People and Teams

UKRI Action Plan

March 2023

UK Research and Innovation

Executive Summary

UKRI has published action plans to implement the Researcher Development Concordat and Technician Commitment across its domains as an investor, policy organisation and employer. Our diverse communities of research and technical staff share many similar challenges which our plans aimed to address.

We've reviewed progress against our plans and present a revised people and teams plan, intended to consider both communities more holistically going forward.

Our revised plan is structured around 4 pillars:

- UKRI as an employer: how we support our own people and teams, intended to ensure we build a supportive and developmental environment for the many research staff we employ at our Centres, Institutes and Units

- Assessment: what we reward, which aims to recognise skilled people, and their development, as a core output of our investment.

- Expectations and assurance: being clear about what we're investing in, to clarify our expectations on how our funding can be used to generate the most impact and societal benefit.

- Engagement: how we support the sector setting out how we will work with our partners to build and develop the breadth of skilled people and teams we need for an increasingly R&D intensive economy.

The last section of the plan lays out how, and where, we will measure the impacts of our actions and develop our data capabilities.

The plan is accompanied by a report (Annex 1) of our progress against our previous action plans.

UKRI people and teams action plan

People are the heart of the research and innovation system. Our researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, archivists, technicians, project managers, methodologists, curators, administrators and those in many other roles, all work together to create new knowledge, understanding, technologies, products and services.

Our vision is for a thriving research and innovation system connected and driven by the people who work within it, following their ideas through the system, across disciplinary siloes and on a diversity of career pathways. We all have a responsibility to support the diversity of skilled people and teams working in research and innovation; helping individuals to reach their potential and developing the UK's human capital for societal benefit.

Our people and teams Action Plan is the result of insight gathered from the implementation of, and review of progress against UKRI's Researcher Development Concordat action plan, published in July 2020, and UKRI's Technician Commitment action plan, published in February 2021 (Annex 1).

In our work to implement these plans, we have identified many commonalities between the challenges both initiatives aim to address. We are also mindful of the huge range of roles that do not completely fit either label and we want to make sure that our plans recognise all contributors we need for a thriving research and innovation system.

Our new single plan reflects the shared challenges faced by our researcher and technician communities and focuses on a shared set of actions that aim to promote culture change and address issues related to working culture, environment and access to professional development and career support they can access.

The people and teams Action Plan is structured around 4 pillars:

- UKRI as an employer: how we support our own people and teams.

- Assessment: what we reward.

- Expectations and assurance: being clear about what we're investing in

- Engagement: how we support the sector

In publishing a single people and teams plan, we hope to address our role as an R&I employer, investor and leader for the Technician Commitment and the Researcher Development Concordat, ensuring we consider the wider range of roles that may not identify with either framework.

This builds on our commitment as signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the UKRI Technician Commitment.

It also aligns with the UKRI Strategy, specifically **Objective 1, World-Class People and Careers**;

- Priority 1.2, Develop the breadth of skilled people and teams essential for the future R&D workforce

- Priority 1.3, Shift research culture to support, rather than hinder, talented people and teams to pursue their ideas

and **Objective 6, A World-Class Organisation**;

- Priority 6.1, Empower talented people to collaborate and thrive

- Priority 6.2, Make UKRI an efficient, effective and agile organisation

Our opportunity

The UKRI Strategy sets out how the UK has a world-class research and innovation system and outlines the challenges that need to be addressed to build on this and make the UK the top destination for talented people and teams.

We want to maximise opportunities to work across disciplinary and sector boundaries and bring in an exciting range of new ideas and perspectives. Some of the most exciting discoveries and innovations have been made at the boundaries between disciplines and sectors. Our current system undervalues many essential skills and contributions, with limited measures of success that lead to linear career pathways and disciplinary silos.

Our incentives and our career structures must aim to support the conditions needed for serendipity and interconnectedness in the R&I system and aim to address hypercompetitive, high pressure and hierarchical environments that compromise creativity and create a permissive environment for bullying, harassment, and questionable research practices.

We must support our workforce and build the resilience needed to respond with agility to the future challenges and opportunities of an increasingly R&I intensive economy.

With the help of our communities, we've made substantial progress in bringing these issues to the forefront of conversations about R&I talent and careers, creating real momentum for change.

What does good look like?

We aim to build a foundation of inclusive environments and cultures that promote staff wellbeing and support our people to reach their potential, as laid out in our draft Equality, Diveristy and Inclusion (EDI) strategy.

Our culture and environment should enable people to understand the broader context of their work, and support them to pursue great ideas without barriers, enabling them to move easily between disciplines, sectors, business, and academia. We need people that can fill the middle ground and build connections between stakeholders; understanding and realising the impact and societal benefit of our investment in R&I.

As a sector, we must recognise the full range of contributions and contributors to research and innovation, provide more opportunities to work across siloes, increase cross training and preparation for a wider range of roles, support a wider range of career pathways within our research organisations, and ensure strategic consideration of our people as an organisational asset and a national strength.

What good looks like is context dependent, and we will avoid imposing top-down solutions, instead developing incentives that support our stakeholders to be innovative as they address these challenges and encouraging them to share good practice.

Capability to deliver

We are focused on ensuring UKRI's investment in R&I results in high quality research and innovation outcomes.

The best environment for this is one that values rigour, technical and methodological expertise, the quality of ideas and experiments over where they are published, and a diversity of contributions and types of research and innovation.

This is dependent on a supportive and developmental culture. Realising the spill over benefits through the development of people and their career journey through the system is key part of UKRI's investment in R&I.

UKRI's incentive structures must recognise that environment and culture are crucial to the capability to deliver a proposed project and realise its benefits, and we will ensure our funding decisions reflect this.

Precarity in research careers

Precarity describes both insecure employment, and the feelings of pressure and insecurity regardless of contract status.

Precarity was recognised in the UK's R&D People and Culture Strategy, and UKRI's five year strategy. It compromises the quality of research and innovation in several ways. As our bullying and harassment evidence review notes, precarity and strong hierarchies create a permissive environment for bullying and harassment, which in turn can drive questionable research practices and compromise the integrity of research outputs, as noted in our landscape study on research integrity. It also limits the diversity of people who contribute to research, reducing the creativity, knowledge recombination and therefore potential of R&I projects. Addressing precarity in research careers is therefore essential to a high-quality research and innovation system and to our ambition for a more knowledge intensive economy.

This plan aims to reduce precarity for our R&I workforce by:

- Incentivising more diverse staffing models in our research performing organisations, including greater use of staff pools, facility staff, technical specialists and methodologists via our application processes, grant assessment and grant conditions. Building these cross-cutting capabilities will provide a diversity of career pathways for R&I staff to follow, both within their institution and to other parts of the sector; provide research organisations with the technical capability and institutional memory to improve the quality of research; and provide more stable employment for our workforce.

- Supporting leadership development in our project leaders, rewarding those who support the careers of their staff and those around them in how we assess an applicant's track record, for example, through the Resume for Research and Innovation.

- Recognising a broader range of contributions in how we assess and award funding, making roles with non-traditional track records more visible and encouraging applicants who have participated in a broader range of research and innovation activity, for example, building connections and collaboration with other parts of the sector and strengthening networks through which their team members and colleagues can progress their careers.

- Setting strong expectations of redeployment between research projects, especially for larger research organisations. Research organisations struggling to redeploy staff between roles will struggle to evidence that they have sufficiently developed their research staff for a range of roles in other parts of the sector.

Ways of working

We will adopt an outcomes focused approach to the implementation of this plan. As we move forward, individual actions and timescales may change if we identify a more efficient or effective way to deliver the same outcome.

This plan replaces our existing Technician Commitment and Researcher Development Concordat plans.

The New Deal for PGR is a related long-term programme of evaluation and change to create a new deal for postgraduate research. Support for postgraduate researchers will therefore be considered within the "New Deal" programme, though we will ensure our efforts are aligned.

The UKRI Funding Service is currently under development as part of the Simpler and Better Funding Programme. Service development is iterative, based on agile, continuous improvement methodology and currently runs in parallel with Je-S as more of our funding opportunities are onboarded to the new service.

Though we expect all new UKRI opportunities to transfer to the new service by January 2024, the service and associated policies, will continue to be updated after this date.

New policies and actions outlined in this plan will likely be linked to the new funding service, so may not be available on all UKRI opportunities until the changeover date.

1

UKRI as an employer: how we support our own people and teams.

Across UKRI's Centres, Institutes, and Units (CIUs) we employ over 4500 research facing staff. We will champion the environment, culture and people development we want to support in the sector for our own staff, ensuring research performed at UKRI is carried out in a supportive and development environment conducive to high quality outputs.

We will do this by:

Intended Outcome	Output	If we're successful	Timeline
Continue to support our CIUs to develop and implement their technician commitment and concordat action plans so that			
Our CIUs take a holistic view of the Technician Commitment and Researcher Development Concordat, alongside the range of related culture and environment frameworks, reducing the overall burden on our staff and encouraging engagement with shared core issues.	**1.1.** Published Technician Commitment and/or Researcher Development Concordat action plans, or equivalent, from our CIUs.	Our institutes will have published and are progressing technician commitment and/or researcher development concordat action plans, or equivalent commitments to supporting people and teams that consider the range of environment and culture frameworks holistically.	Dependent on individual CIU timelines
We strengthen our research and innovation staff communities, build connectivity across UKRI by mapping existing networks and bring together a research culture community of interest.	**1.2.** A research culture and environment community of interest, to discuss and champion research culture at our CIUs. **1.3.** Support and engagement for existing science estate staff networks and communities of interest across UKRI.	A growing community within UKRI's science estate that supports development of our policies and strategy and champions a vibrant research and innovation culture.	2023-2025
Support leadership development across UKRI with			
A framework of UKRI people standards that sets clear expectations for self and people leadership linked to our performance management and progression processes.	**1.4.** a UKRI wide people standards framework linked to a revised appraisal process that rewards and incentivises positive leadership behaviours, with tailored support to adapt and implement the framework across our science estate.	Staff across UKRI will be equipped to support their peers and those they manage, visible through improvements in annual and pulse survey metrics.	2023-2024
Support career pathways and career development for our staff so			
Our staff are supported to develop and progress their careers in research and innovation.	**1.5** Support for our staff to understand the skills, competencies and opportunities to develop their career, within and beyond UKRI, starting with a review of how well our current provision meets identified training needs.	Our staff are equipped to audit their skills and experience and understand how they can progress their career, as evidenced through our people surveys and staff engagement.	2023-2025
Our staff have time and line manager support for professional development and wider experience beyond their immediate project.	**1.6.** UKRI employment policy and practice that supports staff to engage with career based CPD and gives them the time to do so, including support for line managers to develop their staff as part of (1.4).	Our staff will report greater access to CPD opportunities and demonstrate higher engagement with cross UKRI groups and activities.	2023-2025

Intended Outcome	Output	If we're successful	Timeline
Recognise a wider range of contributions and contributors in how we perform research so			
Staff are recognised for their wider contributions to research and innovation in UKRI's reward and recognition processes.	**1.7.** Narrative, R4RI like approaches, are embedded in CIU recognition, reward, and promotion processes.	More of our staff and more of their research and innovation work is recognised, visible through our survey and engagement metrics.	2023-2025
Making UKRI a diverse and inclusive organisation.			
We will embed EDI in how we support and develop our staff through the development of our EDI strategy and its implementation through our local action plans and workforce EDI plan.			

2

Assessment: what we reward.

People deliver the projects we fund but more than that, they're key to realising the overall impact of research and innovation investments and to building connectivity through the R&I system. In every sense, the people supported by our funding, and the value added to their careers through their work is a core output of our investment.

We will ensure that our institutional level assessment, and our funding application and assessment processes incentivise the development of the R&I workforce by encouraging a diversity of career pathways and supports a positive culture that yields high quality research and innovation outputs.

We will do this by:

Intended Outcome	Output	If we're successful	Timeline
Changing who can apply for our funding and how they can build their project team.			
Wider eligibility for our grants and a wider range of roles that can be applied for to support projects.	**2.1.** Testing a new grant roles policy with more roles eligible to apply as project leaders and a wider range of roles and contributors that can be requested as part of our new funding service. **2.2.** Piloting approaches to visibility and recognition for a wider range of contributors through our upcoming schemes, such as our AI Consortium.	Our grant applicants will come from a wider range of backgrounds, in terms of both protected characteristics and career paths. Grant applications will have more diverse staffing structures, making greater use of technical specialists, pooled resources and facilities.	2023-2025
Removal of barriers to the sustainability of technical and methodological specialist roles.	**2.3.** Ensure technical and skills specialist posts requested via the new grant roles policy are eligible for indirect and estates costs, in parity with disciplinary specialists **2.4.** Continued engagement with research organisations to identify and address similar barriers.	Institutions will report greater cost recovery for technical roles and have more resource available for the development of alternative career pathways. We will have better data on the people and teams who are staffed to our grants, allowing us to understand who our investments are supporting.	2023-2025
Increased visibility and recognition of a wider range of roles on our funded grants.	**2.5.** Ensure our new funding services collect sufficient data on staff supported by our funding to understand the roles and people who contributes to our funded research.		2023-2025
Embedding incentives for workforce development in grant assessment so that			
Prospective project leads applying for our funding consider: **– How they will develop and maintain their people leadership skills.** **– How they will support the career and professional development of their team members for a broader range of roles across the R&I system.**	**2.6.** Development of baseline application guidance for research funding opportunities.	Our grant applicants can clearly articulate how they have supported the development of others in module 2 of the Resume for Research and Innovation. Research Organisations applying for funding invest more time and effort in the development of people leadership skills and capabilities for their staff, visible in our engagement with the sector and institutional publications.	2023-2025
Our grant assessors consider: **– Whether the project lead has demonstrated their ability to develop others and maintain effective working relationships.**	**2.7.** Development and embedding of baseline reviewer guidance and assessment criteria across our funding opportunities.	Applicants and host organisations value a broader range of people and roles in how they build project teams through: – Requesting support for a broader range of roles as part of their applications.	2023-2025

Intended Outcome	Output	If we're successful	Timeline
– **Whether the staffing model has sufficient technical and methodological capability to deliver the aims of the project and realise its benefits.** – **The opportunities team members will have, whilst carrying out the project, to work across disciplinary silos and build connectivity within and beyond the host organisation.** – **Whether there is sufficient commitment and support by the host organisation to realise the potential of the project and our investment in its team.**	**2.8.** An embedded evaluation approach to assess the effectiveness of application assessment in changing research and innovation culture.	– Building more cross cutting technical and methodological capability. – Considering the professional development of staff for a range of roles across the R&I system and embedding CPD and experience of working across silos within how roles are structured. – Recognising the weaknesses of our current staffing model and its potential effect on staff health and wellbeing. Evidenced through our engagement with the sector, institutional publications and in our funding applications.	2023-2025
Building incentives aligned to what we reward (2) and what we expect (3) into our institutional level incentives.			
The successor to REF 2021 supports a positive research culture that delivers excellent research and impact.	2.9. The successor to REF 2021 includes assessment elements that reward and recognise institutions and research units that support and develop skilled people and teams.	As for (2) and (3) based on available evidence.	Dependent on the Future Research Assessment Programme
Assessment and review of our institute and block grant type awards appropriately consider the development and support of people and teams.	**2.10.** Institute reviews and Quinquennial reviews assessment elements that reward and recognise institutions and research units that support and develop skilled people and teams.		Subject to institute review and QQR timescales
Inviting a broader range of people into our assessor pools and colleges to benefit from their technical and methodological experience.			
Our scheme administrators can easily identify peer reviewers and panel members with technical and methodological expertise.	**2.11.** Development of a college or community for peer reviewers or panel members, or other solution compatible with our existing systems, for identifying panel members and reviewers from wider range of R&I backgrounds, building on current practice from across our councils.	Our scheme owners and administrators report easier access to technical and methodological experts using our existing tools and processes for reviewer matching.	2023-2025

3

Expectations and assurance: being clear about what we're investing in

Research and innovation is dependent on a supportive, collaborative and developmental environment, which values a diversity of perspectives and embeds productive incentives. Our grant conditions and expectations aim to ensure that the environments in which we invest are those likely to deliver robust, high quality and high integrity outputs.

We will work with our funding partners across the sector and develop our systems and processes to provide assurance that organisations that we fund have the appropriate governance, policies and culture to ensure our investment in the people who carry out R&I is realised.

We will do this by:

Intended Outcome	Output	If we're successful	Timeline
Working with our partners to set out clear policies and expectations for supporting people and teams across the sector.			
For host organisations, this means progress towards: – **Open, transparent, and fair decision-making on who is supported to apply for funding and who is recognised on research outputs.** – **Provision of career based continuing professional development.** – **Policies to ensure technical resources are appropriately costed onto funding applications and staff are resourced sustainably.** – **The development of a diversity of project staffing models and redeployment processes that support a range of role types and mitigate the effects of disciplinary siloes, strong hierarchies and precarious employment.** **For project leads and team members, this means:** – **Understanding of their career options and taking ownership of their own career based CPD and leadership development.** – **Awareness of the broader context of their work within the R&I system.** – **Their commitment to building an inclusive culture and environment within their institution.**	**3.1.** A policy and/or updated terms and conditions for UKRI funding that seek to support improvements in the environment and culture, and the quality of outputs, in the organisations we fund. Including joint working with other research funders and our partners in the sector to develop shared approaches.	Engagement with research organisations and grant holders demonstrates good understanding of UKRI policies, conditions and expectations for supporting people and teams. Sector workforce data and surveys demonstrate: – More effective redeployment processes within ROs and a reduced reliance on fixed term contracts or open ended contracts limited by funding. – Reduced barriers to career transitions to a diversity of careers and pathways. – Greater involvement and consultation of technical and facility staff in staffing and resourcing funding applications. Joint working with other research funders and shared approaches or terms and conditions across the funding landscape.	2023-2024
Developing our Funding Assurance processes to assure our non-financial conditions and expectations, and whether the support promised at application is provided by host organisations.			
UKRI has assurance that organisations in which it invests are supported to comply with our policies and grant conditions.	**3.2.** An assurance pilot for our non-financial terms and conditions that will feed into the development of an integrated funding assurance system to bring together the range of existing assurance and compliance activity from across UKRI. **3.3.** A UKRI sanctions policy as part of UKRI's new funding services.	Teams across UKRI have assurance that ROs in which we invest are compliant with our non-financial and culture related grant conditions, policies and expectations.	2023-2025

4

Engagement:
how we support the sector

Many actions in the plan aim to address long standing challenges in the R&I sector, often caused by current incentive structures. We need to ensure UKRI is embedded in the sector and available as a partner to help build a talent ecosystem that supports a dynamic and interconnected R&I system, ensuring we communicate a clear picture of our destination and supporting the sector to get there.

We will do this by:

Intended Outcome	Output	If we're successful	Timeline
Developing L&D resources, training, policies, engagement and support for UKRI staff, so that			
Our staff are supported to embed incentives for the development of people and teams into their funding calls and to champion this in their engagement with the sector. **We reduce the potential administrative and workload burden on our staff through reducing the barriers for embedding talent development into their work and funding schemes they run.** **We build internal connectivity, and routes for engagement and feedback to improve our work, raise issues and identify new and existing gaps in support.**	**4.1.** L&D and "plug and play" resources and/or policies for our scheme owners to embed support for people and teams into their engagement and funding calls. **4.2.** An ongoing programme of engagement and communication across UKRI funding administration staff.	More UKRI staff will report understanding how their work contributes to our overall strategy in our annual people survey and internal engagement. Staff report having the tools and knowledge to embed incentives for workforce development in their work and engagement. Staff are able to discuss their engagements with the sector and identify issues arising with the relevant policy teams.	2023-2026
Providing clear comms and engagement to bust common myths and raise awareness of our application and assessment policies and processes.			
Our communities have a clear understanding of our policies. For example, who can apply for funding, how roles can be resourced and how value for money decisions are made.	**4.3.** Ongoing engagement and frequently asked questions and guidance published alongside new policies.	More grant applicants and project team members from non-traditional backgrounds. Greater emphasis on people development and greater variety of roles visible in our grant applications.	2023-2026
Supporting the establishment of the UK Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy (ITSS) to:			
Provide strategic leadership, influence, insight and impact for technical skills and strategy across the UK.	**4.4.** Investment and UKRI staff support for an Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy.	A national institute providing insight, influence, and innovative interventions to ensure that the UK has the technical capability and capacity across academia, research, education, and innovation to enable the UK to be a global superpower in science, engineering, and the creative industries, and that technical skills, roles, and careers will be recognised, understood, developed, respected, and aspired to.	2023

Intended Outcome	Output	If we're successful	Timeline
Continuing our ongoing engagement and building new partnerships that champion the diversity of people, roles and contributions necessary for a high performing R&I system.			
– Continuing our existing programme of public engagement, as outlined in our new public engagement strategy. – Building on our broader engagement with the sector and working with our partners to support their events. – Building strong relationships with the organisations we invest in to support them in meeting the conditions of our funding. – Building strong relationships with the organisations we invest in to support them in developing their people and teams. – Good practice sharing, including staffing models from across the sector that support a diverse range of career paths.			Ongoing

How we will know we are making a difference

We will ensure we monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions by being an evidence based and evidence informed organisation, being responsive to any emerging issues and adjusting our plans accordingly. Many activities outlined in this plan align to achieve a set of outcomes. We must strike a balance between evaluating the effectiveness of individual interventions from whether the broader package of measures makes a difference, being mindful it may not be possible to disentangle the two.

We will:

Improve our data capabilities and integration, ensuring we have access to high quality data that informs our decision making.

– We will support the upcoming consultation on the HESA Staff record, aiming to encourage enough high quality data collection on HE staff centrally to reduce our data collection needs through other routes and reduce the overall administrative burden on higher education institutions.
– Ensure the data capabilities developed through our Simpler and Better Funding programme support the delivery of our strategy, collecting data on team structures, applicant characteristics, our investment in types and diversity of roles and exploring approaches in outcomes monitoring that support us to understand how people develop their careers through the R&I system and how working on our funded projects has added value to their career.

Indicator	Source
Evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions. As a starting point, we would expect to see[1]	
As a research funder:	
Increasing diversity of successful applicants for funding and assessors, in terms of protected characteristics we collect and in career background.	UKRI funding services and UKRI EDI data
More technical, methodological and skills specialist roles and greater use of pooled and cross cutting resources on our grant applications.	UKRI funding services
More technical, methodological and specialist roles and career pathways in the organisations we invest in.	Institutional publications and engagement
A greater emphasis on people leadership and management skills and backgrounds of our grant applicants, initially through qualitative analysis of applications.	UKRI funding services (R4RI module 2)
Greater cost recovery of technical and support roles from our funded awards.	Institutional engagement
Reduced reliance on fixed term contracts.	HESA Staff ([TERMS](#))
Broader career aspirations for early career researchers.	Published sector (CEDARS) and organisational surveys and institutional engagement.
Reduced barriers for career transitions to other sectors for early career researchers.	HESA Staff ([RESCON](#) and [ACTLEAVE](#) fields)
Better reporting of both upheld and non-upheld bullying and harassment, and research integrity investigations in annual reporting. We would expect to see an increase in cases reported.	Existing reporting processes and annual statements
Appropriate governance arrangements in place supporting an environment where practice reflects organisational policies.	UKRI Funding assurance programme

1. The suggested indicators are subject to change as we build our capabilities and work with the sector to improve available data sources.

Indicator	Source
Improved diversity of the research workforce across a range of roles and levels of seniority.	HESA Staff (Characteristics fields), UKRI Grants
Uptake of L&D and training resources for UKRI's funding administrators.	UKRI management information (MI) and intranet data
As an employer:	
Increased participation in the UKRI people survey from our Centres, Institutes and Units.	UKRI people survey
Clearer career pathways and support for our staff.	UKRI people survey and engagement
Greater community building and engagement, with staff feeling part of "one UKRI"..	People survey and staff engagement
Better reporting of both upheld and non-upheld bullying and harassment, and research integrity investigations in annual reporting. We would expect to see an increase in cases reported.	UKRI people survey, staff engagement and Trade Union engagement
Reduced reliance on fixed term contracts.	UKRI MI data
Increased completion of exit surveys and next destination data.	UKRI MI data
EDI evidence and indicators are discussed in our Workforce EDI plan.	

Annex 1:
Review of progress against the UKRI Technician Commitment and Researcher Development Concordat action plans

Our researcher and technician communities share similar challenges around the culture and environment they work in, and the professional development and career support they have access to. Our plans had similar overlap, aiming to use a shared set of incentives to promote culture change addressing these issues. We therefore made the decision to align implementation of our plans, our timelines, and our reporting to those in the Technician Commitment plan, as the most recently published. Coordination of both plans sits with the same team in UKRI Talent to maintain this alignment.

Our Technician Commitment plan is organised across the following five themes. You can navigate to each section of progress updates using the bookmarks below.

1. Leading and communicating

2. Technician identity and community

3. Technical careers

4. Research and innovation culture

5. Rewarding and recognising UKRI's technicians

Where an RDC plan action has no equivalent in our TC plan it is presented at the end of this report (click here).

This report provides a RAG rating[2] and an outline of our progress against the TC plan, noting progress against the cognate actions in the RDC plan, including the numbered action they refer to, where relevant. We also indicate where actions will be taken forward in our revised plan.

The following table provides an summary of progress against our plans.

RAG	TC	RDC
Green	16	6
Amber	13	2
Amber (not due within initial 2 years)	17	10
Red	–	–
Superseded	1	1

2. RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings: Green – Complete and/or Business as Usual (BaU); Amber – in progress; Amber (not due) – where actions were not due to be delivered within our initial 2-year plan; Red – not started. Ratings are slightly amended from the Technician Commitment stage 2 guidelines.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
1. Leading and communicating				
UKRI is a champion of the technical profession as both a funder and an employer, through increasing the visibility of and advocating for the importance of technicians and technician career paths to the UK economy and society.	**1.1. As a funder and an employer** we will work with stakeholders across the sector including the Science Council, research organisations, technician skills and development organisations and business to develop a communications package that articulates the benefits and opportunities of technical careers.			
	1.1.1. We will develop a communications package, targeted at technicians, research management, UKRI staff and research and innovation organisations, that supports a positive research culture and the contributions of technicians.	UKRI has developed a communications and engagement package to articulate the value of technical careers and celebrate its technicians.	Years 1-2	**Green**

RDC action 1.2.

We have engaged in a sustained programme of communications and engagement with the sector. Our CEO has written a series of blogs to accompany the 101 jobs project which highlights the contributions of a number of technical roles within the research and innovation system. The Talent and Skills team have engaged across the sector, at Higher Education Technician Summits, Technician Commitment Signatory events, technician conferences held by Technicians Working in Partnership, the Research Institute Technician Group, GW4 and MI Talent, alongside attendances at institution specific events to raise the profile of the Technician Commitment, technical careers, and the importance of a positive research and innovation culture. Our senior leadership have undertaken multiple engagements across the sector championing research, innovation and technical careers, and positive research cultures including the National Postdoc Conference 2021, Higher Education Technician Summit 2021, and the launch of the Talent Commission report, AHRC's partnership with RLUK, and a wider programme of engagement around UKRI's first 5 year strategy. We have sponsored National Postdoc Appreciation week and will be sponsoring the upcoming HETS 2023 and Research Institute Technician Awards.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	1.1.2. We will work with sector initiatives, our CIUs and UKRI public engagement to raise the profile of and encourage entry to technical careers.	UKRI and its CIUs have delivered communications and engagement activities appropriate to their communities that promote the benefits of technical careers, for example through community engagement and outreach.	Years 1-2	**Green**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG

We have, and are developing, a range of public engagement activities and partnerships to encourage more young people into technical careers. For example, STFC's Wonder initiative; our partnership with STEM ambassadors and the Science Museum's David Sainsbury gallery; our work with museums, galleries, science centres and festivals; and the national CREST Awards.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	1.1.3. We will embed recognition for and visibility of technicians in the future development of the UKRI website showcasing the success and contributions of our technical communities.	Increased visibility for the technical communities that UKRI supports as both a funder and an employer demonstrated by engagement with content that celebrates technician contributions and highlights technician career pathways.	Year 1	**Green**

Beyond the 101 jobs project, the Technician Commitment and Researcher Development Concordat are presented on UKRI's Supporting Skills and Talent web page, which is part of the Good Research Resource Hub, a dedicated resource that brings together policies, standards and guidance intended to foster a diverse and dynamic research and innovation system. The Good Research Resource Hub is regularly reviewed and updated and UKRI will raise the profile of the page over the coming year.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
The Technician Commitment action plan contributes to and is embedded in UKRI policies and strategies.	**1.2**. **As a funder and as an employer** we will ensure that the action plan for the Technician Commitment is and will continue to be developed in alignment with UKRI and CIU HR policy, the UKRI corporate strategy, and strategies and frameworks on Talent, EDI, Research Culture and International Visas.	The aims of the Technician Commitment are embedded across relevant UKRI strategies and policies and are understood within and outside UKRI to underpin strategy and policy relevant to technicians.	Year 1 onwards	**Green**

RDC action 1.5.

Both Researcher Development Concordat and Technician Commitment are considered within Objective 1 of our strategy, "World Class People and Careers". Actions and ambitions from both plans feature in the BEIS R&D People and Culture Strategy. Our Corporate plan and council delivery plans reference the TC, RDC and our action plans.

People plans in response to the UKRI people survey (see 2.1.3) reference our ongoing work around the TC, including CIU's own action plans.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI's Centres, Institutes and Units (CIUs) have embedded the principles of the Technician Commitment and are seen as examples of good practice across the R&I landscape in the UK and more broadly.	**1.3.** **As an employer** each of UKRI's CIUs will be asked to nominate a Technician Commitment Lead to advocate for and drive forward their action plan development and implementation.	Each CIU has a nominated Technician Commitment Lead working with the Implementation Group and/or UKRI Talent and Skills team.	3 months	**Green**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	1.4. As an employer we will engage with our CIUs on their Technician Commitment action plans. We will support them to develop new plans or align existing plans to the corporate plan, support them to progress their plans, and enable development and sharing of good practice to align with the vision, outputs and outcomes of the UKRI corporate plan.	Individual CIU action plans are submitted to the Science Council. Once submitted CIU action plans are then implemented within the relevant CIU. UKRI has a forum to collaborate and share good practice across its CIUs.	1-2 years	**Green**

We have identified Technician Commitment leads from across our institutes and host regular discussions to share practice, identify bottlenecks and progress the Technician Commitment across UKRI. (TC 1.3)

Our CIUs are at various stages of progressing the Technician Commitment and RDC, in summary:

– The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) has developed and is progressing its initial 2-year action plan. They are currently reviewing progress and developing their 3 year action plan due to be published in Q1 2023. STFC have recently established a working group considering their implementation of the RDC. Researcher Development Concordat at STFC.

– The Mary Lyons Centre at the Medical Research Council's Harwell site have recently reviewed their progress against the TC and published their revised 3 year action plan.

– The British Geological Survey (BGS) have established a working group to consider the Researcher Development Concordat, the Research Integrity Concordat and the Technician Commitment holistically. BGS have recently become a signatory to the Technician Commitment and will be developing an action plan following a self assessment over the coming year.

– The Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB) have also recently become Technician Commitment signatories and are developing an action plan. LMB have carried out a researcher wellbeing survey and will be taking this forward in the development of their RDC activity.

– The British Antarctic Survey's progress on both frameworks is strongly influenced by the seasonal nature of their work. They have recently resourced a role to support the technician commitment who will report to their Technician Commitment lead.

– The London Institute of Medical Science's (LMS) technician commitment activity falls within the larger Imperial College action plan, though their working group has recently produced a draft researcher RDC plan.

MRC's 3 institutes have recently held a cross institute technician symposium in support of the Technician Commitment.

MRC institutes and STFC are members of the wider Research Institute Technician Group.

Further details on the progress of our CIUs in progressing the TC and RDC can be found in their own action plans and publications.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Shared vision and standards across the UK funding landscape to ensure that the whole technical community has access to career development support from their RO irrespective of how they are funded, and that the administrative burden on ROs is reduced through aligning funder expectations.	**1.5. As a funder** we will collaborate with other funders to develop consistent narrative, expectations and comparable grant terms and conditions around:	Engagement with the technical community demonstrates improved access to career development support irrespective of how individuals are funded.	Year 1 onwards	**Amber (not due)**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	■ The roles of technicians within the research and innovation system, our collective vision for their career progression and the relationship between staff support and the resulting impact across the economy and society.	Engagement with ROs demonstrates that they understand the aligned expectations across major research funders for how the career development of technicians should be supported.		
	■ The scope of what we consider professional development for technicians and the level of support we expect for technicians from the Research Organisations that we fund			
	■ How Research Organisations can support technical careers and develop technical career pathways.			

RDC action 1.3.

We regularly engage with other research funders in developing our policies and strategy via a range of fora such as the Grant Funders Policy group, the Researcher Development Concordat Strategy group, the Bullying & Harassment Forum, and the Future Research Assessment Programme. Alongside these official fora, we've built strong relationships with our funding partners at a range of levels across the organisation. Our engagement supports our own work to develop our policies and conditions around researchers and technicians, which will likely feature in our assurance and expectations work (4.10).

We will build on these engagements as our TC and RDC work develops in our revised plan.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI has an appropriate governance and implementation structure to enable effective delivery of Technician Commitment actions and integration with cross-cutting activities including the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.	**1.6. As a funder and an employer** we will review and revise the Terms of Reference and membership of the UKRI Technician Commitment steering group to create an Implementation Group that will:	Technician Commitment steering group Terms of Reference and membership updated as necessary to create a Technician Commitment Implementation Group.	2 months	**Green**
	■ Identify and liaise with responsible owners for Technician Commitment activity and monitoring progress.	Successful delivery of action plan activity and submission of revised plan at 2 year review point.	2 years	**Green**
	■ Work in partnership with CIUs to support the implementation of their CIU level action plans.			
	■ Develop actions in further detail and define success criteria/measures.			

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	■ Liaise with other key partners and groups, such as the Science Council.	Engagement with ROs demonstrates that they understand the aligned expectations across major research funders for how the career development of technicians should be supported.		
	■ Provide assurance through regular reporting to Executive Committee and UKRI Board.			
	■ Provide briefing and support to UKRI Executive Chairs and their senior teams in their role as champions for the Technician Commitment in their respective disciplines.			

RDC action 1.1.

We established the Talent Initiatives Implementation Group (TIIG) and confirmed our Terms of Reference at TIIG's inaugural meeting in June 2021. TIIG's membership was drawn from across UKRI, with representation from council talent and skills experts; UKRI corporate HR; the central UKRI talent and skills teams; and members of research and technical staff drawn from our institutes. TIIG has been chaired by the Technician Commitment Lead for the MLC at MRC Harwell, a member of UKRI technical staff.

Going forward, we will evolve the governance for our TC and RDC programmes to ensure their integration into the People, Culture and & Talent Change portfolio, which supports UKRI's work on the R&D People and Culture Strategy. This will support the alignment of both the existing and revised TC and RDC plans with the range of research culture and environment efforts ongoing across UKRI, encouraging a focus on the core issues the frameworks aim to address through a more harmonized approach across relevant stakeholders.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
2. Technician identity and community				
Strong technician voice represented in UKRI Technician Commitment activity and greater engagement with our community.	**2.1.** We will strengthen the voice of technicians in the development of our policies and strategies by:			
	2.1.1. As a funder convening an external advisory group and developing methods of engaging with the diverse population of technicians, enabling them to contribute to policy and strategy development.	An external UKRI Technician Commitment advisory group and established mechanisms to engage with the technician community.	Years 1-2	**Green (TC)** **Amber (RDC)**
	2.1.2. As a funder using and/or strengthening existing council advisory structures in the development of activity relevant to the technician community.	Efficient integration of existing council advisory structures with future technician commitment implementation.	Years 1-2	**Amber**

RDC action 1.4

The UKRI ECR Forum was launched for a pilot year to address a strategic gap in our engagement with early career researchers. We were able to ensure ECRs could contribute to a range of strategy and policy development, including the R&D People and Culture Strategy and UKRI Strategy, the Future Research Assessment Programme, our draft EDI Strategy, the Review of research bureaucracy, and the Nurse review of research performing organisations. The pilot year of the forum is currently being reviewed.

BBSRC run a People and Talent Strategy Advisory Panel Researcher Subgroup who have supported our work to implement the RDC. AHRC have used the ECR forum to recruit ECRs to advise on their guidance on training and developing ECRs in the arts and humanities as part of their Statement of Commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Pending the outcome of the review of the pilot year of the ECR forum, we have ensured that technicians are represented in our decision-making via a range of routes:

– Technicians are represented on our pilot Talent and Skills advisory group; which informs UKRI's strategy in Talent and Skills. We are currently considering how we can broaden the Talent and Skills advisory group to include a wider range of people and perspectives.

– We are represented on the Technician Commitment Steering Board and UKRI regularly attend and present to Technician Commitment Signatory events, which act as a good practice exchange and engagement opportunity for the technician community.

– We engage with technician commitment leads and regional interest groups from across the UK, such as the Research Institute Technician Group and Technicians Working in Partnership.

– The EPSRC Research Technical Professional working group has supported the development of our initial action plan and its subsequent implementation.

We've used these routes to ensure the technician voice is represented in the development of UKRI policy and strategy, such as the Future Research Assessment Programme and our consultation on our draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

We recognise the benefits of our engagements with the ECR forum, our technical community, Postgraduate researchers and the huge range of roles that contribute to R&I and will be considering how we can continue to benefit from such engagement in our advisory structures, including in our advisory group pilot.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	2.1.3. As an employer ensuring the principles of the technician commitment are embedded in the development of our employee engagement strategy and ensuring the technician voice is well represented and accessible to internal stakeholders such as HR and research culture teams.	Increased participation of UKRI's technicians in employee engagement mechanisms.	Years 1-2	**Green**

UKRI has developed a bespoke people survey which ran for the first time from April 2022. This has provided a baseline for UKRI to evaluate employee engagement in future people surveys. Our technician and researcher communities, via our technician working group, was consulted in the development of the people survey and supported engagement with the survey across our scientific estate to increase response rates. Our research and innovation staff communities have also been engaged in the development of our EDI strategy and have provided an essential perspective to the work of the UKRI Talent team in implementing our current plans, and in developing this report and revised plan.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI understands the technicians it employs and the technicians who contribute to the research it funds.	**2.2. As an employer** we will collect and analyse data on the technicians employed in UKRI's CIUs, including role types, remit areas, skills and expertise areas, seniority and boundaries between different roles.	Appropriately anonymised quantitative and descriptive profile of the technical workforce within CIUs, including EDI representation, discipline areas, role types, seniority and boundaries with other roles.	Years 1-2	**Green**

We've analysed our workforce data to develop our understanding of our technician and researcher communities. This has informed our engagement with CIUs, our scientific staff, and HR teams, including helping to identify the right communities and support local implementation of the TC and RDC.

UKRI is also developing our understanding of our researcher and technical workforce as part of our workforce planning pilot and strategic workforce planning (See TC 5.4).

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	2.3. As a funder we will work with our partners to consolidate our data and gather available evidence on technicians we fund or those who are supported by but not directly employed on our funding, for example through facility charges.	Appropriately anonymised quantitative and descriptive data on the technical workforce we support within ROs.	Years 1-2	**Green**

In 2020, Research England, via the RED fund, invested in the Midlands Innovation TALENT project to advance status and opportunity for the UK's higher education and research technicians. The first work package, a policy commission on the academic technical workforce, was completed in Feb 2022 with the launch of the TALENT commission's report**. UKRI was represented on the commission by two directors in the People, Culture and Talent remit, and two members of UKRI technical staff.**

The commission made extensive use of HESA data to profile the UK's higher education and research technician community. The TALENT Commission has identified the switch of data collection for non-academic roles from mandatory to opt-in (in England and Northern Ireland) as a key issue to maintain our understanding of the technician workforce. Members of the Midlands Innovation group of universities have elected to opt back into technician data submissions as part of adopting the TALENT Commission's recommendations. We've also engaged with HESA to consider how technician data can be maintained, including in the upcoming consultation on the HESA staff record.

Alongside technician data in HESA, we have produced an interim analysis of the UK's postdoctoral researcher (and related) population. Both analyses have provided a valuable insight into the HESA data which have informed our engagement with the sector consultation on the HESA Staff record.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Technicians are empowered to build their own communities around professional areas of interest, including through professional registration where appropriate.	**2.4. As a funder and an employer** we will engage with our technician community, employers (including our own CIUs) and professional bodies to identify routes for community building and networking across the technical community that we employ and fund, including the development of strategic interventions where communities are not well served by existing professional registration opportunities and associations across UKRI's remit.	Engagement with technicians across our remit confirms that they have the opportunity to build communities and develop their careers through participation in relevant networks either through professional registration or other routes.	Years 1-2	**Amber**
	2.5. As an employer we will support our CIUs to develop technician communities, build collaborations, share good practice and network across UKRI.	UKRI technicians identify as part of a technical staff community within their CIU and across UKRI more broadly evidenced by more prominent technician voices in internal webinars and events, supported by a technician space on our new staff portal.	Years 1-2	**Amber**

To support our CIUs to progress their activity, we have developed case studies of STFC and Harwell's implementation of the TC. We plan to build on these with further case studies from our CIUs, aiming to share this "playbook" more widely with the community when this grows to become a more substantial resource.

A task and finish group of our researchers and research managers has completed a gap analysis against the RDC and identified our priority areas for implementing its principles across our science estate.

To support community building for our technicians we have developed an intranet section for technicians and technical staff at UKRI, signposting to local activity, events, and news items. We held a "celebrating technicians" event, featuring senior leaders from UKRI and the Technician Commitment, and technicians from across UKRI's CIUs. We're currently planning further webinars around technician topics of interest, for example, professional registration.

Our MRC TC leads have recently organised a cross-institute technician symposium, and we will be sponsoring the Research Institute Technician Group's upcoming event in the new year.

AHRC have partnered with Research Libraries UK (RLUK) in the latter becoming a supporter of the Technician Commitment, providing support and raising the profile of the wider academic library community. As part of this partnership, AHRC have commissioned a scoping study on the role of academic research libraries as active participants and leaders in the production of scholarly research and as a result, initiated a Research Engagement Programme for academic libraries to support this community.

Technicians are better recognised for their contributions and their technical expertise valued through our application, peer review and assessment processes, including recognition of their outputs and impacts in line with a wider shift to recognising a broader range of outputs.	**2.6. As a funder** we will amend the eligibility for our grants so that technicians responsible for the intellectual leadership and overall management of a project can apply for funding where they are supported by their organisation to do so.	Technicians are eligible and apply for funding opportunities e.g. fellowships, strategic equipment proposals, where they are responsible for the intellectual leadership and overall management or a project and supported to apply by their organisation.	Years 1-2	**Amber**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG

Some of our schemes are currently open to technician applicants as principal investigators, though we've identified a potential barrier to application due to lack of awareness across our applicant and assessor community.

In partnership with Research Libraries UK, AHRC have launched a Professional Practice Fellowship scheme to strengthen research capacity and capability in research libraries across the arts and humanities.

Research Technical Professionals are eligible to apply for BBSRC funding as a Principal or co-Investigator

Research Technical Professionals are eligible to apply for EPSRC's Strategic Equipment and Open Fellowship calls.

ESRC and MRC have relatively open eligibility for research funding, though the aforementioned lack of awareness, may be the main barrier.

Research facility staff are eligible to apply for funding from NERC.

As part of the Simpler and Better Funding Programme, we will be testing a new policy on grant roles, which will open eligibility more widely across our funding schemes.

We aim to improve the awareness of our application and eligibility policies as part of the Engagement pillar of our revised plan.

| | **2.7. As a funder** we will review and revise, as necessary, the guidance and training for our reviewers and panel members to ensure that our grant review and assessment process is able to take account of technician outputs and impacts. | The narrative CV framework is appropriate to capture the outputs of those not on a standard academic career pathway where relevant to the application. | Years 1-2 | **Amber** |

The Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) will be rolled out across all of UKRI's schemes as we transfer more of our grant funding to the new funding service, currently planned for January 2024. We engage widely across our community to ensure R4RI can accommodate a range of outputs, including those of technicians.

R4RI has been piloted in several different opportunities, including a team based "capability to deliver" in BBSRC's Tools and Resources Development Fund, UKRI Citizen Science, and a team based R4RI in BBSRC's Institute reviews.

| | **2.8. As a funder** we will ensure that where we collect evidence of research outcomes we are also able to collect information on the outputs of technicians. | Researchfish and/or other UKRI research outcome collection methods are able to capture. | Years 1-2 | **Amber** |

We are considering outcomes reporting as part of our Simpler and Better Funding programme, and in our response to the Independent Review of Research Bureaucracy. Several other programmes within UKRI, such as Future Research Assessment, R4RI and Open research/Open data will also be considering a broader range of outputs. Across these programmes we will ensure we have the capability to capture a broader range of research and innovation outputs and outcomes relevant to the broader range of roles that contribute to R&I.

| | **2.9. As a funder** we will include technicians with the appropriate expertise and experience in our peer review process, including through membership of peer review colleges and participation in funding panel meetings. | Technical expertise used in peer review processes for funding opportunities that would benefit from technician assessment e.g. strategic equipment, assessing effective and sustainable resourcing and/or where a deep understanding of technician communities is required. | Years 1-2 | **Amber** |

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Technicians contribute to UKRI peer review and assessment panels for several existing schemes, such as BBSRC's resource development opportunities and EPSRC's Strategic Equipment calls. **We're developing a suite of resources, as part of the Simpler and Better Funding Programme, to support our staff to identify reviewers. We've planned a project to develop a technician peer review college for integration into the SBF programme, however this is currently paused due to resource constraints.**				
Amber	**2.10. As an employer** we will support our CIUs to develop their understanding of, and a consistent framework for, the identification of and recognition of the contributions of their technicians.	CIUs have an understanding of and a consistent approach to recognising the contributions of their technicians.	Years 1-2	**Amber**
As discussed in 2.2 and 2.5, we've used our workforce analysis and the advice of our TC leads to support the identification of technicians and their contributions across our CIUs. Several of our CIUs have expressed an interest in using a narrative approach, based on R4RI, for our internal recruitment, recognition and reward processes. We will work with our local HR and community leads to explore whether we can adopt such narrative approaches in our internal processes.				

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
3. Technical careers				
Development of an evidence base to inform the development of a forward-looking technician career framework.	**3.1. As a funder and an employer** we will work with stakeholders across the sector including the Science Council, research organisations, our own CIUs, technician skills and development organisations and business to gather examples of good practice, existing career pathways, transition points, support needs, barriers to implementation and key issues such as vulnerability to automation.	Evidence base of how technical careers can be supported and identified gaps for intervention.	Years 1-2	**Green**
UKRI understands financial and non-financial barriers to technical career progression in our own employees and the research organisations we fund to support policy and strategy development.	**3.2. As a funder** we will engage with Research Organisations to identify the barriers they face in developing and implementing career paths for technicians.	Identification of the barriers and incentives preventing ROs developing career pathways and senior technical roles.	Years 1-2	**Green (TC)** **Amber (RDC)**

RDC action 4.1

The TALENT commission report is an excellent resource for understanding technicians in the UK's academic research environment. We have worked with the project team to develop a Funding Technical Staff in Research explainer based on a short research project. The commission report provides evidence on the financial and non-financial barriers to more sustainable employment and career structures for technical roles, which is supported by the initial findings of UKRI's Research sustainability workstream. The report provides a suggested career structure for technical roles that could be implemented by research organisations.

The report, supported by our own engagement with the sector, suggests that the barrier to career structures for technical roles is as much cultural as financial. The importance of technicians to a research project is frequently overlooked and resource for technical roles is often the first cut to bring the proposed cost of a grant down to improve perceptions of value for money. This results in reduced resource available for technical roles and technical career paths. The TALENT commission report suggests that this limits career advancement for technicians to often poorly functioning regrading/job evaluation processes as the sole mechanism.

At a "lecturer level" career stage, technicians may be eligible for UKRI funding depending on their discipline (see TC 2.6) however, a key barrier to accessing this route is lack of common understanding around eligibility and institutional support for applications. Partly driven by differing eligibility criteria across funders and UKRI councils.

Due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and resulting resource pressures, we have not been able to engage with our Researcher Development Concordat Strategy Group partners to complete a similar piece of work on the barriers to more secure employment for researchers, though a working group on fairness of employment will be established by the Researcher Development Concordat Strategy Group in the coming year.

UKRI, through the Research England Development (RED) fund, is supporting the establishment of the UK Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy (ITSS) to take forward the recommendations of the TALENT Commission.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	3.3. As an employer we will engage with our CIUs and technician community to identify the barriers to developing and implementing career paths for technicians, including removing barriers to technicians accessing existing progression pathways.	Identification of the barriers and incentives preventing our CIUs from developing career pathways and senior technical roles.	Year 1 onwards	**Amber**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG

Barriers to career progression differ across UKRI, however there is still a perception that technicians are a lower skilled job and limited career stage rather than a role family. A key barrier remains a hesitation to identify with the term technician and outdated views of technicians as a lower skilled/lower impact role.

In general, there are few clear career pathways within UKRI. Similar to other academic research organisations, there are "tenure track" like pathways for academic researchers. Non-MRC CIUs are part of the Individual Merit Promotion Scheme, in addition, we have promotion pathways for some of our STEM roles across the organisation.

We need further engagement with our communities to understand the organisational context and the barriers to technician progression.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI has an understanding of the barriers to accessing existing support to inform future strategic interventions.	**3.4. As a funder** we will investigate how technicians have used the existing provision in our grants for career development and identify the barriers that they have encountered.	Evidence of how technicians can access existing provision and identification of the barriers they face.	Year 1 onwards	**Amber (not due)**

RDC action 4.3.

Our existing provision for technician career development is limited. However, under the guidance for Research Grant Condition (RGC) 8, researchers employed on UKRI grants are entitled to spend 6 hours per week on teaching and demonstrating work or clinical sessions, provided it is related to the research project. Researchers employed on MRC grants can spend these 6 hours on a wider range of activities.

Engagement with our communities suggests a key barrier to accessing this support is a hesitation to make use of it due to precarious employment on fixed term contracts, workload pressures and lack of awareness of this grant condition when designing roles.

RGC 8 does not currently extend to the "technician" role on our grants, which limits our existing provision for technicians. This will be reviewed as part of our Simpler and Better Funding Programme.

As a funder we will ensure that UKRI funding services:

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI knows who is employed with funding it awards and can engage with them. UKRI better understands how its funding indirectly supports roles in the research and innovation system.	**3.5.** Allow us to recognise and value directly funded staff, by knowing who our grant funding is employing; and to collect sufficient data on indirectly supported staff to inform our efforts to recognise everyone involved in the research effort.	UKRI has the name, contact details/contact permission for staff directly employed on its grants and has access to sufficient data on indirectly employed staff to understand how it is supporting these roles in the research and innovation system.	2-3 years	**Amber (not due)**
UKRI's funding services are sufficiently flexible to enable Research Organisations to support technical roles.	**3.6.** Provide flexibility in the capturing of data (e.g. staff effort, working patterns) to support Research Organisations in their ambitions to develop bespoke career paths for technicians.	able to track and develop a range of career paths for technicians where needed.	2-3 years	**Amber (not due)**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
RDC action 2.5. The Simpler and Better Funding programme and our wider transformation workstream is considering where and how we collect data, in line with the Review of Research Bureaucracy and Independent review of UKRI. We are considering how we collect this data, and link to other data sources as part of this work. We will take these actions forward in our revised plan				
Strengthened support for the technicians we fund for professional development and training, including leadership and management development for those in leadership and/or management roles.	**3.7. As a funder** where there is evidenced, demonstrable need for UKRI interventions, we will use existing mechanisms or develop targeted strategic investments in professional development and training in support of staff development.	Technicians report access to the training and development funding and support they are entitled to as required. We will review this measure with time to consider both coverage and quality.	Year 2 onwards	**Amber (not due)**
RDC action 2.1. AHRC have identified a gap in support and developed a new [fellowship scheme to support early career researchers in cultural and heritage institutions](#). As per 3.4, its recommended that our first intervention should be harmonising and raising awareness of available conditions across UKRI before developing a novel strategic intervention.				
Sustainable funding mechanisms and careers for technically skilled people in research and innovation.	**3.8. As a funder** we will work with stakeholders including ROs, technicians and other funders, to explore the ways in which technician roles are supported through research grants and/or QR and the impacts that different funding models have on the career development and sustainability of technical roles.	Understanding of impact of fEC and QR funding structures on the structure of staff roles, including career development and sustainability.	Year 2 onwards	**Green**
See 3.1 and 3.2 on understanding impact of funding models on technical careers.				
	3.9. As a funder we will develop pilot schemes for sustainable funding of career paths and technical posts, for example, support for staff pools or technical fellowships, to inform future interventions.	Pilot opportunities launched to support career paths and trial more sustainable approaches to technician roles.	Year 2 onwards	**Superseded)**
Given the barriers identified in 3.4, our identified priority for supporting technical careers is likely to require culture and structure changes to our funding and incentives rather than a bespoke scheme for technicians. Though our councils may develop technician specific awards, its likely that the intended outcome for this action is best addressed in our wider incentives work in pur revised plan rather than as a new funding scheme.				

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
4. Research and innovation culture				
UKRI has an evidence base of the benefits of healthy, diverse and inclusive research and innovation cultures and well supported research and innovation staff to support future interventions and funding bids.	**4.1. As a funder and an employer** we will develop evidence for, and articulate the economic, social and cultural benefits of, healthy, diverse and inclusive research cultures and sustainable career structures.	Evidence synthesis of new and existing data.	Years 1-2	**Green**

RDC action 4.2.

We have contributed to a range of reports on research culture and the needs of our researcher and technician communities. Via the MU TALENT programme, the commission report itself, alongside Research Culture: a technicians lens, the Role of Technicians in Knowledge Exchange and COVID19: The Impact on Technicians in UK Higher Education & Research provide a resource for research culture and technicians.

Research Integrity: A landscape study discusses the impact of bullying and harassment and workload pressures on research integrity, and Bullying and Harassment in Research and Innovation Environments: An evidence review discusses strong hierarchies, incentive structures, workload, hypercompetition, and precarity as enablesr of bullying and harassment.

Due to their scope, the above have not being brought together into a single resource, though our Good Research Resource Hub brings together a range of policies, standards and guidance on how to deliver excellent research and innovation, and nurture an inclusive research and innovation environment.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI Grant review and assessment considers:	**As a funder** we will review and revise as necessary the guidance and training for our reviewers and panel members, to support their decision-making around:		Year 1 onwards	**Amber (not due)**
Non-traditional career paths and EDI friendly ways of working.	**4.2.** The impact on track records and ways of working of extended leave, flexible working patterns and non-traditional career paths.	Proposals with a variety of working patterns for technician members of the research team are fairly considered in the same way as more 'standard' grants.		
Workload expectations of technically skilled people.	**4.3.** The appropriate level of staffing and workload expectations for technically skilled people on UKRI grants.	Available survey/engagement mechanisms show appropriate working hours for technicians, including time for professional development.		
Whether applicants have given enough thought to the careers of technically skilled people associated with their UKRI grant application.	**4.4.** How technically skilled people associated with UKRI grants are supported to develop their professional and technical skills and how this will add value to their career.	Professional development support for technically skilled people associated with UKRI grants is considered as standard in assessment of applications.		

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG

RDC action 2.2.

Applicant and assessor guidance differs across our councils and in many places has been updated to consider 4.2-4.4 in the context of the TC and RDC. However, we have limited evidence on the effectiveness of our current guidance and criteria in driving culture change. These actions, along with 4.5, have been identified as priority areas for the deliver of our action plans given the central role of grant assessment as an incentive. We're developing a work package to take this forward in line with other UKRI programmes:

Peer review is a critical tool supporting UKRI's funding decisions and its essential that our assessment processes incentivise a positive and supportive research culture. Our Review of Peer Review will involve our communities in many aspects of peer review and underpin further work in this area.

Alongside the review of peer review, a workstream of our Simpler and Better Funding programme is considering assessment criteria for our applications.

Incentivising support for workforce development for a range of roles and careers within the R&I system is a core part of our revised plan.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Incentivise leadership and management development in research leaders, including technician research leaders.	**4.5. As a funder** we will develop clear expectations for the leadership and management attributes of grantholders alongside mechanisms to efficiently integrate these into our assessment processes.	Leadership and management capabilities are considered and assessed as part of the funding application process.	Year 1 onwards	**Amber (not due)**
	4.6. As a funder where there is evidenced need for UKRI interventions, we will use existing mechanisms or new targeted strategic investments to develop and support research leadership and management.	Research leaders develop a broad understanding and acceptance of the principles of the Technician Commitment, driving an increased uptake of management and leadership professional development across the research sector.	Year 2 onwards	**Amber (not due)**

RDC actions 2.3 and 2.4.

Development of others and the maintenance of effective working relationships is one of the 4 modules of the R4RI. We anticipate that this will be the main mechanism by which the leadership of applicants will be assessed at application.

ESRC has recently completed a review of research leadership in the social sciences which defines a core component of research leadership as supporting the career development of others. Though this has been articulated in the report, as per 1.4 we have not yet articulated our expectations of research leadership fully to the community or embedded this into our assessment criteria.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Research Organisations in receipt of fEC and training grants embed the pillars of the Technician Commitment	**4.7. As a funder** we will update the terms and conditions of our fEC and training grants, to refer to the Technician Commitment and set clear expectations that the Research Organisations we fund embed its principles.	Research organisations in receipt of funding have embedded the pillars of the Technician Commitment through taking action to ensure the visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability of their technical communities.	Years 1-2	**Green** **Amber (TC)**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG

RDC action 3.1.

Our standard grant terms and conditions have been updated to reference the revised researcher development concordat. The technician commitment is not yet in our grant conditions as we are still developing our expectations for supporting technicians and assurance of our non-financial terms and conditions (see TC 1.4 and 4.10).

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Research Organisations in receipt of the Research England grant embed the pillars of the Technician Commitment	**4.8. As a funder** Research England will consult upon updating their terms and conditions of grant (as set out in HERA), to ensure Research Organisations refer to the pillars of the Technician Commitment.	Consultation on the inclusion of the Technician Commitment in Research England grant terms and conditions	Years 1-2	**Green (RDC)** **Amber (TC)**

RDC action 3.2.

Research England has updated the terms and conditions of its grant to reference the revised researcher development concordat. The technician commitment is not yet in RE's grant conditions as we are still developing our expectations for supporting technicians and assurance of our non-financial terms and conditions (see TC 1.4 and 4.10).

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Research Organisations have greater financial incentive to invest in supporting the careers and development of technically skilled people in research and innovation.	**4.9. As a funder** Research England, collaborating with the other UK HE Funding Bodies, will consult on strengthening the recognition for support and career development of technically skilled people, and wider research environment in the successor to REF 2021.	Inclusion of sufficient weighting on research and innovation careers and research culture in the consultation on the successor to REF 2021 to drive change in institutional behaviour.	Year 2 onwards	**Amber (not due)**

RDC action 3.5.

The Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP) aims to explore possible approaches to assessment that, amongst other goals, supports a positive research culture. Technicians and early career researchers were amongst the first groups represented in FRAP roundtables and we've used our existing routes to encourage our researcher and technician communities to engage with relevant FRAP consultations.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI has appropriate assurance of compliance with grant terms and conditions as they relate to the Technician Commitment and research culture.	**4.10. As a funder** we will develop suitable processes to monitor compliance of Research Organisations with our terms and conditions of grants as they relate to the Technician Commitment and integrate these into a wider programme of non-financial assurance activities around research culture. These will include a set of remedies and/or sanctions where breaches of terms and conditions are identified.	We will integrate questions relevant to the pillars of the Technician Commitment into our non-financial assurance processes.	Year 2 onwards	**Amber (not due)**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG

RDC action 3.4.

Assurance of our non-financial grant conditions is less well developed across several PC&T areas. We're currently assessing these risks and developing a workplan to integrate them into our overall monitoring, evaluation and assurance activities in a way that reduces bureaucracy and aims to address shared underlying concerns.

Development and assurance of our non-financial terms and conditions is a core part of our revised plan.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI CIUs meet the research culture expectations that UKRI holds for the organisations it funds.	**4.11. As an employer** we will embed the same expectations we hold for ROs we fund into the funding review processes for our own CIUs.	CIU review processes e.g. quinquennial reviews are updated to include comparable research culture expectations and weighting as UKRI grant assessment, future assurance and future REF consultation outcomes.	Dependent on CIU review timeline	**Amber (not due)**

BBSRC has developed a strategy for its strategic institutes and the recent review of institute block grants included a strong focus on research culture, including a team based narrative CV style capability to deliver statement. MRC's institutes are assessed for their role in training, career development and capacity building as part of the Quinquennial review process.

Approaches to institute review processes differ between and within our councils and the UKR Talent team is still developing our understanding of the processes and timescales involved. We are developing our expectations for grant assessment and assurance, and the FRAP programme is examining how research assessment can support a positive research culture, both of which will be taken forward in our revised plan.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
	4.12. As an employer we will carry out an equal pay audit across our own staff population to identify disparities and develop interventions where necessary.	Pay and progression data to inform wider workforce EDI strategy.	Year 1	**Green**

From 2017, UK employers are required to report on their gender pay gap. UKRI's pay gap reports are published annually based on a workforce snapshot on the 31st March. UKRI has also published an equal pay audit based on this data.

Our draft EDI strategy considers our role as a research funder, leader and employer; and will be making use of this data in addressing our pay gap.

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
5. Rewarding and recognising UKRI's technicians				
UKRI's technically skilled people have access to appropriate professional and career development opportunities.	**5.1. As an employer** we will work with our technicians and CIUs to do a gap analysis of the professional and career development opportunities that are available to technicians, including identifying any barriers to accessing these opportunities.	UKRI understands the current professional and career development offering available to technical staff within its CIUs and has identified areas for specific targeted interventions and/or pilot projects to strengthen this offering.	Year 1 onwards	**Amber (not due)**

We have procured a new mentor matching platform to support our internal mentoring programme by removing a key resource bottleneck. We are advertising the platform widely to our STEM communities to encourage more of our researchers, technicians and people managers to participate and will evaluate the impact of the programme as more of our staff come to use the platform.

In our engagement with our technicians, a key barrier we've identified is different resourcing models across UKRI. Some of our staff have more autonomy over their time whereas others are more constrained by line managers or time sheets. Support for people development will be included in our upcoming leadership standards framework (see 5.2).

We have also completed a gap analysis against the researcher development concordat with a task and finish group of our researchers and research leaders. The gap analysis supported the development of our revised plan and has been used to support local implementation of the concordat.

Management across UKRI is recognised for support and development of their staff as a core part of their role.	**5.2. As an employer** we will work with UKRI HR and our CIUs to develop clear expectations for the leadership and management attributes of research facing line managers and embed support for team development into our staff appraisal and promotions processes.	Leadership and management capabilities are considered as part of our appraisal process and embedded in promotion criteria for research facing roles.	Years 1-2	**Amber**

We have developed a new Leadership standards framework for UKRI, which considers the importance of leadership skills for our individual contributors, people managers and organisational leads, designed to embed high standards of leadership across the organisation. Our Leadership standards will be embedded in a new annual appraisal process currently under development.

UKRI has a clear employment offer for technicians, encouraging them to develop their careers at UKRI's world class facilities a nd helping UKRI champion technical careers more widely.	**5.3. As an employer** we will work with our technicians and CIUs to articulate the benefits of developing a career at UKRI and communicate this to existing and prospective staff members.	A UKRI employee value proposition relevant for UKRI's technically skilled people, which can inform UKRI's activity to champion technicians and technical careers (actions 1.1.1-1.1.3)	Years 1-2	**Amber**
UKRI can recruit to and develop its technical workforce to meet its current needs and anticipate future needs brought about by, for example, technological advances.	**5.4. As an employer** we will embed the Technician Commitment in STFC's workforce planning toolkit pilot, ensuring STFC can meet its current and prospective staff needs and inform the roll out of cross UKRI workforce planning.	UKRI technician roles are included in the UKRI Strategic Workforce Plan and the Council Workforce plans for MRC, NERC and STFC.	Years 2-3	**Amber (not due)**

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
UKRI has piloted a workforce planning toolkit, starting with STFC and expanding to some of our other CIUs which includes technical roles. As part of our new operating model work, we will be developing a more strategic approach to workforce planning for UKRI.				
Our technically skilled people are empowered to audit and develop their skills and competencies, knowing how they can progress their careers.	**5.5. As an employer** we will develop career pathways for technically skilled roles, outlining the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary at each stage so that our staff can identify how to develop themselves and progress their careers either within or outside of UKRI.	Those working in technically skilled roles have access to appropriate information on career pathways, including the necessary skills and competencies for career progression, horizontal moves and transitions to or from a role at UKRI.	Years 2-3	**Amber (not due)**
In response to our people survey (see 2.1.3) we have developed a UKRI wide people plan, including an objective to identify clear career pathways for colleagues within UKRI and to/ from the wider R&I sector. This complements ongoing work within our CIUs on career pathways, for example as part of STFC's Technician Commitment plan, and is supported by the central UKRI HR team.				
UKRI recognises and rewards our technically skilled people who develop new skills and competencies and contribute to our success.	**5.6. As an employer** we will work with UKRI HR and our CIUs to ensure that our Reward Strategy recognises the development of skills and competencies relevant to technician roles within the constraints of our Public Sector pay remit.	Technician skills and competencies are represented within UKRI's Reward Strategy.	Years 2-3	**Amber (not due)**
As a public sector organisation we are constrained by the public sector pay remit, which in 2022-2023 was set at an average pay award limit of 2% with flexibility for an additional 1% to address specific priorities. UKRI has worked in partnership with BEIS (our previous sponsor department) to develop a STEM pay flexibilities case to reduce compensation disparities with our competitors, particularly across specialist and niche technical areas such as Quantum Computing, and to link pay to competences and career development.				

Intended Outcome	Action	Outline success measure	Timeline	RAG
Researcher Development Concordat plan actions not addressed above.				
UKRI has reliable and representative data on the experience of researchers aligned to concordat principles.	**3.3** We will establish processes to collect information on the researchers we fund, ensuring survey data are robust and informative enough to assess the impact of our efforts.	CROS/PIRLS successor or future research culture surveys generate robust and representative data of the UK research population.	Year 2 onwards	**Amber (not due)**
Vitae has recently reformed CROS and PIRLS into the Culture, Environment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS). **CEDARS has run for an initial pilot year before being rolled out more widely in 2021. CEDARS has provided a valuable insight into the experiences of researchers and we're considering how we can include insights drawn from CEDARS and similar surveys into our overall monitoring and evaluation of the Concordat and Technician Commitment.** **We are also considering the requirements for data collection and outcomes reporting as part of the Simpler and Better funding programme.**				
The concordat is a holistic part of UKRI's research environment work	**3.6** We will monitor the effectiveness of our interventions in driving genuine changes, as part of a wider programme of monitoring and evaluation outlined in the Research Culture Strategic Framework	Integration of concordat workstream with research culture and other cross-cutting work for monitoring and evaluation.	Year 1	**(Superseded)**
Our work on the Research Culture Strategic Framework has been rolled into our contributions to the BEIS R&D People and Culture strategy and our own People, Culture and Talent programme, which provides leadership and oversight of UKRI's contributions to the strategy. The RDC aligns to Objective 1 of the new UKRI Strategy and is being considered as part of this wider work.				