

28<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Clare Stevenson  
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NR4 7UH

## **Re: Technician Commitment – Self-Assessment & Action Plan**

Dear Clare,

We are delighted to write to all founding signatories of the Technician Commitment following the recent Self-Assessment and Action Plan submissions. All submissions that have been received have now been assessed by the Technician Commitment Steering Board which comprises members from a range of higher education sector organisations and stakeholders. The Steering Board are pleased to see that organisations have engaged positively with the Technician Commitment with the respect and dedication that it deserves.

Please find below feedback from the reviewers of the John Innes Centre submission.

### **1. Technical structures and the internal scope/reach established for the Technician Commitment at this institution:**

*The submission provides a clear description of technical roles at JIC, termed 'Research and Support Staff'. JIC fully understand their technical community and the structures in which they reside. The management, engagement, career development and recognition of RSS staff both internally and externally is impressive. It is clear that JIC have been proactively engaging in the career pathways of the technical community long before becoming a Technician Commitment signatory.*

*All the activity delivered to date has naturally formed a strong foundation in which to engage with the key pillars of the Technician Commitment and provides an opportunity to join a community of higher education and research institutions are committed to ensuring visibility, recognition and opportunity for the technical community.*

### **2. Initiatives/programmes/activities that were already in place for the technical community within this organisation prior to them becoming a signatory of the Technician Commitment:**

*With an impressive range of activity already well established prior to becoming a Technician Commitment signatory, JIC have best practices established in support of the technical community and within the four key pillars of the Commitment as already articulated above. The breadth and depth of*

*the activity is outstanding. A point to note is their inclusion of professional support staff within the Silver Athena SWAN award in 2013 driving national practice.*

*JIC have clearly defined processes and procedures for career development. It is excellent to note the staff survey shows that 84% of staff agree that JIC is a great place to work. Internal structures exist for the profiling and recognition of technical careers alongside a strong history of internal and external awards and accolades. The RSS network is excellent practice and should be commended as sector leading. It is pleasing to see that relevant external organisations are invited to come and present to staff so that they are able to see a range of opportunities to develop their career. Accessible Science talks organised and hosted by the technical community are an excellent example of the opportunity being afforded and adopted by this engaged workforce. The opportunity for RSS staff to undertake PhDs is excellent.*

*RSS staff are represented on key internal committees and members of the technical community are volunteering to build cohorts of practitioners who are sharing their skills and offering informal mentoring. A great demonstration of a practice to ensure sustainability of this community.*

### **3. Initiatives put in place to address the themes of the Technician Commitment since becoming a signatory:**

*It is clear from the submission that JIC are taking their Technician Commitment very seriously. An outstanding array of activity is instituted across the organisation.*

*Based on all the activity that was being undertaken prior to becoming a founding signatory of the technician commitment it is apparent that becoming a signatory enabled JIC to join a cohort of organisations committed to growing this important community of practice. Given their position of strength, JIC may wish to consider how they could drive regional and national collaboration in this space. The Technician Commitment is a continuation of work already being delivered at JIC and an opportunity to work with and share best practice within this community. It therefore natural to see the engagement with the technical community in the delivery of the action plan as outlined in the appendix.*

### **4. Action plan:**

*The activity as identified above is exemplary. A recommendation for the action plan to further enhance the sterling work already being delivered would be to articulate the key milestones to delivery and also statistics that would create an "at a glance" understanding of the impact of the work being delivered and the progression of the work being delivered over time.*

Congratulations on very positive progress coupled with a clear and ambitious Action Plan. In recognition of this submission, the John Innes Centre will be presented with an Award of Submission at the forthcoming Technician Commitment evening reception on November 6<sup>th</sup> at the Tower of London.

We look forward to working with you as you continue the implementation of your Action Plan and to supporting the on-going development of technicians at the John Innes Centre to further increase visibility, recognition, opportunity and sustainability of this vital community.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Pain CSci CChem FRSC

**Chair of the Technician Commitment Steering Board**



Kelly Vere RSci FHEA

**Technician Commitment Lead**