

EDC15D016

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Issue

To inform the Committee of progress within the Athena SWAN initiative pursuing gender equality for women in STEMM 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 becoming a requirement linked to funding.

Equality and Diversity

The focus of this initiative is the pursuit of gender equality, originally within STEMM subjects, but widening to Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law subjects from July 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 as a means of progressing equality for women in STEMM subjects. 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.

Athena SWAN – Report on Progress and Next Steps

ATHENA SWAN SUBMISSION LOG AT OCTOBER 2014				
YEAR	ROUND	UNIVERSITY/ SCHOOL	LEVEL	STATUS
2012	APRIL	UEA	BRONZE	ACHIEVED
2013	APRIL	BIO	BRONZE	ACHIEVED
2013	APRIL	PHA	BRONZE	ACHIEVED
2013	NOV	MED	BRONZE	ACHIEVED
2014	APRIL	RSC	BRONZE	ACHIEVED
		ENV	BRONZE	ACHIEVED
		NSC	BRONZE	ACHIEVED
	NOV	MED	SILVER	SILVER AWARDED
		PSY	BRONZE	BRONZE
		BIO	SILVER	BRONZE AWARDED
		PHA	SILVER	BRONZE AWARDED
		CHE	BRONZE	NO AWARD
				SUBMITTED
2015	APRIL	CMP	BRONZE	
		MTH	BRONZE	SUBMITTED
	NOV	ECO	BRONZE	
		UEA	BRONZE	
		PPL	BRONZE	
		ENV	SILVER?	
		LAW	BRONZE	

OTHER WORK		
ECO	TEMPLATE	WIP
LAW	TEMPLATE	WIP
PPL	TEMPLATE	WIP

1. Current Position

Since the last Equality and Diversity Committee meeting in November 2014 the results of the three Silver submissions and two Bronze submissions put forward in November have been received: **The School of Psychology received a Bronze Award and Norwich Medical School successfully received the University's first Silver award.** The Schools of Biological Sciences and Pharmacy received Bronze awards, and feedback is expected at the end of May to determine why they were not yet considered to have reached Silver level. The retention of Bronze status is, however, still a success and the work that went into the submissions is not wasted.

The School of Chemistry was not successful in receiving an award. However, the submission had been created in a relatively short timescale and this had been flagged as an issue prior to beginning work. Again, the work on Bronze to date is not wasted and Chemistry are moving forward with their Action Plan which will be revised in light of feedback received from the Panel. Feedback from the

Panel is released in different stages by ECU depending on the status of the submission outcome. For Schools receiving 'no award' feedback is issued immediately. All other Schools should receive feedback by mid-June at the latest. The timescale for feedback has been lengthening as the number of submissions per round has escalated across the sector.

The tables above show the **likely** submission pattern to the end of 2015 calendar year, the immediate aim being that five Schools are put forward for the November 2015 submission round. It should be emphasised that the above plan is indicative only and timings may shift if Schools feel it is wiser to wait to the next round to achieve more ground in order to strengthen Action Plans or to support submissions.

The central E&D Office supports a measured approach, NIHR pressures notwithstanding, partly because a failed submission has a detrimental impact on morale within a School but also because of the substantially increased length of time before results and feedback are received from the Equality Challenge Unit. This can delay the chance to resubmit by at least a year. The value of 'distance travelled' when aiming for Silver cannot be over-emphasised. This can take different forms, but measuring impact in itself can involve working on initiatives for around a year. The awarding Panels take evidence of impact seriously so although writing the submission well is clearly important it is the underlying work and its effectiveness over time which is paramount and which must be demonstrated.

Normally, discussions are held during the final month of the submission's preparation and a decision reached between the School and the Equality Office, however, if there is a difference of opinion between the School and the Equality Office regarding the timing or standard of a submission it has been agreed that a short paper reflecting both views will be put from the Equality Office to the Chair of the Athena SWAN Central Steering Group, along with copies of the submission, and that his decision will be final.

Following the increase in submissions being handled internally it was recommended at the last ASCSG that Schools establish their own deadlines prior to the E&D Internal deadline to help avoid last minute rushes which are less easy to support effectively with the increase in activity. Both Schools involved in the current round were very effective in managing submission work which in turn helps the central process. Due to further changes (outlined below) a further internal threshold is under discussion to help manage both expectations and workload.

The Athena SWAN charter has been revised and extended to include other subjects (see section 3 below) and is due to be officially launched on 24 July 2015.

2. Changes to the Equality Challenge Unit

Athena SWAN is managed by the Equality Challenge Unit, the national body established in 2006 to support the Higher Education Sector in issues of equality and diversity, particularly in respect of protected characteristics. In 2012 when the NIHR announced it was tying engagement with, and performance in, Athena SWAN with funding streams there was a huge increase in the number of institutions participating under the Charter. Other funding bodies have also stated they expect to see evidence of advancement in equality citing a range of measures including Athena SWAN. Until now, a large proportion of funding for Athena SWAN came from HEFCE, however, due to changes in the funding regime they are no longer in a position to continue this. As a result, ECU recently announced a subscription model is to be adopted from January 2016.

In July 2015 all HEIs in England will be invited to subscribe to ECU, with payment due in October 2015, subscriptions starting on 1 January 2016 and valid until 31 December 2016. The subscription will include:

1. Membership to ECUs equality charter marks (currently the expanded Athena SWAN and the new Race Equality Charter Mark)
2. Information, advice and training, access to the advice line, publications and train the trainer sessions for equality and diversity staff

3. Research and evidence, including annual statistical reports for staff and students and benchmarking data.

There will also be discounted rates on additional services such as bespoke consultancy, training, seminars and events.

Charges are on a sliding scale based on total HEI income and are likely to be:

Total HEI Income (£)	Subscription level per annum (£)
>500,000,000	20,000
325 – 499,999,999	17,000
250-324,999,999	15,000
175-249,999,999	12,500
100-174,999,999	10,000
25-999,999,999	6000
<24,999,999	4,000

These charges include membership to Athena SWAN and the cost of an Institutional submission – however all School submissions would continue to attract a cost of £500. This is to cover the cost of administering the judging Panels.

A paper is going to ETR for discussion and decision about the introduction of the charges in May. An email will be sent to Committee members to update them about the decisions made.

3. Changes to the Athena SWAN Charter and Awards

For some time a new gender equality mark has been anticipated from ECU. On 1 May 2015 guidance was announced with a formal launch due in July 2015. After much consultation, the decision has been taken to retain the name of Athena SWAN (rather than adopting 'Gender Equality Charter Mark' as was previously announced) but to extend the commitments in the Charter and substantially revise the content of the submission.

It should be noted that as a result of the review the contents of submissions will now be more challenging. They are expected to cover a greater range of data and analyse this to a greater depth (e.g. including intersectionality). It is expected that at least a year of preparation will be needed within a School before attempting a submission under the new scheme. The central Equality Office is creating internal guidance to supplement the new Handbook issued by the Equality Challenge Unit.

There will be a transition period, up to April 2017, during which Schools can decide whether to use the pre-May 2015 style awards for submissions or whether to submit meeting the May 2015 requirements. However after April 2017 submissions can only be made using the new framework.

3a. Key Changes to Athena SWAN

- Extension to other subject areas in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL)
- Charter Principles – extended from six to ten with substantially revised wording throughout (see Appendix 1)
- The duration of the Award and the span of the Action Plan will be extended from three to four years.
- Inclusion of broader range of staff group and a section on support for trans people at both departmental and institutional level
- Inclusion of Equal Pay Audit data
- A new section at institutional level reporting on monitoring of HR policies
- There are no specific word limits for individual sections (although the guidance does provide a recommended word count per section) so there is more drafting flexibility; silver awards have a higher word limit. Extra words can be requested for example where a restructure has taken place
- At institutional level and in Silver awards by Schools a range of data for professional and support staff must be included throughout the submission and there must also be evidence of consultation with these groups
- An emphasis on ‘intersectionality’ – submissions are expected to consider other aspects of equality (e.g. race, disability, etc) when finding solutions to emerging issues while retaining the primary focus of gender equality.
- Research Excellence Framework (REF) data on the number of staff submitted including the numbers that were eligible and the numbers submitted broken down by gender. A comparison of the REF data must be made with the data from the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2008, with commentary on any gender imbalances.
- There is also a new guide on processes providing greater transparency over the assessment process

A paper will go to ET requesting support for the new Charter and formal commitment from the University to continuing with the revised Athena SWAN gender equality framework. A request will also be made for greater faculty engagement on key issues to establish more consistent standards on key underlying processes across all Schools (for example, induction, appraisal, communication and encouragement for promotion, etc). Due to the number of Schools who will potentially want to engage with the award process an internal threshold will be discussed which will need to be met before making a submission formally. This will help manage both expectations and workflow. New application forms can be viewed on [the ECU website](#) under the drop down box “Post-May 2015 Athena SWAN”.

4. Resource Implications

Due to the increased volume of work which will inevitably result from the increase in Athena SWAN and the need to continue with other work on the wider range of protected characteristics a paper requesting additional resource for the central office will also be put to ETR.

5. UEA Institutional Submission

The data for the UEA Athena SWAN pre-May 2015 template has been gathered and will form the basis of our next submission which will be for a Bronze renewal. It is suggested that while we can use the established model we will do so. Text will be drafted and further work undertaken during the summer, with an updated draft circulated for comment every month as a minimum, both to members of ASCSG and to Deans.

6. Norwich Research Park

The John Innes Institute holds a Silver award and Carole Thomas, the Director and Athena Lead has been very committed in attending the Athena SWAN Central Steering Group in support of development here at UEA. It is also understood that the Institute for Food Research has begun work on Athena SWAN.

7. Conclusion

The University is making clear and timely progress, despite some disappointments in our results. UEA's Bronze Action Plan is likely to make significant steps forwards over the next six months in particular and will be circulated as part of the monthly progress report, as well as development of work under the extended Athena SWAN framework. The Committee will be kept informed of progress.

Helen Murdoch
Head of Equality and Diversity
May 2015

Athena Swan Charter Principles

(revised May 2015) (See below for pre May 2015 Charter Principles)

The Athena SWAN Charter is based on ten key principles. By being part of Athena SWAN, institutions are committing to a progressive charter; adopting these principles within their policies, practices, action plans and culture.

1. We acknowledge that academia cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of all.
2. We commit to advancing gender equality in academia, in particular, addressing the loss of women across the career pipeline and the absence of women from senior academic, professional and support roles.
3. We commit to addressing unequal gender representation across academic disciplines and professional and support functions. In this we recognise disciplinary differences including:
 - the relative underrepresentation of women in senior roles in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL)
 - the particularly high loss rate of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM)
4. We commit to tackling the gender pay gap.
5. We commit to removing the obstacles faced by women, in particular, at major points of career development and progression including the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career.
6. We commit to addressing the negative consequences of using short-term contracts for the retention and progression of staff in academia, particularly women.
7. We commit to tackling the discriminatory treatment often experienced by trans people.
8. We acknowledge that advancing gender equality demands commitment and action from all levels of the organisation and in particular active leadership from those in senior roles.

9. We commit to making and mainstreaming sustainable structural and cultural changes to advance gender equality, recognising that initiatives and actions that supporting individuals alone will not sufficiently advance equality.
10. All individuals have identities shaped by several different factors. We commit to considering the intersection of gender and other factors wherever possible.

Original Charter principles (pre May 2015)

The six principles which Charter members are asked to accept and to incorporate into their action plans are:

1. To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action from everyone, at all levels of the organisation
2. To tackle the unequal representation of women in science requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation
3. The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine
4. The high loss rate of women in science is an urgent concern which the organisation will address
5. The system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of women in science, which the organisation recognises
6. 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.