

**EDC13D009**

**Title:** Athena Swan Update Report  
**Author:** Helen Murdoch – Head (Equality & Diversity)  
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**Issue**

Update on progress on Athena Swan Awards

**Recommendation**

For Information.

**Resource Implications**

N.A.

**Risk Implications**

Significant amounts of external funding from NIHR, RCUK, and HEFCE are dependent upon the successful completion of this process.

**Equality and Diversity**

Athena Swan is core to the institution's equality and diversity agenda and aims to facilitate gender equality for Academics in Science, Technological, Engineering, Mathematics and Medical subject areas.

**Timing of decisions**

N.A.

**Further Information**

Further information is available from:

Helen Murdoch [h.murdoch@uea.ac.uk](mailto:h.murdoch@uea.ac.uk)

## **Background & Discussion**

### **Athena Swan Update - Current Status of Submissions and Next Steps**

#### **1. Update on Awards**

On 29 April 2014 confirmation was received that MED had successfully achieved a Bronze Athena Swan award. Currently the University has an overall Bronze award and three individual Bronze awards for Pharmacy, Biological Sciences and Norwich Medical School. The feedback for MED will arrive within the next few weeks as ECU had a record number of applications during the November round.

On 30 April 2014 a further three submissions were made for Environmental Sciences, Nursing Sciences and Rehabilitation Sciences, all at Bronze level. Pharmacy, Biological Sciences and Norwich Medical School are all working towards Silver submissions at the end of November with Chemistry aiming for a Bronze submission at that point too and potentially, Psychology.

All Schools in Science are working towards Athena submissions with all Schools in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences having made submissions. Appendix 1 shows the probable submission pattern into 2016.

UEA will need to consider its Bronze status in the near future as each award has a three year lifespan. A primary focus for the Equality Office over the summer will be to move the Bronze Action Plan further forward and assess whether the University is able to apply for Silver status in April 2015 or whether to renew its Bronze in November 2014 and then apply for Silver in November 2015. Athena SWAN recently reviewed its standards and institutions have to have achieved Silver at School level before they can apply for Silver as a University. However, decisions for November submissions are not currently received until late April making the possibility of a Silver submission hard to judge. Discussion with ECU as well as a thorough review of the Action Plan will inform a decision by the end of Summer 2014.

A new protocol was introduced for this round with internal deadlines for Schools to have drafts ready five weeks before the external deadline. This helped the Equality Office prepare the final submissions as a high volume of work was needed to get the drafts completed to standard during that period. Experience has shown that even when the School has the bulk of the submission in place, this final period is needed to ensure Athena SWAN standards are met and with the increase in Schools taking part this will become even more critical in future rounds.

**The internal deadline for Schools in the next round of submissions will be 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014.**

## **2. Funding Bodies**

In 2011, the NIHR made a statement that unless Departments had achieved Silver award status they would be unable to bid in the 2015/16 funding round. The University has a current exposure of £18.5m to NIHR.

In 2012, RCUK issued a statement that they expected HEIs to be able to evidence progress on issues of equality across the range of protected characteristics – again citing Athena Swan as one such recognised measure. The University has a current exposure to RCUK of £15.3m

In 2013, the government announced that Science and engineering teaching at English universities will receive a £400 million boost. As only 6% of the engineering workforce in the UK is female, this package of support will have a particular focus on encouraging women into these subjects. The new £200 million fund will be administered by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Institutions will be invited to bid for funding against a set of criteria and priorities. With matched funding this will provide at least £400m investment. HEFCE will be expected to look for evidence of commitment to equality and diversity in allocating the teaching capital funding, for example the HEI having an Athena SWAN award. The University has a current exposure of £40.3m via HEFCE (although this is likely to reduce over the next three years).

## **3. Increasing Capacity**

The Equality Office is extending its experience in a number of ways, including participating in national Panels to judge other submissions at the Equality Challenge Unit. This is proving invaluable to understand how Panels think and how they are guided through the process of making decisions about the standards. It's also very valuable when reading five or six submissions together to notice the ways in which lower standard submissions can be very obvious when placed in a group of other candidates – rushed submissions or those without a serious commitment can be very easy to identify with so many other institutions seriously supporting the initiative.

Schools are also increasing their own capacity for this work by exchanging good practice internally and via contacts at other Universities. Carole Thomas of JIC, who recently achieved Silver, has also begun to sit on the Central Steering Group and this is proving very helpful to Athena Leads approaching their own Silver submissions.

A talk has also been arranged for November 7<sup>th</sup> by Professor Tom Welton of the Department of Chemistry at Imperial who led the School in achieving Gold standard in the April 2013 round.

## **4. Role of Faculties**

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. Deans in particular have a key role to play here and as the University works towards additional equality standards or benchmarks this will involve all Faculties beyond

STEMM only subjects. Pilot work has begun with ECO, who have established their own working group (Gender Equality in Economics) in the form of a 'mock' Athena submission. This is good preparation for the introduction in October of the Gender Equality Charter Mark.

## **5. Institutional Synergy**

A key strength of Athena SWAN submission work is in the range of students and staff who engage in feedback on central processes. This feedback is being gathered by the Equality & Diversity Office and will provide the basis of a paper to the next Central Steering Group and will form 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 wider 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.

## **6. 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. Appendix 2 shows the criteria for the current Athena SWAN awards against those for the proposed Charter Mark.

ECU are currently running trial applications under the proposed new standard. Full launch is anticipated in October 2014.

### **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 during the Summer of 2014 to consider if and how the University might be able to engage with this.

***Helen Murdoch***  
***Head of Equality and Diversity***  
***May 2014***

APPENDIX 1

Athena SWAN Award Submission Plan 2014 - 2016																									
	2014												2015										2016		
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
UEA													BR/S?												
NSC/RSC	B/B												B/S												
ENV	B												B/S												
BIO								S																	
PHA								S																	
MED								S																	
PSY													B?												S
CMP													B												S
CHE								B											S						
MTH													B												
<b>Gender Equality Charter Mark from October 2014</b>																									
ECO													?												
LAW																									
PSI/LCS/PHI																									
<b>Race Equality Charter Mark</b>																									

Key: B = Bronze; S = Silver BR = Bronze Renewal

**APPENDIX 2 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
<b>Institution and department level</b>		
<b>A</b>	To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action <b>from everyone</b> , at all levels of the organisation	To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action at all levels of the organisation
<b>B</b>	To tackle unequal representation of <b>women in science</b> requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation	To tackle the unequal representation of <b>women or men</b> requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation
<b>C</b>	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
<b>D</b>	The system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and <b>progression of women in science</b> , which the organisation recognises	The system of short-term contracts has negative consequences for the retention and <b>progression of staff</b> .
<b>E</b>	There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD <b>into a sustainable academic career in science</b> , which require the active consideration of the organisation	There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD <b>into senior academic positions and managerial levels</b> , which require the active consideration of the organisation
<b>F</b>		That employment policies, practices and procedures should actively promote gender equality
<b>G</b>		A broad range of work actively undertaken by staff is recognised in their career progression and promotion
<b>Institution level</b>		
<b>H</b>		To tackle the unfair treatment often experienced by trans people requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation