



**Athena
SWAN**
Silver Award



Equality Challenge Unit



Going for Silver

LMS Good Practice Event – November 2015

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

Equality Charters Advisers

James Lush & Jess Cockell

athenaswan@ecu.ac.uk



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Athena SWAN- as of May 2015

- Gender equality in HE & RIs
- Now open to arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) departments
- Includes professional and support staff; trans students and staff.



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2005 = 10 founder members

2015 = 134 members (533 award holders)

2 rounds of awards per year – April and November

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Why so popular?

- 🏠 It's a great framework
- 🏠 Share good practice
- 🏠 Benefits all genders
- 🏠 Demonstrates awareness, intention, action
- 🏠 It works (*Evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the Athena SWAN Charter*, Loughborough University, 2014)



“[Athena SWAN is] the most effective lever for change I have come across in 12 years of equality work.”

– Institutional champion

Athena SWAN

Managed by ECU

ECU Funding: HEFCE and DELNI



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HEIs in England and Northern Ireland will need to subscribe to ECU to access ECU's services, resources and advice, and to take part in the equality charters, **including Athena SWAN**. Annual subscription will be between £4,000 and £20,000, dependant on an institution's total income.

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Department Awards: requirements for either form



Bronze – *306 Bronze departments*

- ▶ identified challenges
- ▶ planned activities for the future



Silver – *127 Silver departments*

- ▶ ongoing activity
- ▶ evidence of impact

Gold – *7 Gold departments*

- ▶ significant record of activity and impact
- ▶ beacons for gender equality, Athena SWAN & good practice



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Key changes (Departmental in orange)

- = Inclusion of professional and support staff
- = Inclusion of trans staff and students
- = Consideration of intersectionality
- = Questions rationalised
- = Questions added
- = Four year award (and action plan)
- = Aggregated, extended word count



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New questions

- = Inclusion in the REF v. RAE
 - numbers eligible and submitted
- = Support for grant applications
 - gender differences in application & success rates
- = Contract functions and types
 - research and teaching, zero-hour and 'casual' contracts
- = HR policies
 - policy and practice
- = Flexibility following career breaks
 - e.g. transition from p/t to f/t



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Which form: the old form



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Athena SWAN Silver Award

Athena SWAN Silver department award application

Name of university:
Department:
Date of application:
Date of university Bronze and/or Silver Athena SWAN award:

Contact for application:
Email:
Telephone:
Departmental website address:

Athena SWAN Silver Department awards recognise that in addition to university-wide policies the department is working to promote gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline.

Not all institutions use the term 'department' and there are many equivalent academic groupings with different names, sizes and compositions. The definition of a 'department' for SWAN purposes can be found on the Athena SWAN website. If in doubt, contact the Athena SWAN Officer well in advance to check eligibility.

It is essential that the contact person for the application is based in the department.

Sections to be included

At the end of each section state the number of words used. Click [here](#) for additional guidance on completing the template.

Pros

- Familiar
- Same data
- Action plan maps

Cons

- Inclusion
- Questions not always rationally ordered
- Delaying the inevitable

New form



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Pros

- Includes everyone
- Clearer form
- Putting things in place now

Cons

- More data
- Additional questions
- Unfamiliar



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Silver department award



*In addition to the future planning required for Bronze recognition, Silver awards recognise that the department has **taken action** in response to previously identified challenges and **can demonstrate the impact of these actions***

Definition of impact



A marked effect or influence (OED)



'Impact is, in essence, provable real-world benefit based on research,' (Julie Bayley-REF)

Demonstrate, in a measureable way, that gender equality has improved because of your actions (AS)

Degrees of impact



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Image courtesy of seaskylab at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

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Ways to measure impact

- = Staff numbers
- = Representation
- = Take-up
- = Quantitative data
- = Applications



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Getting everything right?



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Planned action/ objective	Rationale (i.e what evidence is there that prompted this action/ objective?)	Key outputs and milestones	Person responsible (include job title)	Success criteria and outcome
<p>1. An annual workshop on promotion, for all staff, to be run in the department.</p>	<p>43% of all staff and 52% of female staff report a “poor” understanding of criteria, believed to be contributing to low application rates.</p> <p>Since the workshop is for all staff, attendance will not mean identifying the fact that you are planning to apply for promotion, but staff will learn about criteria in an informal and accessible forum.</p>	<p>4 months prior to the upcoming promotion round-annually</p> <p>Evaluation to be undertaken after each workshop, and on completion of each promotion round.</p> <p>Review of data to be undertaken in Spring term, in 3 years’ time. Outcomes reported in next submission.</p>	<p>Head, HR, SAT to input</p>	<p>100% of staff attend the first workshop.</p> <p>15% women apply for promotion before 2017, compared to baseline figure of 4% over past three years.</p> <p>80% of female staff report a “good” or “v good” understanding of criteria in next annual survey, compared to baseline figure of 32% in 2014.</p>

Letter of endorsement

- = Should show involvement and engagement in the Athena SWAN work – why?
- = Awareness of the issues – specific to institution?
- = Should demonstrate real personal commitment (personal experience?)
- = Include one or two key examples of good practice
- = Might like to highlight how they will ensure the resources are in place to deliver the action plan

What's changed?

How has it effected the whole department?

How have they made it happen?



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The Self Assessment Process



Who	the SAT, gender balance, grade
What	experience the team has, self assessment has been carried out, consultation has happened, has already been implemented
Why	are you doing this, why is it important, this team

New team? Continuity?

The Self Assessment Process



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When	did the process start, how often the SAT has met, will they meet in the future
How	is it communicated, will the action plan be implemented, the process will be resourced, will you keep momentum going.

Demonstrate that reporting mechanisms and wider comms have happened?
What *recent* consultation have you done?
What is the wider staff opinion on progress

A picture of the department



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SILVER APPLICATIONS ONLY

Where relevant comment on the transition of technical staff to academic roles.

Key career transition points/Career development



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- = **Recruitment**- where advertised, wording, panel make up/training, actively seeking candidates
- = **Induction**- in-house and support available to academics on probation e.g. Reduced teaching load.
- = **Training**- in-house, take-up of central provision, usefulness
- = **Appraisal**- how frequent is it, who conducts it, feedback.
- = **Promotion**- is the process is known and understood with clear, easily available, criteria
- = **REF v. RAE**
- = **Support offered to those applying for research grants**

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Key career transition points

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- = induction of professional and support staff
- = promotion of professional and support staff



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Organisation and culture

- = **Committee membership** - rotation, shadowing, deputising
- = **Workload models** are they clear and transparent, do they include administration (incl Athena SWAN work)
- = **Social gatherings** – where and when are they, are they family friendly
- = **Meetings held in core hours** – especially key staff meetings
- = **Outreach** – who does it and is it recognised
- = **HR policies** – who knows about them, how consistently are they implemented



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What's changed? How is it benefitting female staff?
Any new concerns? How will you improve things further?

Flexibility and managing career breaks

- = What support is available before and after a break
- = Can staff work p/t and then return to f/t?
- = Are there clear policies for covering teaching
- = KIT days
- = Nursery provisions
- = Childcare vouchers
- = Protected research time on return

What's changed? How is it benefitting female staff?
Any new concerns? How will you improve things further?



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Case studies



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- = 1 to be a SAT member
- = 1 can be a man
- = show how the inclusive culture and working practices of the department – including policies that are broadly available rather than being individual arrangements – have enabled them to pursue an academic career
- = demonstrate the support they have received

Action Plans

- = SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and linked directly to body of application
- = Referred to throughout application – data, analysis, action
- = Cross reference action points to the action plan so that panels can easily find the relevant actions while they read the submission
- = Clearly defined responsibilities
- = Not front-loaded – milestones
- = Specific to issues faced by institution
- = Aiming to move beyond monitoring (which remains important)
- = Targets significant improvement whilst remaining realistic
- = Measurable outcomes and successes – quantifiable, numerical



Challenges

- = Requirement for robust self-assessment
- = Not a tick-box exercise
- = Common reasons for being unsuccessful:
 - = Poor action plan that is not **SMART**
 - = Lack of senior management **buy-in**; team lacks power
 - = **Descriptive**, rather than analytical narrative
 - = Applications not **identifying** issues raised by the data
 - = Action plan not **targeted** to issues raised
 - = Inappropriate balance between process and **proactive** action



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Further information available:



www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/

athenaswan@ecu.ac.uk

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