Athena SWAN 2018
Overview

The Equality Challenge Unit’s Athena SWAN Charter was established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths & medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education & research. In May 2018, the School of Life Sciences (SLS) submitted their Silver Athena SWAN Application.

The Athena SWAN charter was expanded in May 2015 to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) and to include all staff in professional and support roles. The charter now aims to address equality more broadly and not just the barriers to progression affecting women. For more information please see: https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/

In the School of Life Sciences, we aim to make discoveries that help to improve lives and educate new generations of scientists. Being diverse is critical for our community to perform to the highest level and we have to recruit and support a diverse population of staff and students to maintain our excellence. The Athena SWAN accreditation system provides a formal mechanism for measuring diversity in our community. It requires applicants to identify reasons for any imbalanced representation of gender and other characteristics in our staff and students and to establish means to address these imbalances.

This booklet highlights some of the impacts of our Bronze Athena SWAN award in School Culture, Recruitment & Promotions, Career Development, and Students & Teaching. We also include a few responses from staff in our School in the 2015 and 2017 University’s Staff Surveys and list some of the new actions proposed in our recently submitted Silver application. We hope you find this useful and that it conveys our commitment to a culture where everyone feels valued and able to develop to their full potential.

Inke Näthke, Associate Dean for Professional Culture
School Culture

Achieved

Athena SWAN and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) is a standard agenda item for all key meetings in the School

Recognition that activities supporting diversity, career development, research integrity need to be to professionalised

Appointment of Associate Dean for Professional Culture

An open forum sought views from the SLS community following offensive remarks relating to gender made by well-known scientist in whose name SLS awarded an annual prize

Name of the award was changed

Increased satisfaction with support for work-life balance reported in University of Dundee staff survey

Moving Forward

Establish a School of Life Sciences “Professional Culture” award

Include contributions of all staff to ED&I in OSaRs

Present actions proposed by outcomes from culture review to Senior Executive groups
In these and all subsequent examples shown, responses from female and male SLS staff in the 2015 and 2017 UoD staff survey are shown in the top row with all responses from SLS indicated in brackets above them. For 2017, results are also broken down by staff category and gender, shown on the bottom right.
The University provides good support to help me balance my work and personal commitments.

Funding success rate was similar for both genders (37% for females and 34% for males) reflecting effectiveness of support for all Academic & Research staff.

Moving Forward

Monitor impact of external consultant delivering grant writing workshops and establish a repository of templates and examples for successful grant applications.

Achieved

Clearly defined workload that is reviewed and adjusted regularly.

- Academic & Research (SLS overall 68%)
  - 2015 UoD Staff Survey: 64%
  - 2017 UoD Staff Survey: 79%
- Professional Services (SLS overall 77%)
  - 2015 UoD Staff Survey: 64%
  - 2017 UoD Staff Survey: 79%
Recruitment & Promotions

**Achieved**

Raised awareness changed recruitment practice

- Appointment of 4 females out of 10 senior academics over last 3 years

Female Teaching & Research staff numbers have increased due to targeted recruitment, increased support and more transparent promotions procedures

Increased transparency of promotions processes for academic and research staff across University of Dundee

- More applications for and success of promotions, particularly from females

Secondments and ‘acting up’ led to many Professional Services staff ‘promotions’

**Moving Forward**

Monitor recruitment processes to ensure they are fair and there is no gender bias at any stage of recruitment process for any grade

Increase proportion of female Academic & Research staff (particularly ≥G8 and Teaching & Scholarship)

Improve recording of gender composition of recruitment panels and introduce SLS process to ensure E&D training completion of recruitment panel members

Encourage higher attendance at promotions workshops and monitor impact of attendance

Hold School Career development seminars for all staff seeking promotion

Encourage and support staff to apply for promotion, Contribution Related Points, or Accelerated Advancement as appropriate and provide extra support for those who are unsuccessful

Advertise the opportunity to complete secondments, “acting up” and part-time PhDs to Professional Services staff

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More applications for and success of promotions, particularly from females

Secondments and ‘acting up’ led to many Professional Services staff ‘promotions’
Monitor success of inviting selected Postdoctoral Research Assistants for pre-applications seminars and record whether they subsequently gain employment.

Monitor the total time Postdoctoral Research Assistants are employed to identify potential reasons for gender differences in staff on fixed term and open ended contracts.

Monitor reasons for leaving for all staff and utilise exit questionnaire data to identify good and unhelpful practices.

Improve attendance of staff at University of Dundee Welcome Event and improve induction material to further facilitate settling in.

Create network of University of Dundee Research Integrity Leads. Research Integrity training to be mandatory for Academic & Research staff and linked to promotions and Objective Setting & Reviews (OSaRs).

**Achieved**

SLS staff feel the University acts fairly with regards to career progression and promotion. More staff were satisfied with their roles in 2017 than in 2015, suggesting that promotions procedures have improved.

Appointment of first Daphne Jackson fellow

Fellow established required research credentials to successfully obtain a long-term research position.

Establishment of return to work fellowship.

Appointment of pre-PhD candidate who had taken a career break to facilitate gaining experience and establish a track record to become competitive for PhD programmes nationally.

**Moving Forward**

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"I am satisfied with my current level of training and development."
Achieved

Data on gender of seminar speakers and hosts is collected routinely and showed that females were about twice as likely as males to invite female speakers

Identify means to share ideas for speakers

Gender balance of speakers in prestigious “Named Lectures” has increased from 17% female (until 2013) to 46% female (2014 – 2017)

Number of female Honorary Doctorates increased significantly

‘HerStory’ exhibition showcased pioneering women from around Dundee together with all the female professors in the UoD

Times of regular seminars changed. Named lectures are now held at lunchtime, followed by a social networking event with increased attendance

Increased involvement of males in Public Engagement activities

Appointment of 7 senior academics as Public Engagement champions

Moving Forward

Identify and put in place additional support for staff taking on leadership roles to minimise any impact on Teaching and Research

Improve the gender balance of seminar speakers

Coordinate and host an art project that examines how women in science are perceived

Evaluate and consider changing the timing and format of the research symposium

Continue to strive for gender parity in Public Engagement activities
Career Development

School of Life Sciences in-house support for early career Academic & Research staff

- Child care funding
- PICLS SLSRSA
- OSaR
- Assistance with grant applications
- Workshops for career development
- Mentoring

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Achieved

Significant increase in completion of online Equality & Diversity training modules

- Increased awareness of E&D policies

Introduction of new Objective Setting & Review (OSaR) for Postdoctoral Research Assistants

- Concerted efforts to use this valuable tool for career development

- Increased completion by Postdoctoral Research Assistants

Bespoke mentoring programme for Early Career Researchers (Tenure Track staff)

Unconscious bias training and annual lectures implemented. Attendees report increased consciousness of their own potential biases and an understanding of how to deal with them

Moving Forward

Monitor uptake of and collate feedback from Academic & Research and Professional Services staff in mentoring programmes

Develop a careers event targeted to postgraduate and undergraduate students and Postdoctoral Research Assistants
Attending the lecture on unconscious bias was amazing. It helped me recognise my own biases I was not aware of. Most importantly, it opened my eyes to how important it is to just think that extra bit longer when making decisions about people to ask myself how a bias I may not have been aware of is influencing it.

Was your OSaR meeting useful for you?
**Achieved**

- Increased awareness of University of Dundee work-life policies
- Successful lobbying for change in UoD maternity leave policy for Postdoctoral Research Assistants with fixed funding that ends during maternity leave
- Postdoctoral Research Assistants’ contracts are extended to cover maternity leave and prevent having to back-pay maternity pay
- Improved extended parental leave with increased benefits for paternity leave resulting from awareness in SLS, which in turn led to lobbying the University of Dundee
- Support available from Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF) for extra support during maternity leave and for expenses related to dependent care (uptake to date = £51,998)
- Return rate from maternity leave is close to 100% for all staff. 100% of Professional Services and 89% of Academic & Research staff are still working 18 months after returning
- Increased completion of Objective Setting & Review meetings and associated increase in reported Objective Setting

**Moving Forward**

- Investigate differences in OSaR completion in different staff groups and by gender
- Use follow-up OSaR meetings with staff mid-cycle to ensure goals are being worked towards
- Improve ease for disseminating relevant information for maternity, adoption, paternity, and parental leave
- Improve recording of informal flexible working arrangements, including transitions from full-time to part-time work
- Monitor practices of staff returning to work after maternity leave to identify what is most useful to staff and to further increase Academic & Research staff retention if issues are identified
What was good about SLS?

- Ability to be involved in all aspects of academic life, from teaching to management.
- Very supportive colleagues, willing to act as mentors and sharing good and bad experiences.

Quote from Senior Academic female who moved to a leadership position elsewhere.
(by email, name withheld)

Have you felt discriminated against at work in the last 12 months?

2015 UoD Staff Survey
(SLS overall 8%)

- 11% women
- 5% men

2017 UoD Staff Survey
(SLS overall 6%)

- 7% women
- 4% men

Academic & Research
(SLS overall 6%)

- 10% women
- 1% men

Professional Services
(SLS overall 6%)

- 5% women
- 11% men
Students & Teaching

Achieved

Completion of online Equality & Diversity modules is mandatory for all School of Life Sciences students.

Student satisfaction improved from 82% in 2013 to 95% in 2018 (National Student Survey).

Robust monitoring of attendance and increased tutorial support for undergraduate students facilitated early interventions where appropriate causing decreased student withdrawal.

‘Graduate Prospect’ (fraction of students entering employment or graduate-level study 6 months after graduation) from Biological Science degrees increased from 54% in 2013 to 77% in 2018 (National Student Survey).

Reduction in reported numbers of PhD students seeking assistance from University of Dundee Student Support Services.

Moving Forward

Monitor gender balance of student applications and matriculations at all levels.

Monitor gender balance of undergraduate degree outcomes.

Monitor length of time taken by PhD students to complete their degree and analyse by gender.

Teaching staff are very passionate about their subjects and they motivate you to do your best for every assignment given.

Quotes from Undergraduate students taken from the University of Dundee National Student Survey (NSS) 2016.

(names withheld)
Join In

Our Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team is here to listen and welcomes input from all School of Life Sciences staff and students.

Thank you so much for being so wonderfully friendly and refreshingly honest. I have learnt much from you, and I appreciate being given the opportunity to work with you and others with Athena SWAN.

Quotes from a Postdoctoral Research Assistant Athena SWAN representative leaving SLS to start a new job
(by letter – name withheld)

This has been a wonderful experience for me and taught me many project management and team work skills.

Find out more

Email SLS-AthenaSWAN@dundee.ac.uk

www.dundee.ac.uk/equality-diversity/athenaswan/

@UoD_AthenaSWAN