

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF THE ATHENA SWAN CHARTER

JULY 2015





ECU's Athena SWAN Charter recognises commitment to advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education.

In May 2015 the Charter was 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 is owned by ECU. It is funded by ECU, the Biochemical Society, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, the Department of Health, the Higher Education Authority, the Royal Society and the Scottish Funding Council.

ECU would also like thank Pfizer for funding the Athena SWAN 10th anniversary celebrations.



www.ecu.ac.uk/athena-swan
@Athena_SWAN
©Equality Challenge Unit, July 2015



Equality Challenge Unit



Biochemical Society
Advancing Molecular Bioscience



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills



Department
of Health

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

THE
ROYAL
SOCIETY



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

FOREWORD



David Ruebain
Chief Executive
Equality Challenge Unit

As I have said before, ECU's Athena SWAN Charter is one of my favourite things to talk about because we know that it works. The Charter is changing in 2015, and as we celebrate its tenth anniversary we must not forget its history as its scope expands. I am excited to welcome to the Charter applications from arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law departments (AHSSBL), and higher education institutions that focus specifically on these areas, in addition to the current science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) disciplines.

In addition to expanding the Charter to cover AHSSBL, all applicants will need to sign up to the new principles, which have been extended to cover professional and support staff as well as trans staff. The new Athena SWAN Charter principles reflect the progressive nature of the Charter, reinforcing the message that award holders can never rest on their laurels. Expectations will change as the sector moves forward in the pursuit of equality. I am convinced that this is the right approach and look forward to seeing institutions rising to the challenge.

I would like to thank the staff at ECU for all the work they put into the Athena SWAN Charter and for their involvement in the development of ECU's Equality charters. Our race equality charter is directly informed by expertise gained through the Athena SWAN Charter and ECU's broader projects and research, while being specifically tailored to support institutions to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students. Best of luck to all of those who are taking part in the trial.

With the number of award submissions totalling nearly 300 in 2014 and the introduction of the race equality

'The Charter
is changing ...
and we must
not forget its
history as its
scope expands.'

charter, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the substantial number of individuals who volunteer their time to ECU's Equality charters as panellists. Peer review is the cornerstone of the process so we really could not run our equality charters without you. A full list of those who have taken part as a panellist will be published on our website.

Good reputations spread, which is why ECU's Athena SWAN Charter is being piloted in the Republic of Ireland and will be working in partnership with Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Forum, a new initiative of the Australian Academy of Science. Sarah Dickinson, Head of Equality Charters, and I recently spent time in Australia to discuss this work. It was invigorating to hold discussions with our distinguished colleagues, Professors

'I am excited
to welcome
to the Charter
applications from
arts, humanities,
social sciences,
business and law
departments.'

Nalini Joshi and Brian Schmidt, who are spearheading the project and are both passionate about meeting the challenges of gender equality.

In addition to our work in Ireland and Australia, ECU is part of a European Commission FP7 funded project, GENDER-NET, which is developing transnational activity to promote the gendering of research content and promote gender equality in research careers across the European Research Area.

Another important project that is already well underway at ECU is developing the fourth iteration of the Athena Survey of Science, Engineering and Technology (ASSET). ASSET 2015 aims to further improve our understanding of gender differences in STEMM academics' experiences, expectations and perceptions of recruitment, selection, career progression, access to influential positions and retention. The results of the survey, which will be available in 2016, will be useful to those undertaking Athena SWAN to be able to benchmark their work with national data.

Finally, I would like to thank all funders of ECU's Athena SWAN Charter for their support over the last ten years. I would also like to thank Pfizer for sponsoring this celebration and King's College London for hosting. I am delighted to be celebrating ten years of Athena SWAN and although we expect greater scrutiny of the Charter in the coming years, we know that we ourselves can and must rise to the challenge, as we expect you to.

MESSAGE FROM THE ATHENA SWAN PATRON



Professor Dame Julia Higgins
Imperial College London

It is both amazing and gratifying to those of us who were there at the beginning to be celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Athena SWAN Charter. I was one of the initiators of the Athena Project in 1998, together with Caroline Fox and Nancy Lane.

The project set its sights high from the beginning. Run by women for women, its aims were to level the playing field for academic women in science. It addressed itself to the leadership of universities and national organisations, and demanded their involvement. It left three successful legacies: the Athena Forum, the ASSET survey of academic staff and the one we celebrate here, the Athena SWAN Charter.

The reputation of the Charter has been growing for some time, and 2014 saw this enthusiasm translated into international action with a pilot expansion of the Charter in Ireland, and knowledge sharing exchanges with Australia. This is a great testament to the strength of the awards process and the persuasiveness of the system that we initiated via the original Athena Project.

It is very gratifying to see the Charter grow – as it has done quite consistently – and develop as the needs and expectations of the sector change. The Charter could never have stood still once the buy-in and success became ever more evident, and things that were seen as innovative and unusual in 2005 are now commonplace. This is rightfully reflected by the peer review assessment process, for which I would like to personally thank the panel members who take time from their busy schedules.

'It is very gratifying to see the Charter grow, as it has done quite consistently, and develop as the needs and expectations of the sector change.'

To take one example, success rates for Research Councils UK grants and fellowships were recently published by gender for the first time. They showed that grant applications from women are disproportionately low to five of the seven research councils, across both sciences and arts (the exceptions were the Economic and Social Research Council and the Science and Technology Facilities Council). Looking at the success of staff members' research grant applications has not been an essential part of the Athena SWAN Charter self-assessment process up until now, but as attention is increasingly focussed on this area, the new departmental submission forms will ask applicants to investigate this more thoroughly.

My involvement with ongoing development has meant that I frequently meet women who have benefitted from programmes originating from Charter activities. Often, these women are not based in STEMM fields, as a growing number of institutions undertake activities more systematically. In fact, there is growing recognition that what is good for women is good for everyone. It is therefore apt that the Charter is now expanding to incorporate new areas. I greatly hope that this is successful.

I will close by congratulating the award winners and wishing them success in implementing their ambitious plans for gender equality; actions that are devoted to improving the ethos and environment so that everyone can thrive.

TEN YEARS OF THE ATHENA SWAN CHARTER: 2005–2015

Founded in 2005, the Athena SWAN Charter originated as a scheme that recognises commitment to advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research.

Charter membership remains open to any university or publicly funded research institute that is committed to the advancement of the careers of women in STEMM. Members are able to submit for Athena SWAN Charter awards at institution and department level, based on an in-depth self-assessment that is reviewed by a panel drawn from higher education across the UK. Members are supported throughout the process with workshops, guidance and opportunities to share practice.

PRINCIPLES 2005–2015

All Athena SWAN members have signed up to the principles of the Charter:

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

MAKING PROGRESS

There are three levels of awards available, designed to encourage continuous progression and sustainable change. There are awards for the whole institution, and individual departments and faculties can be conferred awards as long as their institution holds at least a bronze award. Award holders have to reapply to renew their awards every three years. These renewals also require evidence of progress and the successful completion of earlier action plans.

BRONZE AWARD

A Bronze award recognises a solid foundation for eliminating discrimination and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff.

SILVER AWARD

A Silver award recognises a significant record of activity and achievement by the institution in promoting equality and in addressing challenges across the whole institution. Silver award winners demonstrate that equality is well embedded within the institution or department with strong leadership in promoting the Charter principles.

GOLD AWARD

A Gold award recognises sustained progression and achievement in promoting gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline. A well established record of activity and achievement in working towards equality in the career progression of women in STEMM 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.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ATHENA SWAN CHARTER



*A personal perspective
from Professor Jeremy
K. M. Sanders CBE FRS
Pro Vice-Chancellor for
Institutional Affairs
University of Cambridge*

In 2014, the Athena SWAN Silver award for Cambridge was the result of a huge commitment of resource and dedicated individuals' time. It is public recognition of progress in the university's gender agenda, building on our Clinical School's Silver award in 2013 (covering 2200 staff) and in 2014 the first Gold for a physics department (400 staff).

Cambridge was one of the first bronze award institutions in 2006, having been an early supporter of SWAN through our Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Initiative project, established in 1999. Nationally, Sally Davies's 2011 letter galvanised medical schools, and the sector more broadly, into action. Since then, we have been spending around £500k more annually on gender initiatives, including £300k on the Returning Carers Scheme, which helps boost research careers after a career break for family responsibilities. Like all our schemes, it is open to women and men; we recognise that if we improve management and the working environment for everyone, then women will benefit disproportionately.

Athena SWAN provides a stimulus because universities and their staff are competitive; they like recognition and prizes. It gives us a framework to help improve processes and behaviours, and it is also a good mechanism for sharing expertise and good practice.

Some departments and individuals do still see Athena SWAN as a box-ticking exercise. However, Cambridge is not interested in ticking boxes and gaining points in order to win certificates; our aim must be the more fundamental one of making women's working lives

'Changing
embedded
cultures and
behaviours is
a long-term
commitment.'

better, for the benefit of the individual, the university, their families and society generally. If that leads to Athena SWAN awards and similar recognition, then that is welcome. Our experience has been that the Athena SWAN process has sometimes found it difficult to recognise innovations and local circumstances that don't fit standard templates, so it is important that assessments are flexible and responsive – not rigidly formulaic – if they are to be supportive and useful.

Changing embedded cultures and behaviours is a long-term commitment. We need to improve the numbers of senior women across the entire academic spectrum, so the broadening of the SWAN scheme is potentially welcome. The working environment in Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences is, at least in Cambridge, so different from that in STEMM, that it's not yet clear if the same assessment process will be effective. What is clear is that if we are to effect lasting change then we need support from men as well as women; gender equality is not a women's problem, it is necessary for all of us.

We cannot rest or be complacent. We have embraced the 2015 legislative changes in Shared Parental Leave with a policy that is substantially more generous than is legally required, and hope it will help to change culture around the sharing of childcare responsibilities. We are looking into providing more workplace nursery facilities, and in 2014 we were the first university to join The 30% Club. So, we have much to celebrate; we have come a long way from the all-male, medieval monastic institution of the past, but we also have a long way to go.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ATHENA SWAN CHARTER FROM OUR MEMBERS

'The expanded Athena SWAN Charter, which includes elements of the gender equality charter mark, was warmly welcomed at Aberystwyth University. In September 2014 we were delighted to receive the news of our success in achieving institutional Bronze awards in both charters. This was a fantastic result representing a vital next step on the equality and diversity enhancement journey at Aberystwyth. Participation in the Equality charters required us to think deeply about equality and diversity and both awards were catalysts for cultural change across the university.'

Professor Kate Bullen, Aberystwyth University

Aberystwyth University successfully took part in ECU's Gender equality charter mark trial, a project that informed the expansion of the Athena SWAN Charter.

The introduction of Athena SWAN to the Irish higher education sector represents a major milestone in its timing and the fact that it was negotiated with the buy-in of all the Irish universities. Bringing our institutions together has been an empowering experience and marks a sea change that extends beyond the women in our institutions, many of whom had campaigned, over several decades, for gender equality. Men were now engaging in the process and calling for interventions to change the culture and behaviours on our campuses. It is about more than "fixing the numbers" and "fixing the women" – it represents a way of changing the culture.

Professor Eileen Drew, Director of the Centre for Women in Science & Engineering Research (WiSER), Trinity College Dublin

Professor Drew chairs the Athena SWAN Irish Committee

'The department began this journey in 2008, and the first years were a struggle. But enthusiasm and willingness to do more, help more, to make changes for those who followed behind us, was strong. As our early actions bore fruit, people within the department recognised a real cultural change for the better. We didn't realise it at the time, but our actions and success were leading the way, our work became more widely recognised. At the same time a community was evolving both within the college and nationally, all of us with the aim of supporting women in science. We are still evolving, still hitting snags, developing new ideas and pushing forward, doing things in new ways as new people take over the helm.'

Dr Patricia Hunt, Professor Tom Welton, Professor Sue Gibson & Professor Alan Armstrong, Department of Chemistry, Imperial College London

The Department of Chemistry at Imperial College London received a Gold Athena SWAN award in 2013.

'Equality charters required us to think deeply about equality and diversity and both awards were catalysts for cultural change across the university.'

'Obtaining our Silver award has motivated and inspired us even further to develop collaborations with Sheffield NHS Foundation Trust and Health Education Yorkshire and Humber through the Sheffield Women in Medicine initiative. We are delighted that these new partnerships are helping us to build an even better workplace culture in medicine at Sheffield.'

Professor Sheila Francis, University of Sheffield Medical School

The University of Sheffield Medical School holds a Silver award

'Since the Charter's inception we have encouraged departments to apply for awards and the college has benefitted from senior support and engagement. Our philosophy has always been that if we improve the situation for our women academics we improve it for everyone: best practice benefits all. Athena SWAN has helped change the culture of our college. We look forward to the next ten years of the new expanded Athena SWAN Charter.'

Rob Bell and Professor Dorothy Griffiths, Imperial College London

Imperial College London holds a Silver institutional award

'We started our Athena SWAN project in September 2013 and were very proud to receive an institute Silver award in April 2015. This is the most important and far-reaching endeavour the Babraham Institute has undertaken. There is a buzz about the institute, a new collective awareness of the challenges women face and our women scientists have a louder voice and greater confidence. We have renewed appreciation of our excellent features supporting women scientists and many of our new initiatives benefit all staff.'

Dr Anne E. Corcoran, Babraham Institute

The Babraham Institute was the second independent research institute to achieve a Silver award

'The John Innes Centre is proud to be the first research institute to hold a Silver Athena SWAN award, an award in recognition of a culture that truly embraces the principles of flexibility that provide for family friendly working practices, while demonstrating a commitment to career advancement for all. We are not complacent – there is still much to be done!'

Dr Carole Thomas, Head of Directorate, John Innes Centre

The John Innes Centre was the first independent research institute to achieve a Silver award

'Our philosophy has always been that if we improve the situation for our women academics we improve it for everyone.'

'As a woman working in STEMM, I contribute to teaching and research and take part in a range of academic activities. I am however, not an academic, I'm a technician. Technicians make an essential contribution to the success of our institutions, yet we are often overlooked in wider higher education initiatives and policy. It's fantastic that ECU has expanded the Charter to include technicians and other professional support staff. Not only does it help to ensure visibility and recognition for these staff groups, it also guarantees that changes in policy and practice are embedded in a culture that supports the wider university community and the talents of all.'

Kelly Vere, Senior Technician in Life Sciences and Engineering at the University of Nottingham

Technical staff are included in the post-May 2015 Athena SWAN Charter principles

'We are really delighted to have been recently awarded Silver. Our engagement with this process provides us with the impetus to collectively reflect on our policies and practices, promote our existing strengths and take ownership of our weaknesses. Our Silver action plan endeavours to make Norwich Medical School a more transparent, fairer and satisfying work environment for us all. We look forward to striving for a Gold award.'

Professor Anne Marie Minihihi and the Supporting Excellence, Equality and Satisfaction for all at Work (SEESAW) team, Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia

Norwich Medical School holds a Silver award

'Queen's University Belfast has fully engaged with the Athena SWAN assessment process over the last decade. In our experience, Athena SWAN has been an important driver for behavioural change which in turn has influenced a more gender-equal culture in the university. We actively listen to the voice of academic women. Maternity, paternity and caring leave is routinely accommodated in our workload models; all-male interview shortlists are closely scrutinised; promotions processes take interruptions for maternity, paternity and caring purposes into account. To sum up our progress over ten years in a phrase, we in Queen's University "live the SWAN life" (coined by the Dean of Engineering and Physical Sciences and Chairperson of the University SWAN Steering Group, Professor Tom Millar).'

Professor Yvonne Galligan, Queen's University Belfast

Queen's University Belfast is a founding signatory of the Athena SWAN Charter and holds a Silver award

'Congratulations to all at ECU for a successful 10 years of Athena SWAN!'

'We are committed to supporting the Athena SWAN Charter principles developed in 2015, which accord with Royal Holloway's stated strategic aim to "nurture a culture of inclusion and diversity", and will continue to promote gender balance across all disciplines in our staff community.'

Dr Barbara Davis, Faculty Manager, Faculty of Science, Royal Holloway, University of London

Royal Holloway, University of London was one of the first institutions to sign up to the new principles of the Athena SWAN Charter, following its expansion in May 2015

'We are proud of our success and recognise the importance of bottom up action with top down support and advocacy. We are delighted that the Charter has now been extended to include arts and social science departments and many of these departments are already actively working towards their submissions. The Athena SWAN Charter is all about people achieving their potential. Warwick is 50 years old and we anticipate we'll be working on this goal for the next 50 years and look forward to working with Athena SWAN towards that goal.'

Professor Alison Rodger and Sandra Beaufoy, University of Warwick

The University of Warwick holds a Silver institution award

'Our participation in the Athena SWAN Charter has been a real driver for change in the university's culture and attitudes, with the principles now embedded in our values and strategic priorities. We have benefitted greatly from the spirit of collaboration among higher education institutions, and the sharing of good practice and solutions, whether simple or innovative. We are pleased to sign up to the new broader principles of ECU's Athena SWAN Charter, recognising the importance of addressing inequalities for all regardless of gender, academic discipline, and job function. Congratulations to all at ECU for a successful 10 years of Athena SWAN!'

Dr Caroline Wallace, Senior Partner – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh was one of the first institutions to sign up to the new principles of the Athena SWAN Charter, following its expansion in May 2015

'The Athena SWAN journey has been a real eye opener, at times frustrating, but very rewarding.'

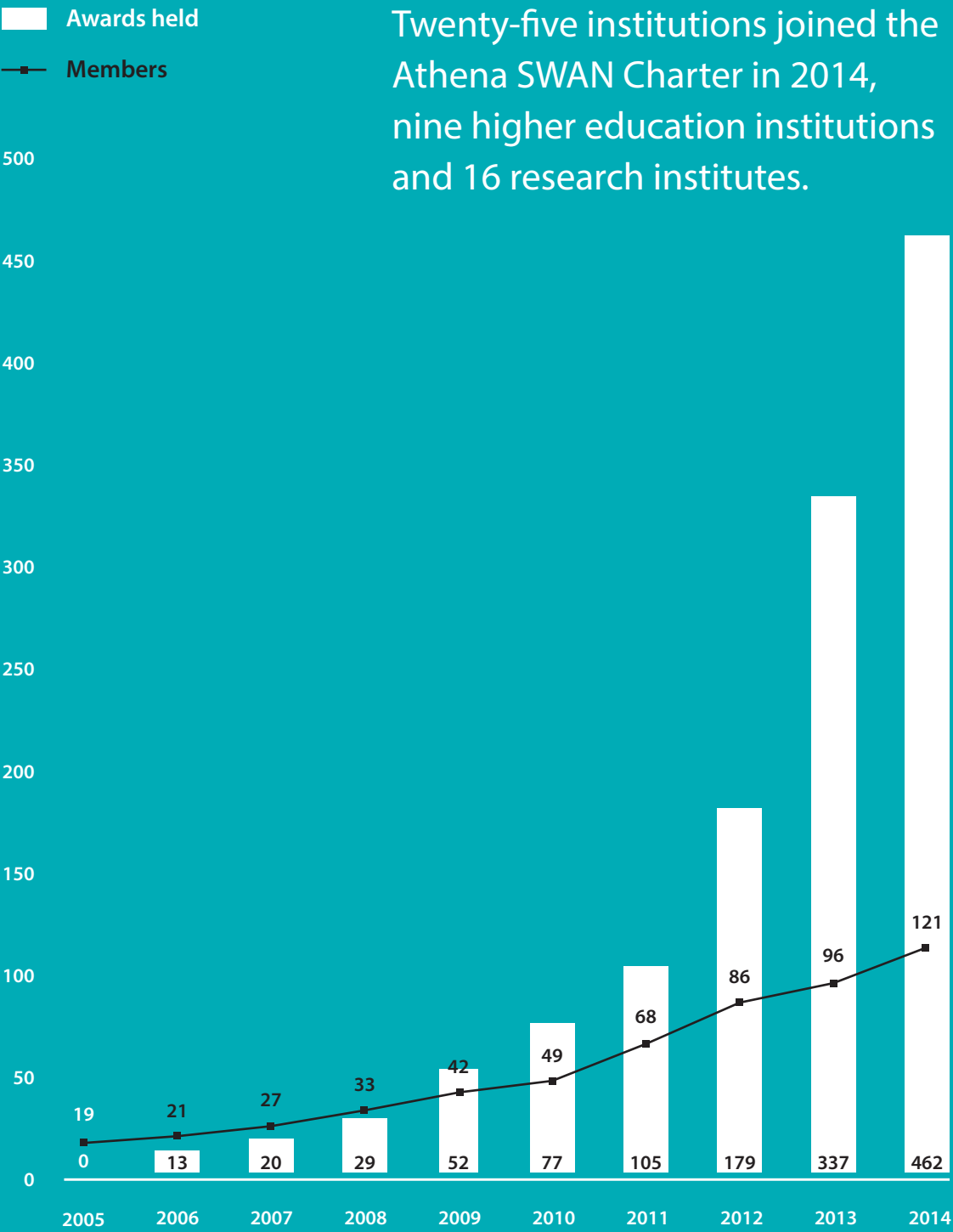
'Small changes caused a big effect in the department. These resulted in an acceptance of "life beyond work" and an appropriate culture for a world-leading research laboratory in the twenty-first century. The Athena SWAN journey has been a real eye opener, at times frustrating, but very rewarding. We are proud of our Athena SWAN Gold award, but at the same time acknowledge that there is still a lot more we need to do both locally within the department and university and at the national level.'

Professor Val Gibson, Department of Physics (Cavendish Laboratory), University of Cambridge

The Department of Physics (Cavendish Laboratory) at the University of Cambridge achieved a gold award in 2014

A GROWING MEMBERSHIP

Twenty-five institutions joined the Athena SWAN Charter in 2014, nine higher education institutions and 16 research institutes.

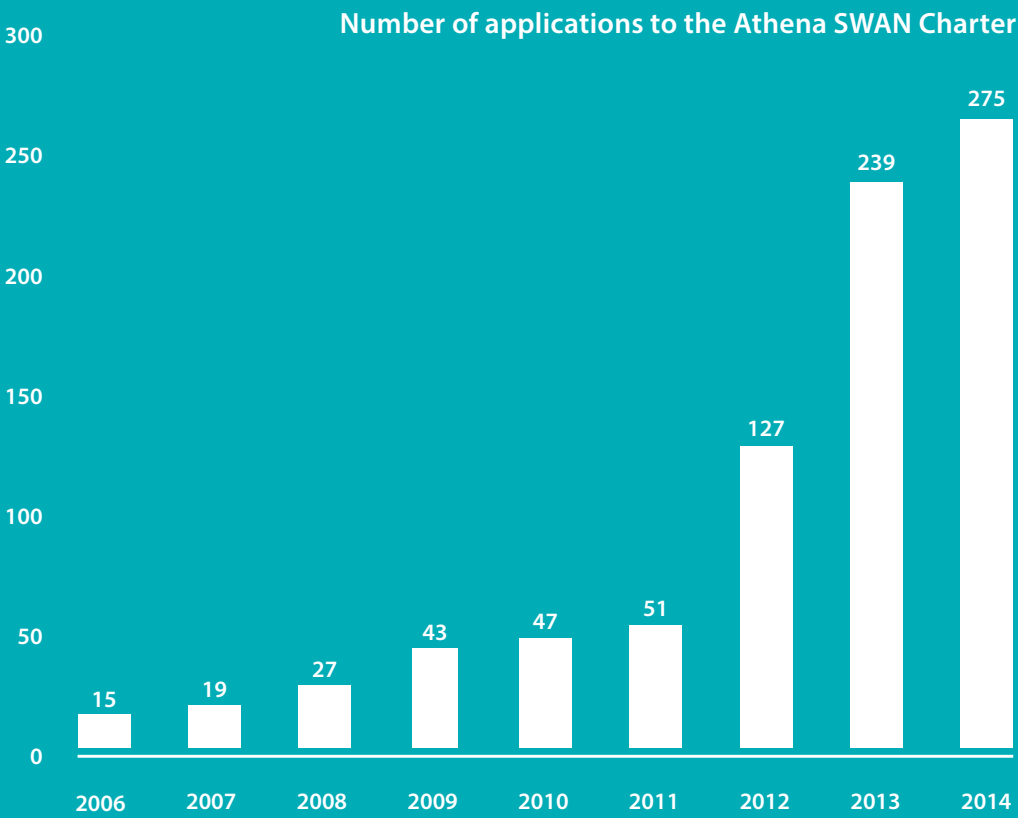


The institutes that joined the Athena SWAN Charter in 2014 are:

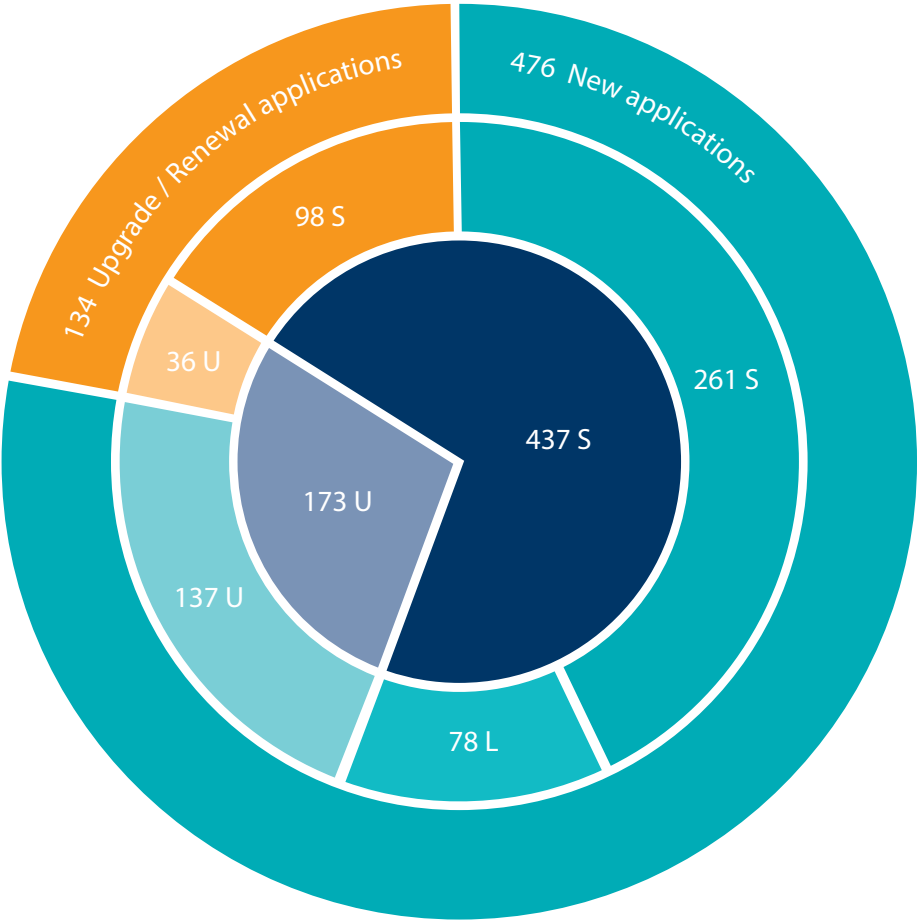
- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| = Babraham Institute | = Leeds Beckett University | = Natural History Museum |
| = British Antarctic Survey | = Middlesex University | = Pirbright Institute |
| = British Geological Survey | = Moredun Research Institute | = Rothamsted Research |
| = Centre for Ecology & Hydrology | = MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit | = Teesside University |
| = City University London | = MRC National Institute for Medical Research | = University of Bolton |
| = Cranfield University | = MRC Toxicology Unit | = University of Cumbria |
| = Institute of Food Research | = National Oceanography Centre | = University of Derby |
| = James Hutton Institute | | = University of Salford |
| = John Innes Centre | | = Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute |

Charter members hold 462 awards at institution and department levels.

Applications to ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter significantly increased in late 2012, and have continued to grow. Between November 2012 and November 2014, 437 awards were made, including 98 renewals or upgrades of previous awards. This clearly indicates the ongoing commitment of higher education institutions and research institutes to the Athena SWAN principles.

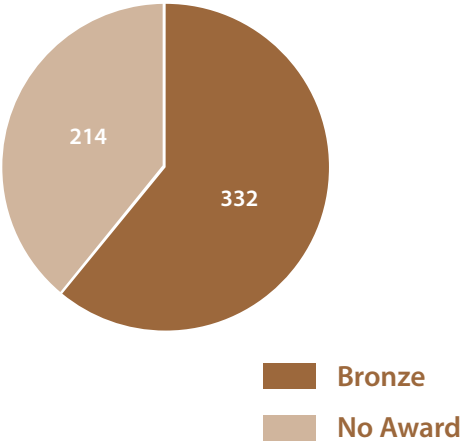


Applications to the
Athena SWAN Charter

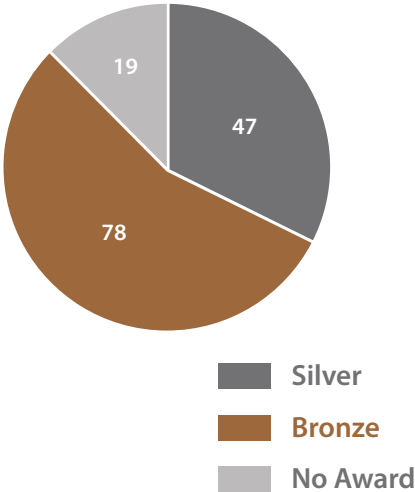


- S = Successful at level applied for
- L = Successful at lower level than applied for
- U = Unsuccessful application
- New applications
- Upgrade / Renewal applications
- Total successful applications
- Total unsuccessful applications

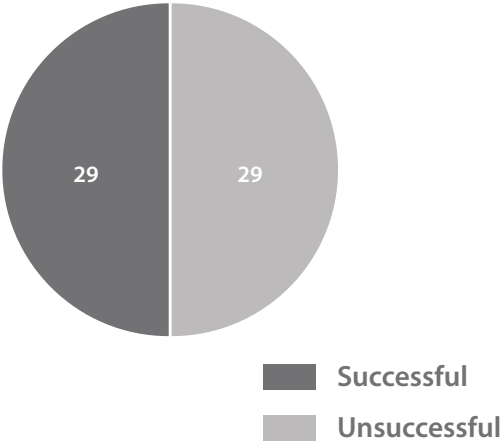
Results of new Bronze
applications since Nov 2012



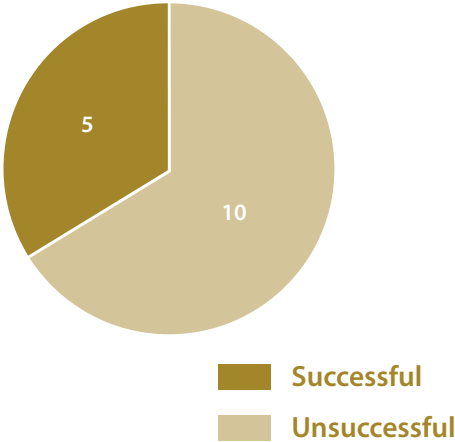
Results of new Silver
applications since Nov 2012



Results of Silver upgrade
applications since Nov 2012



Results of Gold upgrade
applications since Nov 2012



Full details of Athena SWAN members and award winners can be found at www.ecu.ac.uk/athena-swan



'It's fantastic that ECU has expanded the Charter to include technicians and other professional support staff.'

SUPPORTING EXPANSION: IRELAND

In 2014, ECU reached an agreement with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Ireland to pilot an expansion of the Athena SWAN Charter to the Republic of Ireland.

Ruth Gilligan joined the Athena SWAN team in June 2014 to support the development of the Charter expansion, which involves all Irish universities and Institutes of Technology (IoTs), as well as the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI).

The expansion was officially launched on 5 February 2015 by Ireland's Minister for Education Jan O'Sullivan, at the Department of Education and Skills in Dublin. This event marked the beginning of a three year pilot, and also provided an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the commitment made by Irish institutions to address gender inequalities and imbalance.

Starting in 2014, workshops have been held throughout Ireland, through which ECU staff have introduced the Athena SWAN Charter process to representatives from all the institutions taking part. To support the development and tailoring of the process to the higher education sector in Ireland, a committee has been established to advise ECU. The committee includes representatives of universities, IoTs and the RCSI, as well as the HEA, Irish Universities Association, Science Foundation Ireland and the Irish Research Council. Additionally, the committee is open to representatives from Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University. Both of the Northern Irish institutions already take part in Athena SWAN, and ECU are grateful for their support in the development of the expansion.



'Athena
SWAN is all
about people
achieving
their potential.'

SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Specific members of the Athena SWAN team have responsibility to support institutions in Scotland and research institutes with their applications and to be a key point of contact, including carrying out visits to participating institutions and running workshops.

WORKSHOP AT ABERTAY UNIVERSITY

One such example was the Athena SWAN workshop in June 2014, primarily to support the ambitions of departments aiming for silver awards. The workshop provided practical examples and featured Dr Christine Switzer speaking about her department's experience of successfully applying for a Silver award (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Strathclyde).

Over 30 delegates from 15 institutions attended the session, which looked at how applicants can provide evidence that stands up to the scrutiny of Athena SWAN Charter assessment panels, and was an opportunity to exchange ideas with other charter members. Attendees spoke openly about their own experiences with applying for awards, and it provided an opportunity to talk about the issues that academics, HR staff and equality and diversity practitioners face in bringing about change in their institutions.

Professor Nigel Seaton, the Principal of Abertay University, opened the session and was very enthusiastic about their developing engagement with Athena SWAN. The university was subsequently awarded a Bronze award in the November 2014 round.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS

Following a decision by the Department of Health in 2011 to link some future National Institute for Health Research funding to achievement of an Athena SWAN silver award, we saw an increase in applications from medical and dental schools.

Specific support for those pursuing awards in these disciplines has been put in place, as ECU recognised that structural and operational issues may differ in medical and dental schools, the departments that form these schools, and related subject areas.

To help us understand the implications of these differences for undertaking the Athena SWAN Charter process, a medical and dental advisory group was set up in September 2012. Chaired by Dr Jan Bogg from the University of Liverpool, the group includes representatives from universities, clinical and non-clinical academics (in both medicine and dentistry), representatives from the Medical Schools Council and the British Medical Association, human resources professionals and two lay members.

We hold workshops specifically for medical and dental schools and the group's input has been valuable to inform the guidance we give to other Charter applicants. Dr Bogg has taken on the role of Athena SWAN Advisor to UK medical and dental schools at the Medical Schools Council. Her work includes communicating about the charter through newsletters and an Athena SWAN area on the Medical Schools Council website.

RESEARCH INSTITUTES

Independent, publicly funded research institutes were welcomed to join the Athena SWAN Charter in April 2014, after a successful pilot awards scheme in 2013. Membership has since grown to 21, of which seven have joined in 2014:

- = Diamond Light Source
- = Defence Science and Technology Laboratory
- = Institute of Food Research
- = MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit
- = MRC Institute of Hearing Research
- = Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
- = United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

Research institutes recruit from, and are a key supplier of talent to, the higher education sector, and they have similar work patterns and cultures. As part of the academic research system, research institutes have similar structures and women particularly face similar barriers to career progression. However, the pilot process identified some key areas of difference, and an advisory group has been set up to provide guidance to ECU on specific areas, including the development of guidance for panellists on areas where research institutes may differ from higher education institutions. The research institutes' advisory group comprises representatives from funding councils and a number of research institutes at different points in their Athena SWAN journeys.

LOOKING AHEAD

EXTENDING THE ATHENA SWAN CHARTER

ECU has managed the Athena SWAN Charter since 2005, and the scheme has made a measurable positive difference for gender equality in participating institutions and departments. We built on our knowledge from the Athena SWAN Charter in developing a gender equality charter mark to be a catalyst for addressing gender inequalities and imbalance in the arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) departments.

The gender equality charter mark trial considered a broader scope than the Athena SWAN Charter, covering wider issues of gender inequality and explicitly considering the progression of professional, technical and support staff. In response to consultation with participants and the wider sector, in November 2014 ECU announced that we would expand the scope and aims of the Athena SWAN Charter in line with the gender equality charter mark trial, opening up Athena SWAN to all academic areas, as well as professional and support staff.

ECU is now entering a period of managed transition, allowing existing Athena SWAN members and their STEMM departments to submit for an award under the original criteria until November 2016, while permitting new members and AHSSBL applicants to submit for an award from November 2015. Current members have the option to move to the updated forms immediately if they wish.

The developments and consultations have also provided opportunity and impetus to further develop and increase the robustness of ECU's processes, and ensure that the new race equality charter develops in a complementary, parallel fashion. You can find more details on the Athena SWAN Charter assessment process in the new handbook and guide to processes, which are published on our website. The website will be updated as we respond to the needs of the sector.

WORKING WITH THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

The following statement is from the Australian Academy of Science, and refers to a workshop that David Ruebain (ECU Chief Executive) and Sarah Dickinson (ECU Interim Head of Equality Charters) attended.

'In November 2014, the Australian Academy of Science held a national forum with STEM leaders to address the chronic underrepresentation of women in science fields. The broad consensus was that the Athena SWAN Charter provides an excellent vehicle by which Australia could quickly make major strides to address gender equity issues within the science sector. Beginning in August 2015, the Academy will lead the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Pilot that will adapt the Athena SWAN process to the local landscape. Given what's at stake, and the potential for major gains in what has been called a "wicked" problem, we have every reason to proceed with Athena SWAN without delay. We are extremely excited by the prospects of an Athena SWAN initiative making major changes for the betterment of all Australians working in science and research. Using the SAGE Pilot, the Academy will be wholeheartedly pushing for the broad scale adoption of Athena SWAN over the coming years.'

SUPPORTING ATHENA SWAN

THE ROYAL SOCIETY

The Royal Society has supported the Athena SWAN Charter since its inception and is proud to continue doing so, because it has a track record of making a real difference on the ground, bringing about cultural change that helps to ensure the best people want to come into science and remain. The Royal Society wants to see the UK's scientific research community maximise its potential, both in generating new knowledge and in applying it to real world problems. To do that science needs to draw from the widest range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences, maximising innovation and creativity in science for the benefit of humanity. The Society is concerned with excellent science wherever and by whomever it is done and is committed to increasing diversity in STEM by seeking out participation from underrepresented groups, in order to build and develop a world in which studying and working in science are open to all. The Society is delighted to continue to support the Athena SWAN Charter as part of its commitment to increasing diversity in STEM.

SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL (SFC)

The review on the impact of Athena Swan clearly demonstrates why the SFC continues to support the Charter. Amongst its findings, the review noted that women staff feel Athena SWAN has increased their self-confidence, enhanced their leadership skills and impacted positively on their career development. Furthermore, we believe the Charter helps members to enhance their management practices, working conditions and career development opportunities for all researchers. The SFC will continue to work with Scottish higher education institutions to improve how the sector recruits, retains and develops all research staff, including their efforts to tackle gender inequality. We believe the Athena Swan Charter is a key part of this work.

BIOCHEMICAL SOCIETY

The Biochemical Society has been a strong supporter of Athena SWAN for several years. Of our 5000+ members, some 38 per cent are women, most of whom work in the university sector. However, the Society is well aware that the proportion of women molecular bioscientists in senior academic

positions in our universities is very much lower than this figure. It is of vital importance to the health of UK science that our very many talented women biochemists, as well as those from minority backgrounds, get the opportunity to fulfil their potential in this country. The Athena SWAN Charter plays a vital role in encouraging UK universities to examine their recruitment, promotion and retention strategies to ensure that students and staff alike feel that there are no barriers to their scientific advancement based on gender or ethnic origin. The Biochemical Society is proud to have committed financial support in order to help Athena SWAN achieve this end.



HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY (HEA)

The HEA is delighted to be supporting the extension of the Athena SWAN Charter to Ireland. The positive impact of the scheme on the career development and satisfaction of women working in STEMM disciplines and on gender equality has been proven, and its extension to Ireland provides a strong mechanism for building on our achievements to date in this area. Promoting the attainment of equality of opportunity in higher education is a key function of the HEA, and we have an enduring commitment to gender equality across all disciplines. Ensuring the fair representation and career progression of female academics is vitally important to maintaining and enhancing Ireland's international reputation for the quality and impact of our scientific community. It is our hope and expectation that the Athena SWAN Charter will become an established feature of the Irish higher education landscape.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Athena SWAN makes an important contribution to advancing equality in higher education and research. Since its inception, Athena SWAN has aimed to make real improvements to career development and satisfaction of women working in STEMM, driving improved gender diversity and changing cultures and attitudes. The Department of Health is supportive of the principles of the Charter, and the belief that research cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of the whole population.



Aspects of Athena SWAN are also supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.



EQUALITY CHALLENGE UNIT

ECU works to further and support equality and diversity for staff and students in higher education across all four nations of the UK, and in colleges in Scotland.

ECU works closely with colleges and universities to seek to ensure that staff and students are not unfairly excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged because of age, disability, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or through any combination of these characteristics or other unfair treatment.

Providing a central source of expertise, research, advice and leadership, we support institutions in building a culture that provides equality of both opportunity and outcome, promotes good relations, values the benefits of diversity and provides a model of equality for the wider UK society.

www.ecu.ac.uk

@EqualityinHE



Equality Challenge Unit