

MIDLANDS INNOVATION

OUR RESPONSE TO THE TALENT COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Midlands Innovation (MI) is a partnership between Aston, Birmingham, Cranfield, Keele, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham and Warwick universities. A key MI priority is the development of our technical workforce of >2100 FTE technical colleagues. All 8 MI institutions were founding signatories of the Technician Commitment in 2017 and have individual organisational strategies in place to ensure visibility, recognition and opportunity for their technical communities.

MI has been pioneering in its focus on technicians with activity pre-dating the advent of the Technician Commitment. In 2015, we established the biennial UK Higher Education Technician Summit (HETS) and Papin Prizes to raise the profile of the technical community, celebrating excellence and providing networking and professional development opportunities. HETS is the largest event of its kind internationally.

In 2018 we established a Technical Staff Strategy Committee with technical leads from all 8 universities. This enables MI to directly engage with the technical community. In 2019 we launched an innovative pilot technical placement programme, enabling technical staff to spend time at another MI university to learn new skills. In 2020 it was announced that MI would lead the Research England funded 'TALENT' programme – an initiative with national reach to advance status and opportunity for the technical community. A key workstream of TALENT is the TALENT Commission, chaired by Sir John Holman, which published its findings in February 2022.

As founders of the TALENT programme it is important that MI recognise the recommendations of the TALENT Commission and action them accordingly. This statement sets out our collective commitment to advance the culture and environment for our technical colleagues who make such vital contributions to each of our institutions. We want MI to be the place to be for those seeking fulfilling and vibrant technical careers in higher education and research.

Technician **Commitment**



WE COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. We will address equality, diversity, and inclusivity considerations for technical workforces through implementation of targeted technician-specific initiatives and by ensuring inclusion within wider all-staff initiatives (e.g. those linked to Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter). We support an inclusive approach to recognition and reward.
2. We will enable opportunities for technical staff to be considered as co-investigators, co-supervisors, for grants or projects and provide transparent guidelines for how technical staff can be costed on to proposals. Where appropriate, we will encourage technical staff to be PIs on proposals, with the same levels of support for writing and navigating processes as available to researchers. We will encourage appropriate inclusion of technical staff as authors, co-authors, or contributors on published papers and presentations, providing clear guidance for appropriate inclusion at relevant stages.
3. We will encourage and support events for visibility, outreach, and public engagement specifically for and/or including technical staff.
4. We will ensure the collection, reporting, tracking and analysis of data on our technical workforces. We will submit staff records to HESA for our technical staff and track the size and make-up of our technical workforces.
5. We will take a strategic approach to the sustainability of technical skills and careers, and appropriate succession planning through horizon scanning and identifying current and potential future skills gaps. All of our universities will appoint an institutional strategic lead from a technical background to lead this agenda.
6. We will continue to expand entry routes to technical roles and careers within MI by encouraging applicants from both vocational and academic pathways and we will invest in apprentices and trainee technician positions. We will host T-Level work experience placements and technical placement opportunities for local schools and colleges. We will ensure utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy for training and developing technical colleagues.
7. We will develop and pilot new opportunities for progression via Technical Specialist pathways, and opportunities and mechanisms for staff to move across career pathways and job families. We will ensure provision and protected time for training and professional development and support technical staff to take advantage of development opportunities, such as technical training, placements, and professional registration. We will ensure inclusion of technical staff within end-to-end recruitment processes when hiring for technical roles and visibility of clearly defined career pathways and job descriptions for technical roles and careers.
8. We will ensure representation of technical staff on department-, school-, faculty-, and institution-level decision-making committees, boards, panels, and similar groups, through either a dedicated seat or designated technical advocates within senior leadership and/or existing members. Our technical colleagues will have protected time to participate in these fora.
9. We will continue to form partnerships with organisations and initiatives that support our technical community.
10. We will be inclusive of technical staff and their considerations in conversations on sector-policy developments and support technical colleagues to contribute to and/or attend government events and initiatives to develop policy.



www.mitalent.ac.uk/theTALENTCommission

