

Technician Commitment: tackling the challenges facing the technical community in the research environment

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The progress in analytical geochemistry reported at the annual Goldschmidt conference is result of a collective and collaborative effort, involving people in a range of roles, from research leads designing programmes through to technical specialists developing and implementing the analytical methods. And some of these roles are hybrid. Depending on the institution, the challenges faced by people engaged in these diverse areas of activity can be very different. Academic staff can struggle to balance admin, teaching and research responsibilities on their tenure track careers. However, those in technical roles face substantially different challenges related to inadequate recognition, visibility, career development and sustainability.

The Technician Commitment, a grass-roots effort, has grown to address these issues. This is a higher education and research institution-led initiative that aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working within the sector, across all disciplines. This effort was launched in the UK and has become embedded across UK Higher Education Institutions and the UK Research and Innovation landscape. In 2023, it expanded to include signatories from Australia making it a truly international community effort.

The British Geological Survey started its engagement with Technician Commitment in 2020. In 2022 we became signatories in our own right and in July 2023 we will publish our first 2-year action plan. We will discuss the issues we have faced as a mid-sized research organisation, including those around identity, career progression and recognition. The approach we have taken is to consider the Technician Commitment in parallel with other culture and EDI commitments, such as the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, tailoring our approach to our staff community. Whilst at the start of this journey, we will outline the benefits already being realised and those we hope to achieve over the longer term.

<https://www.techniciancommitment.org.uk/>