Lancaster University
Athena SWAN Departmental Guidance

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1. **Support for Athena SWAN**

1.1. This guide has been prepared to assist departments with their applications for Athena SWAN awards. Support, such as attendance at meetings, giving feedback on draft documents, discussing ideas/actions will be provided where possible. For assistance contact Sophie Black, ED&I Advisor, s.black2@lancaster.ac.uk

1.2. Other resources:
- Lancaster University Athena SWAN website [http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/edi/diversity-groups/gender-equality/](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/edi/diversity-groups/gender-equality/)
- Equality Challenge Unit Athena SWAN website [http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charter-marks/athena-swan/](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charter-marks/athena-swan/)
- ECU Athena SWAN handbooks [http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources/](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources/)

1.3. Throughout this document you will see comments that look like this:
**Panellist view**
These are personal reflections by individuals who have sat on Athena SWAN assessment panels, giving an insight into expectations, best practice etc.

2. **About Athena SWAN**

2.1. The Athena SWAN charter recognises and celebrates good practice in relation to gender equality. When it was founded it focused on students and academics in STEM/M departments (science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine) but the charter has now been expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students. The charter now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women. Departments can apply for different level awards that illustrate their commitment, progress and successes.

2.2. This document is based on the new, expanded charter, known as the post-May 2015 charter. Detailed information about how the new charter differs from the old requirements can be found in Appendix 2.

2.3. Athena SWAN is run by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). We have been asked to identify a key **contact for the ECU at Lancaster** – if you have any queries for the ECU, please forward these to Sam Riches.

2.4. There are two submission deadlines every year – the last working day of **April** and the last working day of **November**.

3. **Athena SWAN Awards**

ECU publishes an awards handbook which can be found here ([Awards handbook](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources/)) which departments should consult before embarking on the submission process and which contains full
details of the 10 Athena SWAN key principles. This gives guidance on applying for a departmental Bronze or Silver award; Gold guidance can be found separately here (Gold guidance). Note that only departments who already have a Silver award can go for Gold.

Key sections of the guidance are as follows:

3.1 Bronze department
Bronze department awards recognise that in addition to institution-wide policies, the department is working to promote gender equality and to identify and address challenges particular to the department and discipline. The department must also plan future actions. This includes:
  • an assessment of gender equality in the institution, including quantitative (staff and student data) and qualitative (policies, practices, systems and arrangements) evidence and identifying both challenges and opportunities
  • a four-year plan that builds on this assessment, information on activities that are already in place and what has been learned from these
  • the development of an organisational structure, including a self-assessment team, to carry proposed actions forward

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

3.3 Gold department
A Gold department award recognises significant and sustained progression and achievement by the department in promoting gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline. A well-established record of activity and achievement in working towards gender equality should be complemented by data demonstrating continued impact. Gold departments should be beacons of achievement in gender equality and should champion and promote good practice to the wider community.

Panels can decide to make an award at a lower level than that applied for. For example, a Silver application may receive a Bronze award or no award. A section-by-section summary of the submission document is provided at the end of this document.

Panellist view Athena SWAN awards are not easy to get, and in my experience panels are becoming harder to please. In the most recent awards round (results announced April 2016) only 40% of first-time applicants received an award. Applying for an award is not something to be rushed into; be prepared that it will take work and commitment.

4. Setting up a Self-Assessment Team (SAT)

The SAT takes responsibility for the analysis of the staff and student data. It agrees and implements actions and initiatives in response to the analysis and put together the Athena SWAN application and action plan.
4.1. Key considerations when establishing your SAT:

- The membership of the SAT should be representative and diverse – there should be a good gender balance and a range of members at all stages of the academic pipeline, including PDRAs and PhD students. Some departments include undergraduates on the SAT which is generally well received.

**Panellist view** Gender balance on the SAT is extremely important. A preponderance of female members risks giving the impression that the men in the department are uninterested in the Athena SWAN project.

- It is important that there is commitment from the HoD and the senior members of staff in the department. Commitment and interest from senior staff can make it easier for changes to be put in place and resourced.

- Ensure the SAT fits within the management structure of the department and decide how the SAT will report to, and interact with, other key decision making committees and individuals.

- SAT members should take responsibility for aspects of the application and the action plan – don’t leave all the work to the SAT lead.

**Panellist view** Make sure that all SAT members actively contribute to the department’s Athena SWAN effort. I recently assessed an application which had some good points but was clearly being driven by one committed individual who was doing all the work. As a result, there was a lack of evidence of commitment from others in the department and the application failed.

5. Data provision

5.1. Staff data

Human Resources provide the following department staff data, which is updated annually in September:

- Staff female/male numbers and female % by grade.

- Staff female/male numbers and female % on fixed-term contracts.

- Successful and unsuccessful applications for promotion, by grade (from 2015).

- Staff recruitment activity reports (applications/short-lists/appointments) by gender and category of staff.

Contact **Sophie Black**, email: s.black2@lancaster.ac.uk for the most recent staff recruitment data for your department – please be sure to specify whether you would prefer it in academic or calendar year format, and for how many years.
The University’s general (non-Athena SWAN) staff and student diversity data is available at: http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/edi/resources/

5.2. Student Data
The Director of Planning provides the following department student data, updated annually in September:

- Student female/male numbers and female % by category of student.
- Student attainment and completion rates by gender.
- New student intake (updated October).

5.3. Department data
Departments generally hold more comprehensive data (quantitative and qualitative) on the following, with limited information being available from elsewhere:

- Flexible working cases and experiences.
- Maternity, adoption and parental leave cases and experiences.
- Membership of influential committees.

5.4. Benchmarking data
It is vital that you choose appropriate national data to benchmark your statistics against. Data is available through ECU and also through HESA. If you choose to benchmark against a data set which is not the ‘obvious’ choice, make sure you explain your decision in detail.

One option is to access benchmarking data provided centrally by Athena SWAN. It is available here (Benchmarking data). For more detailed departmental comparisons, please contact your faculty Athena SWAN representative.

Panellist view It’s a good idea to look at benchmarking data at the beginning of the process. This will let you know if you have any challenges over and above those faced by the sector as a whole. However just being at the same level as everyone else doesn’t mean there is no work to be done, as nationally the figures in certain disciplines are poor.

6. Presentation and analysis of data
Provision and analysis of departmental data is a key part of the submission. Analysing your data should be the starting point to decide what actions your department needs to take. Benchmarking against similar departments is a vital part of this and great consideration should be given to what an appropriate benchmark is.

Use your analysis to set key objectives. For example, if your student data are near the benchmark but your staff data are way off, you obviously should focus on staff issues in the first instance.
6.1 Data presentation
• Make sure your data is easy to interpret and discuss.

• Remember panellists will have to read up to five applications – make it easy for them to understand your data.

• Where possible use graphs to represent data (avoid large tables of data).

• Provide both numbers and percentages, unless numbers are very small in which case percentages can be misleading.

• Label graphs with figure numbers and captions for easy referral.

• Provide data for a minimum of three years.

• Remember your application will be printed in black and white unless you send in 10 printed colour copies. Make sure the colours you use can be distinguished or use patterns to differentiate.

Panellist view It is important to take particular care when dealing with small numbers. Many STEM departments have very small numbers of senior women and one individual arriving, leaving or being promoted can have an apparently dramatic effect on figures when they are presented as percentages. Panels tend to contain members who are experts on statistical analysis and this is always picked up. It is best to be upfront about the small numbers in your department and the statistical anomalies that this can apparently cause. Comments on the statistical significance or otherwise of trends are generally welcomed.

6.2 Analysis and discussion
The purpose of analysing your data is to understand the key areas of attrition in your department and to inform your action plan. Identify the career transition points where you have a leak in the pipeline and develop actions that tackle these.

• Discuss the data, don’t just report it – hypothesise why certain trends might be happening in your department and situation. Make reference to processes such as recruitment and promotion in your department and how these processes may relate to trends in the data. SWAN panels will be looking for a reflective narrative of the data.

• Highlight issues and areas for action through the discussion of your data, describe what you have already done and the impact it has had and describe the actions you intend to take. Reference this to the specific action in your action plan.

• Assume that the panel will not know anything about your department, how it is structured or what the Lancaster University policies on recruitment or promotion are. Make sure you describe processes and practices.

Panellist view Including a pipeline diagram showing women’s progression through the various career stages is a good idea, ideally with national benchmarking data as a comparator.
6.3 New requirements for post-2015 Athena SWAN charter
In 2015 the Athena SWAN charter was updated to cover professional and support staff, and trans staff and students. This is an evolving area and we are working to provide guidance on this in the future.

7. Surveys, focus groups and qualitative data

The post-May 2015 charter contains an expectation that you will consult your staff regularly. Qualitative and survey data can be key to showing impact; for example, if you run a survey on an annual basis you can compare results to show improvements.

You should carry out a staff survey within your department, preferably on an annual basis. Example staff surveys will be made available on the university Athena SWAN website, and some faculties can provide their departments with help with these.

In addition, staff surveys are carried out centrally by the university. The last survey was in 2014 and results were broken down by gender and role. HoDs were given reports on the results and they should be approached for information in the first instance; if you have any problems accessing the results please contact Sophie Black. The next central staff survey is in preparation and we hope that results will be available in time for April 2017 applications.

Students are surveyed on an institution-wide basis through the National Student Survey and the results can be found, broken down by department, on the Planning Support Unit website. Although results are not split by gender, they may still prove useful in terms of student perception of the department etc.

Full survey results can be presented as a table in the Any Other Information section of the submissions (tables do not count towards word limits) but the data should be presented and discussed throughout the application.

7.1. Structuring your survey
As mentioned above, sample surveys are available. However should you decide to design your own from scratch, please bear the following in mind:

- Always include an introduction to your survey outlining how the data will be used, why, by whom and that the data will remain anonymous. Think about how you will ensure confidentiality.

- Consider what you want to know - think about the staff and student data and what you want to understand in more detail.

- What will you do with the data? Think about the wording of questions – how will you use the data to support your application or help to develop your action plan?

- Include an ‘about you’ section to identify gender of respondents, SWAN grade, contract type (fixed term/permanent) and whether they work full time, part time
and/or flexibly. Don’t ask for information you aren’t going to use.

- Avoid having too many multiple choice options, for example strongly agree, slightly agree, agree .... Think about how you will use the data. Strongly agree and agree is enough, or just yes and no.

- Also avoid ‘neither agree or disagree’. Not applicable may be relevant in some cases. Try to engage respondents – make the questions interesting or even provocative – create questions that staff will have an opinion on.

- Some open ended questions can provide interesting and useful data (preferably more specific than ‘any other comments’).

- We are working on providing a standard survey for departments to use. This will be distributed once available.

7.2. Focus groups:

- Focus groups can be a really useful way to further understand a particular issue that has been identified by the SAT – either through data analysis or survey results.

- Make sure that you choose a topic that will engage staff/students, encouraging them to attend.

- Focus groups will generate qualitative data – don’t reduce the discussions to statistics. Semi structured, open ended approaches will compliment your surveys.

8. Silver awards - evidencing impact

Illustrating the impact of your actions is what distinguishes a Silver from a Bronze award.

8.1. While the eventual aim is to increase the number of women at all stages of the academic career pipeline, it will take time to improve your staff statistics, particularly at senior level. However, there are some ways to show statistical change, for example:

- Committee membership (improved gender balance, but bear in mind over-burdening when there are small numbers of male/female staff in the department)

- Interview panels (improved gender balance, again considering workload)

- Increase in numbers of applications for promotion could show that you are supporting/informing staff in relation to progression

- Improvement in gender balance among seminar speakers

- Increased take-up of parental leave
• Increased use of departmental mentoring opportunities.

8.2. Use qualitative methods to establish whether actions have had an impact - these methods could include:

• If you re-run your Athena SWAN survey you will be able to compare results over time.

• Focus groups – ask staff/students about their experiences and if they have seen improvements, for example if you recently implemented early career researcher network you could discuss whether these sessions have been helpful and whether they have seen any changes or impact from the sessions.

• You could ask people to fill in feedback forms after Athena SWAN events (e.g. careers events).

9. Gold awards – be a beacon

As well as demonstrating sustained effort and impact in gender equality, Gold departments have to be a “beacon” of good practice both within Lancaster and externally. Departments that are in a position to go for Gold will probably have their own ideas about this, but here are some suggestions.

9.1. Beacon status
• The university is facilitating an inter-departmental partnership scheme. This allows experienced departments to share this with departments that are less advanced in the process. Contact Sam Riches to get involved.

• Consider trying to form a partnership with a department in another institution, for example UCLAN or Cumbria. Again, Sam or Sophie can assist you with this.

• Tell us about the great things you do and we will put them in our Best Practice document. Just introducing a piece of good practice that is taken up across the faculty/university can demonstrate beacon status.

• Hold external events.

10. Other issues to consider

There are some actions/analysis you could consider that are not directly asked about in the application form. These could include:

• Gender balance of invited speakers and internal seminar speakers.
• Applications and success rate for funding by gender – consider the encouragement and support offered to early career researchers in applying for grants.

• Gender balance of staff attending conferences and what support is available (e.g. child care, financial support to attend).

• The gender split for clinical and non-clinical staff.

• You could also refer to issues discussed in the most recent Lancaster University Athena SWAN submission.

11. Development opportunities

Organisation and Educational Development (OED - part of Human Resources) supports the professional and career development of Lancaster University staff. Current core development opportunities particularly relevant to the Athena Swan agenda include:

• Bonington Leadership programme (includes female only cohort).
• Head of Department support programme (including 1:1 coaching).
• Research Development Programme and stand-alone events.
• Research Staff Association.
• CPD sharing practice events covering a broad range of teaching and learning topics.
• Pan-institutional mentor match scheme and associated workshops.
• ‘Recruiting the best’ workshop.
• Performance and development review and performance management.

In addition, OED works directly with Deans/Heads of Department to identify faculty or discipline-specific development needs and supports effective responses and interventions. Awareness-raising of Unconscious Bias also features in relevant OED programmes. Full details of current development opportunities can be found at www.lancaster.ac.uk/oed.

In addition, you may want to ask all staff (especially those who have not done any equality training since the 2010 Equality Act) to complete our Diversity on-line training at www.lancaster.ac.uk/hr/equality-diversity/development.html. This is mandatory for new starters.

12. Additional sources of information

The following information may also be of assistance in helping to prepare.

12.1 Lancaster AS website:
http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/edi/diversity-groups/gender-equality/

• Successful bronze and silver applications from Lancaster University and departments. Use them for ideas on how to develop your own approach. Talk to the authors to find out about the feedback they received on different aspects of the
assessment.

- Fellowship schemes information, news and case studies.
- **Athena SWAN Action Plan 2015-18.**
- Athena SWAN calendar.
- This [Athena SWAN guide for departments](#).
- Gender balance in admin workload allocation to academic staff.

A variety of other useful reports and documents are also available.

### 13. Potential pitfalls

This is a small selection of Things To Avoid.

- “Our data is better than the national average, therefore we have no action planned” – the national average is not the aim as the under-representation of women in STEMM is a national problem – aim higher than the national average.

- “The data is not statistically significant so no conclusions can be drawn and no action is planned” – having small numbers of staff is probably going to lead to stats not being significant – this doesn’t mean there isn’t a trend or a leaky pipeline. Qualitative data can also help to identify issues that should be addressed.

- “Whilst our survey identified areas where staff were unhappy or felt unsupported, there was no gender differences in the results. Therefore we have no actions planned to address these issues” – these issues should still be addressed. In your application you can show that all staff have benefited, but highlight the impact for women in the Department. In general, the message is that all staff benefit from equality.

- “Our recruitment data illustrate no clear gender bias at the point of invitation to interview or appointment, therefore no action is planned” – it may be that women are just as likely to be appointed once they apply, but are enough women applying? Consider what you could do to encourage women to apply for positions within your department. Look into the proportion of staff involved in recruitment who have completed relevant training – for example, recruitment and selection, equality and diversity (since the introduction of the 2010 Equality Act) and unconscious bias training.

- HoD letter: “I have worked with women in the past”. The panel want to see the HoD is engaged and committed, and that the SAT is embedded within the department – they won’t be impressed with the HoD using examples of when they worked with female scientists and discovered it wasn’t that bad.
• Description of your SAT team: “Jane – happily married with 7 children. Katy – single and no children”. The panel are looking for a variety of experiences on the team, eg child care, maternity/paternity, flexible working, but they don’t want to know everyone’s personal circumstances.

• ‘We don’t have a gender problem here’: avoid making bold statements, especially if you can’t show evidence. For example “we have eradicated all unconscious bias from the department” - it isn’t possible to eradicate unconscious bias - however you can make people aware of their own unconscious biases, and ask them to actively challenge their own biases and try to avoid them. Generally, these comments show the department has missed the point.

• Culture and social events: avoid activities or events that reinforce unhelpful gender norms. For example, the monthly ladies’ cake club.

• Maternity: people often fall into the trap of blaming all gender imbalances on childcare and maternity. Unless you have evidence to support such claims, avoid statements like “Female PhD students take longer to complete their studies because of maternity and childcare issues”. While maternity and child care are likely to be important, try not to use this as the explanation for every issues identified. SWAN panels will be looking for a detailed analysis of the structures, practices and culture of the department.

• Language: be careful of language when describing your data and your department – some words that are commonplace in scientific articles can sound strange or even biased when referring to gender and staff. For example “the senior grades are greatly enriched with men”. Remember the application isn’t an article or a grant application and doesn’t need to be as formal – it is important to get the personality of the department across.

• Blame: be honest about your data and what might have caused gender imbalances, and identify actions to address the problems – don’t try to place blame for this on anyone. For example, panels will not appreciate statements like “women make it difficult for themselves to get promoted as they have a lack of confidence”.

Appendix: An overview of the application form

Application forms and the Athena SWAN handbook can be downloaded from the Athena SWAN website. Note that this guide is based on the post-May 2015 layout of the form, which all departments will have to use as of the April 2017 round. Numbers below refer to the relevant sections of the submission.

Please note, this overview is for Bronze submissions only. Silver and Gold submissions have extra requirements which are outlined in the handbook. In particular, Silver awards have data/career development requirements for support staff.

1) **Letter of endorsement from HoD**
   - This is an opportunity for the HoD to show that they are personally committed to and engaged in Athena SWAN. Give examples of the HoD’s involvement in the process.
   - Show how SWAN is linked to, and part of, the Departmental strategy.
   - Give examples of successful SAT actions and the impact they have had on the department
   - Illustrate how Athena SWAN has become an embedded part of the department, for example:
     - explain how the SAT fits into the formal structure of the department (showing it isn’t a stand-alone group)
     - illustrate how equality and gender considerations are embedded within the culture and vision of the department
   - How will Athena SWAN actions and the SAT be resourced in the future?

   **Panellist view** Warm words from the HoD are not enough. Panellists read these letters very carefully, especially as they are the first thing in the submission, and they are looking for evidence of personal commitment. The HoD should put in anything he or she has personally done, and what the reporting lines are between them and the AS SAT.

2) **A description of the department**
   Describe the department so that panellists can understand how it is structured without any other knowledge. Include information on numbers of staff (academic, professional, support staff separately) and students. Comment on any recent changes in structure or management and on any other relevant features such as quasi-autonomous research institutes within the department. If there is anything particularly notable about the department – eg, it has staff based in buildings which are geographically distant to the main body – mention them here. Particularly complex structures can be explained using diagrams.

3) **The self-assessment process**
   i) **Description of the SAT**
• Give a brief outline – how many men and women are on the SAT, and a breakdown by seniority.

• When giving a description of each SAT member, give examples of how each member has contributed to the SAT, whether they have any experience of working flexibly, maternity/paternity, why they are interested in SWAN.

• List SAT members alphabetically – not hierarchically.

Giving details of SAT members in application
It is up to individual departments how they present information on the membership of the SAT. Some departments choose to use a table and others use descriptive text. ECU have advised us that they would prefer to see gender of SAT team members included in the information as the gender balance of the team is an important consideration.

Sample of text description of team members (taken from a York University submission):

**Liat Levita** is a fixed-term lecturer and joined the department in 2009. She investigates changes in the brain throughout development with particular emphasis on emotional regulation. During the 2010/11 academic year she won both the Vice-Chancellor’s Teaching Award and the Supervisor of the Year Award.

**Jo Clarke** is Course Director for the MSc in Forensic Psychology and previously worked for the Prison Service. She is a single-parent working full time with a teenage daughter and has recently started fostering.

Sample of table of team members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>SAT role</th>
<th>FT/PT</th>
<th>Relevant work-life balance experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Liaison with dept. management committee</td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Works three days a week Child at preschool centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>Data collation lead</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whichever option is chosen, it is interesting to include specific examples of flexible working/caring responsibilities in the SAT team overview - but don’t take it too far. We don’t need to know the intimate details of everybody’s personal circumstances. Remember that staff who have always worked full time and never had any caring responsibilities can still be passionate supporters of workplace equality.

ii) An account of the self-assessment process
• Give a clear picture of how the SAT worked, for example when it started meeting, how regularly the team met and the processes undertaken to develop and implement actions.
• Include any information on how the SAT consulted with staff here (this acts as an introduction to discussions of surveys and qualitative data during the application).

• Outline reporting mechanisms – show how the SAT has become an embedded structure of the department and how the SAT fits within the management of the department.

• Describe how Athena SWAN was communicated to the department – would most staff/students know what Athena SWAN is and have they seen your action plan?

• Give examples of senior involvement and support.

• Consultation with individuals or departments, both within and outside of Lancaster University, is seen as good practice – give details of these consultations.

iii) **Plan for the future of the SAT**

• Make sure you have a clear plan for the SAT in the future – including how often the SAT will meet, how actions will be implemented and monitored and how and when the action plan will be reviewed and revised.

Please note: the Athena SWAN charter now covers equality for trans staff and students. Care should be taken that gender identification of SAT members and use of personal pronouns accord with the wishes of the members.

4) **A picture of the department**

4.1 **Student data**

4.2 **Academic and research staff data**

Presentation of data has been discussed in some detail in sections 6-7 of this document. Just a few general points to make:

• Generally, the purpose of this section is to discuss the data. In later sections you can describe in more detail the work you have done to support women at career transition points or to improve working culture. To help panels, make it clear if you address issues in later sections (e.g. see discussion in section 4.b(ii)).

• Illustrate trends over time – try to make your data as clear and simple as possible.

• Use graphs rather than tables wherever possible, and use percentages (unless numbers are very small).

• Remember to include information from any qualitative data throughout the application – don’t just leave it until the ‘any other comments’ section at the end.

• Include a graph that shows the full pipeline from Undergraduate to Professor.

• Discuss the data – don’t just report it
Panellist view If your data shows a major problem – for example, that your proportion of female undergraduates is significantly below the national average, or that you have not interviewed any female candidates for recent staff posts – make sure you face the issue head on. Panels are very good at using the data to spot areas of weakness and it is much better to have actions to address these than to try to sweep them under the carpet. The more serious the problem, the stronger the actions need to be.

5) **Supporting and advancing women’s careers**

5.1 **Key career transition points: academic staff**

- **Recruitment:** Consider whether you are currently actively doing anything to encourage women to apply, gender balance of interview panels, does the data suggest any bias in the process?

Panellist view If you have very few female members of staff, it can be very onerous to insist that one of them sits on every appointment committee. In this situation, best practice is to ask a female member of staff from a related department/discipline to sit on the panel.

- **Promotion:** how does the current promotion process work in your department? – How effective is Performance & Development Review in planning to achieve promotion? Do staff self-nominate or do you have a pro-active system to identify staff for promotion? Do people understand the promotion process, how are people supported through promotion and how are people given advice on how to progress?

- **Key career transition points:** Discuss the key issues that have been identified through your qualitative and quantitative data analysis and what you are going to do/have done in response to this analysis. Tell the panel how and why you chose a particular action, and the impact it has had and/or the impact you hope to see. Include information here on any training or mentoring schemes you have put in place – for example do you have formal and/or informal systems of mentoring? Consider whether women are receiving informal support or are being mentored by senior members of staff.

Panellist view There is often a tension between wanting to provide female mentors for students, female visibility at admissions days, female representation on committees etc and the priorities and workload of existing female staff. If you have few female staff it’s a good idea to explicitly discuss what measures are taken not to overburden them.

5.2 **Key career transition points: professional and support staff (Silver only)**

Guidance to follow

5.3 **Career development: academic staff**

- **Performance & Development Review (PDR):** explain how PDR takes place in your department. Is it annual? Who carries it out? What is expected to be covered and how is this monitored? Do post docs have PDR? How are career progression and support covered in PDR?
• **Induction:** explain how new staff and students make aware of key information such as social activities, flexible working policies, maternity/paternity policies, and how they can access this information if they need it in the future?

• **Support for female students:** explain any support provision aimed specifically at female students or any actions that you can show a particular impact for female students? What do you do to promote an academic career to your female students? (e.g. Women in Physics Group and other department networking groups).

5.4 Career development: professional and support staff (Silver only)
Guidance to follow

5.5 Flexible working and managing career breaks

• **Maternity:** What support is in place for women on before, during and after maternity leave? How does the process work? Consider if the same support is open to staff on fixed term contracts or students. If some staff/students did not return after their maternity, do you know why?

• **Paternity, adoption and parental leave:** make use of the new laws relating to shared leave. Numbers are likely to be small, but you could proactively encourage dads to take time off – ask them to apply in writing so that takeup is properly logged and reported.

• **Shared Parental Leave:** The new university policy on Shared Parental Leave came into effect from 5th April 2015. Again, state what steps you take to promote uptake of this scheme.

• **Flexible working:** what formal and informal options for flexible working do you offer? Is flexible working seen as a positive thing in the department and is it an option offered to all staff (i.e. not just parents/women returning from maternity)?

5.6 Organisation and culture

• **Committees:** Describe how committee membership is decided and what your different committees are responsible for, reflect on how the gender balance could be improved. Is membership regularly rotated, and how are views of all staff – men and women – represented at these meetings?

  **Panellist view** Beware of any signs that women in the department are being assigned to less important committees or stereotypical “female” committees. Being passed over for the most important committees can harm women’s career prospects. For example, if your Athena SWAN, outreach and social committees are all 50% female but your key research committee is only 20% female you need to comment on how this will be addressed.

• **Fixed term contracts:** it is likely that this will reflect the gender balance of post docs in your department. You could explain here how you support staff on fixed term contracts.
to apply for permanent or new posts and how you provide the resources for staff to successfully apply for grants that would lead to continued employment.

**Workload:** do you have a robust mechanism to ensure that women aren’t overburdened with teaching or administrative roles? If you don’t have a formal workload model, give a good explanation why. What is the gender balance between Research/Teaching/Admin responsibilities – are women dedicating more or less time to research? Is teaching valued in your department?

**Panellist view** Panellists now expect to see a transparent workload model as standard. If your department does not have one, this is an area to prioritise.

- **Timing of meetings:** What are the core hours for your department’s key business activity? How do you ensure that meetings and social activities are open to all staff, especially those with caring commitments? If it is not possible for some meetings to be held in core hours, what do you do to ensure women are not unable to attend key meetings?

**Panellist view** Again, panels now expect to see that your department has core hours which are shorter than 9-5 to cater for staff with caring responsibilities, with 10-4 being the gold standard. Post-work dinners with influential visiting staff should be avoided – lunch is a good alternative.

- **Culture:** use this section as an opportunity to present the personality of your department to the panel. Are staff happy and feel supported and included? Do people socialise with one another?

- **Outreach:** Include how outreach activities are run as well as who they are aimed at. Is outreach considered in Performance Development & Review (PDR) and promotion?

6) **Case studies (Silver only)**

- There should be 2 case studies for a silver award – one case study should be a member of the SAT team, while the other should be a member of the department who hasn’t been a member of the SAT.
- It is useful to have case studies that represent different stages of the academic pipeline, for example, a female professor and a post doc.
- While showing the support provided by the department during maternity is important, make sure that your case studies illustrate a wide variety of supportive policies and practices offered by the department.
- Case studies written in first person feel more genuine.
- Case studies should highlight the good practice in the department and the impact of actions described in the application.

Some departments have included pictures in their case studies. Have a look at recent successful submissions (available from your Athena SWAN Faculty Representative).
7) **Further information**

Avoid leaving this section blank. Include here anything you think is relevant to the submission that you have not yet outlined. As previously noted, this is a good place to put full survey results. You could also refer to the most recent University Athena SWAN submission and use this to support your activities and illustrate your knowledge of what is going on across the institution.

8) **Action plan**

- Your action plan should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely).
- Describe all future actions. Actions already completed should be described in the application, not in the action plan.
- Be specific with dates and actions, for example, if the department plans to implement a mentoring scheme give a deadline and target for number of staff getting involved.
- Reference actions from your action plan in the application.
- Action plans that have HR or administrative staff responsible for the majority of actions won’t be viewed positively – make sure actions are distributed across the SAT team and to other members of the department.
- Make sure your actions span the next four years – this shows a maintained and consistent focus on SWAN. Panels will be suspicious of action plans where the majority of actions are planned for the 4 months after submission.
- Don’t have too many data monitoring actions – panels will want to see innovative and tailored actions developed in response to data and consultation. I would suggest these actions should make up the majority of your action plan – especially for silver and gold awards.
- Don’t let success measures become vague – make them achievable and measurable. For example, a success measure could be a % increase in the number of people reporting x in the annual staff survey.
- Avoid success measures like ‘data analysed annually’. Consider the impact you are hoping to see for the women in your department.