

EDC13D001

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Author: Helen Murdoch, Head of Equality and Diversity
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Athena Swan Update - Current Status of Submissions and Next Steps

1. Submissions made in April 2013

Results for submissions made in April 2013 were received in late September 2013. Three submissions were made and of these the Schools of Pharmacy and Biological Sciences were successful and are now Bronze Award holders; Environmental Sciences were not successful on this occasion. However, detailed feedback has been received on the unsuccessful submission and provides a clear steer and good opportunity for a successful submission in April 2014. An updated Submission Feedback Log is attached for the Committee's information (Appendix 1). One key aspect in this was a misunderstanding within the School on the need for positive action to improve women's access to and chances of success and the difference between this and positive discrimination. This is a fundamental principle of our work and briefings/training can be provided by the Equality Office/CSED to clarify this point if needed (and have been provided to ENV).

Of the two successful submissions, feedback has so far been received only for BIO. Athena Swan advise the second, for PHA, will be received in the near future, but have been overwhelmed by the volume of work triggered by the number of applications. The Submission Feedback Log is increasingly important as it provides a detailed steer for us in creating successful future submissions and is actively used as a checklist in developing each new submission and in conjunction with active use of successful submissions from other University's (relevant examples having been obtained and put onto the UEA Athena Swan Blackboard site) will help ensure our future efforts are effectively focussed.

An Awards Ceremony was held in London on 7th November 2013 and as well as actively receiving the awards for both Schools a brochure was received with an example of best practice listed against each institution receiving an award. These examples will be collated as a further checklist against each submission to ensure we are thinking as broadly as possible about our activities. The range of examples given did, however, suggest some inconsistency regarding the rigour of the assessment for awards.

2. Next Steps

ECU has recently announced that from April 2013 each submission will cost £250 and the Athena Swan Membership fee will increase from £1000 to £2,000 per annum.

Currently, anticipated submissions are:

Nov 2013: MED (Bronze) & RSC (Bronze) - ECU has been notified of our 'intention to submit'.

April 2014: NSC (Bronze), ENV (Bronze)

Nov 2014: Potentially: BIO, PHA, MED (Silver) – potentially also UEA Silver- first possibility for submission, dependent on our results in School submissions and our progress against our central plan. It may be judged better to go for **UEA Silver in April 2015.**

April 2015: Potentially: UEA (Silver), joint NSC/RSC (Silver?), BIO, PHA, MED, ENV (Silver)?

Forward planning is further complicated by the imminent launch of two new Charter Marks (see 5 below).

Currently, draft submission templates are being finalised for MED and RSC with all data in place and final commentary being agreed.

The next set of draft templates (BIO, ENV, PHA, NSC) have been populated with data and have been circulated to Schools, however, this is for information only to alert Schools to any shifts taking place – new data will be added as we move forward so templates are ready for commentary to be developed in the new year. Self Assessment groups are meeting regularly in Schools to direct and monitor action to be taken against Plans.

3. Self Assessment Groups

Groups/Lead contacts in all Schools actively involved in Athena Submissions have met as regularly as has been feasible over the summer months and regular meetings dates have been established for the current semester. Key actions will be to take stock of progress to date against action plans, identify areas of common cause (e.g. appraisal, promotion, mentoring) and ensure these are co-ordinated to ensure that, as well as helping to inform and update central policies where appropriate, both resources and impact are maximised. The Central Steering Group is also meeting regularly and will be considering joint feedback from Schools to help inform reviews of processes and associated guidance. Action taken will be reported to the Equality Committee as will progress against Plan and the development of a Silver submission.

4. Current Issues

a) Data

One area of perpetual difficulty is that of data retrieval to meet the requirements of the Awards. Each award requires a range of student and staff data from undergraduate level to Professor and beyond. Basic numbers – i.e. to meet the required standards involves drilling data where patterns suggest a gender bias in order to better understand what drivers are at work. This in turn is expected to inform the development of Action Plans which form a key element of each submission

and judgements formed by the panel. The data will also be critical in the progression to Silver award level in terms of measuring 'distance travelled'. A key aspect is being certain that data will be taken from a base that is consistent over time.

Core staff data is dependable, and although some refinement is needed it comes from a single gatekeeper who is highly knowledgeable about the data, its sources and the work of the Equality Office. Some data is still collated on spreadsheets (e.g. flexible working, maternity/paternity/adoption leave) and if possible a more effective solution within the central system (Northgate) will be sought to address this since it is proving very labour intensive for HR colleagues to collate what is needed.

Student data however, is problematic. Discoverer reports have been withdrawn and requests for new requirements for student data are now directed to BIU. However, equality data information is not factored into core BIU work. This aspect of the Data Warehouse is still under development although not seen as a priority or a core aspect of the organisations data requirements. Requests for information around evidencing equality have therefore taken a backward step and become problematic in terms of consistency and availability.

A gap now exists in data support which limits our agility in responding to the development of award submissions as well as new areas which will need to be explored to satisfy the requirements of funding agencies (see Appendix 2). Drawing student data from several different sources involves a high element of rework within the Equality Office which, with greater data support, would free essential resource for producing more proactive work. Rework also heightens the margin for error and risks a lack of consistency in results. It is requested that, given the exposure of the University via NIHR funding (currently £30m) and further strands of funding via RCUK, that Equality is accepted as a key, core element within the development of the Data Warehouse and broader management information. Since external demands in this respect are set to escalate it is an aspect of data management which requires greater organisational support and needs to be viewed as part of the University's central priorities rather than an add-on which is only able to be progressed through reactive, ad hoc requests.

b) Role of Faculty

As the University gathers information about common themes under Athena it will move from focussing on individual School initiatives to establishing consistent approaches across the University. This will need support from Senior Management from VC, PVCs and Deans to ensure Schools follow policy as agreed by the University through HRD, DoS and other policy-making areas. Deans in particular have a key role to play here and as the University works towards other standards (see 5 below) this will involve all Faculties as the Charters develop beyond STEMM only subjects. Pilot work is due to take place with ECO and LAW during December 2013/January 2014, and potentially PSI, in the form of 'mock' Athena submissions to see what data shows about the Schools and work that could be undertaken in the light of current submission experience.

c) Institutional synergy

A key advantage to Athena work is in the range of students and staff who engage in feedback on central processes. This feedback is being gathered centrally and will provide the basis of a paper to

the next Central Steering Group and forms part of the next update to the Equality Committee to consolidate common themes and help inform forthcoming reviews of policy and guidance.

An additional challenge sits with the organisation as a whole to think more holistically, embedding consideration of equality in planning at an early stage. A small example of this can be seen in the high profile 'Too Difficult Box' series of lectures which this Semester consisted only of male speakers. When the University demonstrates change in approach across the board on a consistent basis we will know we have moved forward in our thinking.

5. New Initiatives from ECU

a) Gender Equality Charter Mark

As part of a wider Systemic Change/Advancing Gender Equality project, ECU supported the University of Reading in initiating and leading a pilot scheme to extend Athena Swan beyond STEMM subjects. Five Universities participated in the pilot and feedback was incorporated into a final report. As a result, on 25 July 2013 the ECU launched a trial of the proposed extension of Athena Swan into a new Gender Equality Charter Mark, for Schools/Faculties in the areas of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The aim is to address underrepresentation of women in senior positions. The scope of the Charter Mark has been broadened to cover academic staff, professional and support staff, men, women and gender identity.

The Athena Swan Charter will continue in its current form for the foreseeable future but the aim is to bring it under the Gender Equality Charter Mark in the medium term.

ECU are currently running trial applications under the proposed new Charter Mark. Full launch of the new Charter mark is anticipated in May 2014.

A comparison of the existing Athena SWAN principles and those that will be used in the gender equality charter mark trial is given at Appendix 3.

b) Race Equality Charter Mark

The ECU has been running a project over the last two years to look at how to bring about systemic change in race equality across the sector. As a result, it has been decided to launch an additional Charter Mark focussed on race. An initial consultation was held in 2013 and, based on a range of feedback, a draft framework is under development with a view to opening the draft for extensive consultation in January 2014. Following that exercise a revised draft will be piloted in Autumn 2014 – applications to participate will be invited in Spring/Summer 2014 with a view to launching the full Charter Mark in 2015.

ECU have published some suggestions for institutions wishing to prepare for the new Charter and the Equality Office will be looking at this after the April 2014 round of Athena submissions has been completed.

Helen Murdoch
Head of Equality and Diversity
November 2013

Feedback from Submissions – Summary

Letter of Endorsement

Positive	Negative
Senior level commitment and ambition shown (UEA Bronze)	Integration of Athena Swan into School's overall strategy and leadership process less clear (MED Nov 2012)
Integration of Athena Swan with wider strategy (UEA Bronze)	
Personal enthusiasm and organisational context shown (MED Nov 2012)	
Letter highlighted some actions already in place. (ENV April 2013)	
Showed an appreciation of the Athena Swan process. (ENV April 2013)	

Self Assessment Process

Positive	Negative
Self Assessment Team alongside core contact group was positive (UEA Bronze)	More male participation recommended (UEA Bronze)
Composition generally praised along with Senior Staff involvement (UEA Bronze)	More clarification of the future plans for the SAT to meet was needed (UEA Bronze)
Good level of consultation demonstrated (UEA Bronze)	Time-frame for Self Assessment Process was too short (MED Nov 2012)
Lead people had been identified in progressing both application and Action Plan (MED Nov 2012)	Wider consultation needed as part of process (MED Nov 2012)
Diverse membership praised (MED 2012)	Reporting structure was unclear (MED Nov 2012)
Wide and varied membership from PhD student to Head of School (ENV April 2013)	Presence of only one Professor and no other high level staff might make it harder to achieve change as this indicates lack of senior buy-in (ENV April 2013)
Membership table appreciated and inclusion of length of time people had been in post useful (ENV April 2013)	Concerned that stating 'no children' under work life balance in some people's descriptions suggested an over emphasis on child-care. (ENV April 2013)
Formally changing SAT into department committee was welcomed (ENV April 2013)	

Description of University or Department

Positive	Negative
Data presentation mostly clear (UEA Bronze)	In some places Panel felt data presentation not clear (UEA Bronze)
Panel appreciated detailed turnover data, in	Questioned why International Development

particular higher proportion of women than men leaving senior lecturer/reader posts (UEA Bronze)	had been classed as a STEMM subject (UEA Bronze)
Impressed with equal pay data and that number of gaps had been falling (UEA Bronze)	Indications of numbers would have been helpful throughout to help Panel judge significance (UEA Bronze)
Narrative and analysis was coherent (UEA Bronze)	Labelling of numbers and percentages should have been consistent throughout application (MED Nov 2012)
Praised fact that School level data was presented (UEA Bronze)	Not possible to judge extent of issues with data in its current form and advised data be broken down by grade throughout application (MED Nov 2012)
Labelling of both numbers and percentages on some graphs was useful (MED Nov 2012)	Analysis too superficial but did directly signpost to actions (MED Nov 2012)
Praised disaggregation of data between ATR and ATS contracts (MED Nov 2012)	
Picture of the department comprehensive and clear (ENV April 2013)	No specific mention of women in the department made. 'would not know this section was for an Athena Swan application' (ENV April 2013)
Presentation of student data was good, including both numbers and proportions. (ENV April 2013)	Staff data less clear – not broken down by grades in the graphs (ENV April 2013)
	Department's strategy is to not be preferential to women (pg 23) and this wording overlooks the need to consider positive action and targeted activities that aim to level the playing field (ENV April 2013)
A lot of data presented....	But narrative weak – needs to create strong picture of the department

Supporting and Advancing Women's Careers

Positive	Negative
Co-opting experienced individuals from other areas for recruitment panels into areas where not many women to avoid over-burdening women in areas where there are few, was praised (UEA Bronze)	Numbers as well as percentages would have been useful re women recruited since 2009 (UEA Bronze)
RESNet praised and commended as an area of noteworthy good practice (UEA Bronze)	Panel would have liked to have known the frequency of appraisals (UEA Bronze)
Panel generally felt support for researchers was good (UEA Bronze)	Section on Organisation and Culture had actions in Plan but these were not highlighted in the text (UEA Bronze)
Impressed with the appraisal training to ensure research staff career development is discussed and that there is a specialist career advisor for research staff – moving forward noted it would be important to monitor effectiveness of	Error noted in Table6 (percentages over 100% in total) (UEA Bronze)

provision (UEA Bronze)	
Development of mentoring scheme for returners from maternity/adoption leave was seen as a good idea and praised as noteworthy good practice (UEA Bronze)	Low female representation on Committees especially those for Promotion, needs to be addressed urgently (UEA Bronze)
Keeping record of women's media appearances was praised but Panel not sure how this was disseminated or how women were encouraged to do this (UEA Bronze)	Data broken down too far to draw useful conclusions (MED Nov 2012) (NB potential inconsistency with the comment immediately below)
Commitment to investigate rate of staff leaving was welcomed (UEA Bronze)	Data should be broken down by grade as much as possible in order to be helpful in identifying leak in pipeline (MED Nov 2012)
Application showed good induction support and commended the research forum for women in science. (MED Nov 2012)	Three years data better shown on one graph to show trends effectively (MED Nov 2012)
Idea for women staff's advisory group was well received but Panel would have liked more detail able reporting mechanisms. (MED Nov 2012)	Application showed some awareness of areas of possible concern for the School but these lacked connection to either the data or the action plan (MED Nov 2012)
Panel pleased to see mention of informal consultation with staff but there were no results or actions from this and these should have been embedded throughout the application (MED Nov 2012)	Identification of current workload issues had been identified but there were no initiatives to address these (MED Nov 2012)
Some proactivity on maternity and flexible working was noted but see opposite comment (MED Nov 2012)	Maternity return rate data was lacking and flexible working request data was analysed by gender (MED Nov 2012)
	Data presentation outweighed analysis and narrative – noted data should support discussion not replace it (MED Nov 2012)
Investigating barriers to women applying and intend to review advertising (ENV April 2013)	Opportunity to be more proactive. Data presented without sufficient narrative (ENV April 2013)
	Need more proactive actions to support staff at key career transition points. Resources highlighted are not women specific or have detail of their specific targeting or benefit for women – mentioned that resources are available but unclear what is being done to encourage people to use them (ENV April 2013)
	Appraisal arrangements were unclear. Keen to see that Heads of Schools are meeting regularly with staff (ENV April 2013)
	Noted that support for female students is University-led – not clear what is specifically done by the School. (ENV April 2013)
	Panel formed the impression that the department expect women to make use of University practice/policy without support to do so. (ENV April 2013)
All members of staff are required to take part in	... but also state not all staff are keen to do this

committees (noted as good practice) (ENV April 2013)	– no comment made of how this is addressed (ENV April 2013)
	Low female representation on strategic committees – Panel felt evidence showed this could be well balanced across all committees if it were made policy (ENV April 2013)
	Outreach information too generic and needed more focus on women (ENV April 2013)
Meetings arranged with an awareness of Nursery closing times (ENV April 2013)	Nursery closing at 5.30 pm. (More of a University level point – but part of ENV April 2013 feedback)
	Flexibility and Managing Career breaks sections appeared rushed. (ENV April 2013)
8 members of staff took paternity leave – noted that institution has extended paternity leave and this has been beneficial (ENV April 2013)	Non- return from maternity at a high rate (ENV April 2013)
Breast feeding facilities in place (ENV April 2013)	Not enough information about support for staff on maternity leave (ENV April 2013)

Any other comments

Positive	Negative
Pleased School had noted they were on the beginning of a journey and were conscious of how the journey should begin (MED Nov 2012)	Once a proportion of the work outlined had been completed a bronze application would be timelier (MED Nov 2012)
School have raised the issue of women's over-representation in administrative and technical roles. Recommend action on this at later date (ENV April 2013)	

Action Plan

Did address the issues identified in the submission (UEA Bronze)	Somewhat lacking in ambition (UEA Bronze)
Actions around appraisal and promotion were praised (UEA Bronze)	Responsibilities could have been spread more widely – actions centred on E&D Team and HR – would have benefitted from more STEMM input (UEA Bronze)
	Panel found it difficult to link the findings of the SAT laid out in the body of the application and the actions in the Action Plan (MED Nov 2012)
	Felt actions in Plan were mostly generic and not specific enough to women – simply just good management practice (MED Nov 2012)
	Allocating responsibility to groups was not helpful (MED Nov 2012)
	Concerned by the very short time frame covered by Action Plan which should prioritise actions across three years (MED Nov 2012)

Section of actions on Athena Swan was well received (ENV April 2013)	Action Plan very 'front loaded' – not enough coverage for the full three years and success measures are not measurable (ENV April 2013)
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Final Comments

Good foundations in place but evidently much work to be done (UEA Bronze)	Committees in particular require proactive attention (UEA Bronze)
ResNet mentioned as noteworthy good practice (MED Nov 2012)	Future submissions must take account of word counts (UEA Bronze)
	Information about Self Assessment Team's work life balance should be noted (UEA Bronze)
	Self assessment process had been too short for an application to be made and as a result limited reflection or analysis and a focus in the action plan on data collection which would have been better completed before application was made (MED Nov 2012)
	Panel recommended SAT use consultation and qualitative data to support future applications (MED Nov 2012)
	Current application did not represent a baseline or living document from which the SAT could work (MED Nov 2012)
	Would like to see more senior buy-in in future applications (MED Nov 2012)
Meetings arranged with an awareness of Nursery hours (ENV April 2013)	Lack of data in specific female areas like maternity leave (ENV April 2013)
Requiring members of staff to take part in committees (ENV April 2013)	Some actions Panel would expect SAT to have done before Bronze (not specified) (ENV April 2013)
	A strong impression that the School didn't think it needed to do things specifically for women and expect women to make use of generic initiatives without much evidence of how they are supported to do so. Panel would like to see SAT look at positive actions (ENV April 2013)

Noteworthy Good Practice

Committee membership based on workload and career development shows potential for good practice	
Supporting a junior woman researcher by placing her on NERC Committee	

RCUK EXPECTATIONS FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

An organization's success and competitiveness depends on its ability to embrace diversity and draw on the skills, understanding and experience of its people. The potential rewards of diversity are significant: recruiting staff from the widest possible pool will unlock talent and make a major contribution to the impact of research and will benefit the economic and social wellbeing of the UK. RCUK expects that equality and diversity therefore is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of normal research practice.

RCUK expect those in receipt of Research Council funding to:

- promote and lead cultural change in relation to equalities and diversity
- engage staff at all levels with improving the promotion of equality and diversity
- ensure all members of the research workforce are trained and supported to address disincentives and indirect obstacles to recruitment, retention and progression in research careers
- provide evidence of ways in which equality and diversity issues are managed at both an institutional and department level.

Research Councils recommend that the evidence includes:

- participation in schemes such as:
 - Athena SWAN
 - Project Juno,
 - Investors in People,
 - Stonewall Diversity Champions and other similar initiatives to demonstrate departmental level action
- input prepared for the Research Excellence Framework research environment at unit of assessment level
- appropriate benchmarking data (e.g. HEIDI equality reports from HESA data)
- evidence of the application of the 'Every Researcher Counts resource' to support this work
- other available and pertinent management information.

RCUK will:

- review the overall effectiveness of the approach at a Departmental / Institutional level through its Audit and Assurance Programme
- discuss equality and diversity at Institutional visits
- reserve the right to introduce more formal accreditation requirements for grant funding should significant improvement not be evidenced.

**Comparison of elements of Athena SWAN Charter and proposed Gender Equality Charter
Mark from the Equality Challenge Unit**

	Athena SWAN Charter	Gender equality charter mark
Institution and department level		
A	To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action from everyone , at all levels of the organisation	To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action at all levels of the organisation
B	To tackle unequal representation of women in science requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation	To tackle the unequal representation of women or men requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation
C	The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine	The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine
D	The system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of women in science , which the organisation recognises	The system of short-term contracts has negative consequences for the retention and progression of staff .
E	There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career in science , which require the active consideration of the organisation	There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD into senior academic positions and managerial levels , which require the active consideration of the organisation
F		That employment policies, practices and procedures should actively promote gender equality
G		A broad range of work actively undertaken by staff is recognised in their career progression and promotion

Institution level		
H		To tackle the unfair treatment often experienced by trans people requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation