

EDC15D013

Title: Athena SWAN – Report on Progress and Next Steps
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Issue

To inform the Committee of progress within the Athena SWAN initiative pursuing gender equality in all subjects at UEA

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note content for information

Resource Implications

None for the Committee to agree at this stage.

Risk Implications

Achievement within this framework to Silver standard is linked to NIHR funding. Additionally, other funding bodies view Athena SWAN as evidence demonstrating activity supporting equality, which is increasingly becoming a requirement linked to the broader range of funding. Additionally, REF 2020 is likely to require evidence that all Schools are involved in Athena SWAN to a minimum of Bronze standard.

Equality and Diversity

The focus of this initiative is the pursuit of gender equality within all subjects following the widening of this initiative to Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law subjects in May 2015.

Timing of decisions

n/a

Further Information

The first paper to the Committee about Athena SWAN was in November 2011 addressing the question of membership (EDC11D001)

Background

Athena SWAN is a framework, very widely adopted within the Higher Education Sector originally as a means of progressing equality for women in STEMM subjects. Following the widening of this initiative to all subjects from May 2015, gender equality as a whole is now the focus. Achievement within this framework has recently been linked to funding streams, principally from the NIHR, with HEFCE and RCUK also making clear statements about the need to evidence progress in equality as part of funding applications/awards. Most recently REF 2020 has linked evidence of Athena SWAN to UoAs.

Athena SWAN – Report on Progress and Next Steps

1. Current Position

Since the last Equality and Diversity Committee in March 2016, the University has received notification that the Bronze Renewal submission put forward in the November 2015 round was successful. Feedback from this submission is expected by the end of June 2016. Helen Murdoch will collect the award on behalf of the University at an awards event being held at the University of Sheffield in June 2016.

The University has so far achieved a Bronze and Bronze (Renewal) award at University level, 9 Bronze awards at School level and a Silver School award.

The Schools of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies, Chemistry and Economics and made their submissions at the end of April 2016. Applications for PPL and ECO were made under the Post-May 2015 template. All were made at Bronze level. The results of these submissions are expected mid-late October 2016.

The Schools of Biological Sciences, Health Sciences and Pharmacy will now be the main focus of work as they prepare to make applications for Silver awards in November 2016.

The current plan of submissions and renewals is shown below for 2016 – 2018 (but is reliant on additional resource in the Central Office):

May 2016 Forward Planning								REF??
FACULTY		30/11/2016	30/04/2017	30/11/2017	30/04/2018	30/11/2018	30/04/2019	30/11/2019
UEA		SSSS						
SCI	BIO	SS??			®			
SCI	PHA	SS??			®			
SCI	ENV		SS/BR?	®				
SCI	MTH				SS??	®		
SCI	CMP			SS??	SS??	®		
SCI	CHE						®	
FMH	MED				®			
FMH	NSC	SS/BR?		®				
FMH	RSC	HSC		®				
SSF	PSY		SS??		®			
SSF	ECO							
SSF	LAW		BB??					
SSF	DEV						BB??	
SSF	EDU					BB??		
SSF	NBS			BB??				
SSF	SWK						BB??	
HUM	PPL							
HUM	AMA					BB??		
HUM	HIS						BB??	
HUM	LDC					BB??		
Number of rounds:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B =Bronze								
S =Silver								
R =Renewal								
® = potential renewal								

2. Workload

Since 2012 the workload in the central office has increased with additional Schools added every year. Currently, there is a backlog in the production of data despite effective working and constant application to tasks. The two person team now finds themselves at a 'capacity crunch' point where the continued support of all Schools involved and the data production required is beyond current capacity. Updating templates to give Schools enough time to act upon any development in trends is delayed now to the point where we are definitely unable to take on any new Schools in addition to those currently involved. The Equality Strategy Paper includes a recommendation on this point.

3. Sector Results

Nationally, 84 higher education institutions, research institutes and individual schools and departments received an Athena SWAN award in the results from the November 2015 round of submissions with a success rate of 66 per cent, slightly down from 70 per cent for the previous round in April 2015. This slight decrease can be attributed to the lower success rate of applications using the new process which were made in this round for the first time following the expansion of the Charter in May 2015.

The total number of applications made under the new process were 12, with 5 applications being successful, a success rate of 42 per cent.

Newcastle University and the University of Sheffield both received Silver institution awards, bringing the total number with this award to nine universities.

4. Athena SWAN Central Steering Group

The Athena SWAN Central Steering Group took place in March. Updates included:

- Unconscious Bias training
- the Green Book review
- schools funding places on the Aurora Leadership Programme for women
- exchanges in best practice

These meetings continue to be well attended and useful to support the work on Athena SWAN across the institution. The central E&D team intend in future months to produce more focussed information on Silver level activity to help Schools move on from Bronze using this meeting as an exchange and discussion point.

5. Faculty of Science Athena SWAN/Equality & Diversity Project Co-ordinator

Following the recent recruitment for the new role of Equality and Diversity Project Co-Ordinator for the Faculty of Science Katie Large has been appointed. Katie joins the institution from Devon County Council on Monday 9th May 2016 and will be based in the Science Faculty working closely with the AS Leads there, but managed by the central Equality & Diversity Office.

This role will support Athena SWAN in the Science Faculty rather than the work of the central office.