heads of Schools, Technical Resource Managers and HR to design and develop options that will meet the future technical support requirements of the University.
- To consult widely with technician staff, individually or through focus groups, to ascertain their views on the way forward to identify the strength and/or weaknesses that currently exist within the current structure, skills base and staffing complement.
- To consult with service users to explore their future needs for technical support and their views on the strengths and/or weaknesses of the current structure and mechanisms for support.
- Recognise the combination of core and externally funded resources and take cognisance of how these staff should be structured, particularly around reporting structures.

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