Further information

About ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter

Website: [www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan)

ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter: guide to processes

Outlines the processes supporting ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter awards including the peer-review process, submission and appeals procedures: [www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources)

Online information

About ECU’s Equality Charters: [www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters)

Check our frequently asked questions to see if your query has been answered: [www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-faqs](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-faqs)

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Applying as a research institute

This handbook supports self-assessment teams in research institutes to understand the requirements of submitting an application form to ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter.

The application form cannot be completed without reference to the information included in this handbook.

Applications that are incomplete, or that do not comply with the criteria set out in this handbook, may not be accepted.

Expanding the criteria: post-May 2015 changes

In April 2014, Athena SWAN membership was extended to include research institutes. Prior to this, institutions could only achieve Athena SWAN membership and awards if they held higher education institution (HEI) status, or were constituent units/institutes in an HEI. Only independent research institutes focusing on science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) research were eligible to apply.

In May 2015, ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter was expanded to include institutions, departments and research institutes that focus on the arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) disciplines.

This expanded remit includes staff in professional support roles, trans staff and students, and recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just the barriers to progression that affect women.

The research institutes application form has therefore been revised in line with the expanded criteria.

All institutes wishing to remain members of ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter must sign up to the expanded principles by April 2017. A template for the letter is available on the website: www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/join-athena-swan.
Which criteria should we use?

The original pre-May 2015 Charter criteria and the expanded post-May 2015 Charter criteria will run alongside each other until the April 2018 awards round.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research institutes joining from July 2016 onwards</th>
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<tr>
<td>= Use this handbook and the related application form.</td>
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<td><strong>Applying for an award</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>= You will need to send a letter of commitment to the expanded Athena SWAN Charter principles, before you can submit an application using the expanded criteria.</td>
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**Renewals**

| = If your award is due for renewal in or before November 2017, you can choose to: |
| = renew using the pre-May 2015 criteria. |
| = apply for a new award under the expanded criteria outlined in this guidance. |
Eligibility

Pre-requisites for applying using the research institute application process.

- The applicant research institute must be independent of a higher education institution (HEI). Institutes which are constituent units of or institutes in an HEI, or hold HEI status, should apply using the HEI department/institution application form.
- The applicant institute must be a member of ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter and signed up to the Charter principles.
- The applicant institute must not have outstanding membership fees.

ECU’s Equality Charters Team can provide advice regarding whether your research institute is eligible to apply.

Composition

Not all organisations use the term ‘institute’ and there are many equivalent researcher groupings with different names, sizes and compositions.

There are precedents for successful submissions from a wide range of institutes of all sizes. While AHSSBL institutes may face different challenges, the self-assessment process will be very similar to these STEMM institutes.

Students

An institute which does not provide teaching or supervision can still apply for an award.

You will need to note this in 4 A picture of the research institute in the application form.

If your institute has its own students (undergraduate and/or postgraduate), student and benchmarking data should be provided where required in the application form.
Staff employed by different bodies

Research institutes may include staff who are employed or funded by external bodies such as the government, a research council (RC) or charity.

These staff may be on different contracts with different terms and conditions than directly employed staff.

Where this is the case, differences in contracts and their impact on gender equality should be reflected on in relevant questions. Data for staff employed by different bodies should be presented separately, where possible.
Award validity

Awards conferred under the expanded criteria are valid for four years from the application submission deadline.

The period of time for which an award is valid will be stated in the results letter sent to all successful applicants. Contact ECU’s Equality Charters Team if you are unsure when your award will be due for renewal.

Awards may be withdrawn if information is established that the award holder no longer satisfies the requirements of the award. See 4. Withdrawal of award in ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter: guide to processes.

Renewals

When applying for a renewal (or an award at a higher level) the applicant’s existing award will be valid throughout the review process, and until the award results of that round are announced.

Grace period

If an award holder is unsuccessful in renewing their award, they are offered a grace period. This grace period extends from the date the results letter is received until the assessment round that falls one year after the results communication. Applicants can submit a revised application at any time during this period and their award remains valid throughout the grace period and assessment of the revised application.

Changes to structure

If the structure of the award-holding institute changes significantly during the period of award validity, please contact ECU’s Equality Charters Team as a new, updated submission may be required.

Examples of structure change include:

- Merging or splitting of institute
- Staffing restructure
Award levels

Research institutes can apply for Athena SWAN awards at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

Application outcomes

There are four potential outcomes for applications at any level:

- **An award at the level applied for**
  The application meets the criteria set out for this award level.

- **No award**
  The application does not meet the criteria set out for this award level, or that of the level below in the case of Silver or Gold applications.

- **An award at the level below that applied for**
  The application does not meet the criteria set out for this award level, but does fully meet the criteria of the level below in the case of Silver or Gold applications. For Bronze applications this would result in no award.

- **An award at the level above that applied for**
  If the assessment panel believes that the application may meet the criteria of the award level above, they may request additional information.

Feedback

The awards panel provides constructive feedback on all submissions to provide encouragement and support.

The feedback highlights effective practice the panel would like to commend as well as suggestions for the self-assessment team to consider. These ‘for future consideration’ comments may be outside the scope of the award criteria and are intended to be constructive suggestions for future applications and planned actions.

Any feedback relating to the criteria not being met, and the reasons for a decision being made, will be highlighted separately.
Bronze research institute award

Prerequisites

= The applicant institute must be a member of ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter and signed up to the Charter principles.
= The applicant institute must not have outstanding membership fees.

What needs to be demonstrated

Bronze awards recognise that the institute has a solid foundation for eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff.

This includes:

= An assessment of gender equality in the institute, including quantitative (staff and student data) and qualitative (staff feedback on policies, practices, systems and arrangements) evidence, and identification of 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.

Potential outcomes

= Bronze award
= No award
= Silver award (with additional evidence)
**Silver research institute award**

**Prerequisites**

- The applicant institute must be a member of ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter and signed up to the Charter principles.
- The applicant institute must not have outstanding membership fees.

Research institutes applying for Silver are **not required** to already hold a Bronze award.

However, holding a Bronze award may make it easier to evidence progress and the impact of initiatives on gender equality.

**What needs to be demonstrated**

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

Institutes need to demonstrate how Athena SWAN is well embedded within the institution with strong leadership in promoting the charter principles and should evidence the impact of Athena SWAN activities.

**Potential outcomes**

- Silver award
- No award
- Bronze award
- Gold award (with additional evidence)
Gold research institute award

Prerequisites

- The applicant institute must be a member of ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter and signed up to the Charter principles.
- The applicant institute must not have outstanding membership fees.
- The applicant institute must hold a Silver award.

What needs to be demonstrated

Gold institutes should be beacons of achievement in gender equality and should champion and promote good practice in the wider community. A Gold award recognises a significant and sustained record of activity and achievement by the institute in addressing challenges across the full range of the institute and promoting gender equality within and beyond the institute.

Applications should demonstrate how Athena SWAN is completely embedded within the institute with strong leadership in promoting and championing the charter principles. This includes consideration of gender equality for professional and support staff and trans people. This should be complemented by data demonstrating the impact of Athena SWAN activities.

The institute should also demonstrate that they have taken an intersectional approach to analysing data and devising possible solutions to identified challenges.

Potential outcomes

- Gold award
- No award
- Silver award
- Bronze award
New areas covered by ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter

Including professional staff and technical support staff

ECU now requires applications to include data and analysis for professional and technical support staff. Data should correspond to the application form section headings and should cover the three years preceding the submission, or five years for Gold awards. If data are unavailable, an explanation should be given, and in most cases a relevant action planned to address this.

Requirements

Data and narrative on professional and technical support staff data should be included throughout the application and for each question relating to staff. Present professional staff, technical support staff and research staff data separately.

Identify trends and issues in the professional and technical support staff data. Provide details of any initiatives that have been put in place and, for silver and gold applications, the impact of these initiatives.

Demonstrate the ways the institute includes and supports professional and technical support staff. For example, are they invited to staff meetings, what career development opportunities are available and are there flexible working policies in place.

Staff consultation should be used to provide evidence of professional and technical support staff perceptions and the impact of the initiatives or policies.

Additionally, please outline future priorities for professional and technical support staff.
Intersectionality

Research institutes are required to reflect on the intersection of gender and race. Reflection on the intersection of gender with other protected characteristics can also be included.

Intersectionality means recognising that people’s identities and social positions are shaped by several factors, which create unique experiences and perspectives. These factors include, among others: sexuality, gender, race, disability, age, and religion.

For example, someone isn’t a woman and black, or a woman and white, but a black woman or white woman. These different elements of identity form and inform each other. In this example, the person’s identity as a woman cannot be separated from their identity as a black or white individual, and vice versa. The experience of black women, and the barriers they face, will be different to those a white woman faces.

Requirements

Intersectionality needs to be considered in increased detail the higher the level of award.

At bronze, silver and gold level, research institutes are expected to consider the intersection of gender with ethnicity when gathering and reporting on pipeline data for research, technical support and professional staff (Question 4.2.i). If it is not possible for the institute to do this within the application at bronze level, the panel will expect to see that appropriate actions have been put in place to collect the data in the future.

At silver and gold level, the expectation is that an institute obtain and reflect on ethnicity data (though not necessarily present this data), where possible and where issues are identified. The application should also provide an explanation of any actions implemented and consideration of how actions will impact on all target groups across ethnicity and gender.
Examples of intersectional activity:

- A self-assessment team looking at their research staff data by grade, gender and ethnicity, identify that the institute has fewer black and minority ethnic (BME) female researchers than the sector benchmark. To understand this further, they could look at recruitment data and statistical significance. When recruitment data are compared to benchmarking data, they see that the proportion of BME female applicants is below the sector-wide proportion of BME female researchers in their discipline. The team consult the institute’s BME staff network (and national networks), and target actions at encouraging BME female applicants to apply, with the aim of bringing the proportion of applicants above the sector benchmark.

- Including staff with different protected characteristics in the self-assessment team.

- Asking for equality monitoring data (protected characteristics) when conducting surveys, so that data can be analysed according to different characteristics alongside factors such as contract types or working patterns.

- Reviewing action plans to ensure that actions will benefit staff of all ethnicities, when not specifically targeted at BME staff.

- Picking an aspirational benchmark, rather than aiming to be consistent with a poor national benchmark.
Trans staff and students

‘Trans’ is an inclusive umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the gender they were assigned (male or female) at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, transgender people, genderfluid or genderqueer people, intersex people and anyone who does not see themselves as clearly fitting into a binary male or female identity. Trans people may or may not alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.

‘Cisgender’ is a term used to refer to someone who is not trans. A cisgender person’s gender identity aligns with the one they were assigned at birth.

Trans issues are covered in a dedicated section (Section 6, Supporting Trans people), to focus thought on this area of gender equality and to reflect the fact that issues faced by trans staff and students can differ to those faced by cisgender staff and students.

This is an area of policy, provision and support where many institutions may find there are gaps. For institutions who have not considered trans issues before, the questions in the application can stimulate debate, and initiate action. An institution may not be aware of having any trans staff or students, but policies and provision should still be in place.

Requirement

Where possible, this section of the application form should be used to evaluate the steps you have taken (or will be taking) to ensure the working and studying environment is inclusive of trans people. Evidence of this may be demonstrated through creating a trans specific policy, ensuring existing policies protect trans staff and students, raising awareness of trans issues, and considering trans issues in facilities and service provision.

An example of an activity which could be conducted in an institute which does not have staff who have identified themselves as trans might be reviewing a dignity at work policy (perhaps with input from an trans charity or support organisation) to make sure it protects and supports trans people.

While narrative relating to trans staff is not required in any section apart from 6 Supporting trans people, where available, you may choose to include this throughout the application.
Data on trans staff and students

ECU does not require any quantitative data on trans staff and students to be presented in the application. Any decision to include data relating to gender identity should be taken in consultation with trans staff and student groups. If, following consultation, the institute decides to include data on gender identity, they should robustly consider data protection, such as ensuring the anonymity, confidentiality and secure storage of this data. Gender identity constitutes sensitive personal data, and all data subjects need to be informed of the reasons for collecting this information, how it will be used, with whom it will be shared, and provide consent to this.

Qualitative data can be included, but should not identify individuals, unless they have explicitly stated that it may do so.

Further guidance

ECU has been receiving an increasing number of enquiries about supporting trans people and we are in the process of revising and updating our trans guidance. You can find our current guidance online.

Supporting trans people www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/inclusive-environment/providing-support/trans-people

Guidance relating to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, developing an evidence base of trans inclusiveness, and encouraging disclosure of equality information:


Encouraging disclosure www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/using-data-and-evidence/encouraging-disclosure-equality-info
Self-assessment team

Having an effective self-assessment team will be key to the success of an Athena SWAN application. The submission will require significant reflective analysis, which should be driven as far as possible by the full team.

A self-assessment team can be a committee in its own right, or it can be a working group that reports to a committee with a broader agenda. To ensure the action plan (and its owners) are able to implement changes, any governing/steering committee should track the application writing process and endorse the final application and action plan.

Composition

It is likely that the team will include at least one person from each of the institute’s high level research groupings as well as professional and technical support staff. The aim is for each of the main areas of the institute to have a representative on the team.

The team should comprise a mixture of staff from different grades and roles, able to provide perspectives from different career stages.

The proportion of men and women involved should reflect the gender profile of the institute. Where the numbers of women (or men) in an institute are very small, it may be that one gender is overrepresented due to small numbers. However, it is vital that the composition of the team does not lead to a disproportionate burden on underrepresented groups.

Team size needs to remain manageable. To ensure effectiveness, while also maintaining adequate representation, a more complex structure might be appropriate. For example, a smaller application writing team and a larger working group. Where this is the case, in the description of the self-assessment team, provide details of which staff make up the writing group and which sit on the larger working/steering group.
Chair

The chair’s role is crucial as they have a large responsibility for the success of the application. Their role in meetings will ensure:

- that the power balance within the team is maintained, that everyone is able to have their say, and that stronger voices and hierarchy do not overpower discussions and decisions.
- that all members of the team take responsibility for completing tasks and the charter mark process.
- that equality and diversity/human resources members are not overloaded with tasks or assumed to take responsibility for the ultimate submission.

There are also logistical issues for the chair to consider:

- How many meetings to have, when will they be, and for how long?
- Who will decide on the agenda for meetings, especially the first meeting?
- Will meetings be minuted? Who will have responsibility for that? How will the secretariat of the meetings be supported?
- How will the work and progress of the self-assessment team be communicated to senior management teams and committees and the rest of the institution?
- How will the chair ensure the success of the team and the charter process?

Meetings

The self-assessment team must meet at least three times a year. This is a minimum requirement and more frequent meetings may be appropriate in the run up to submission or to ensure effective implementation and review of the action plan.
Shared responsibility, workload and recognition

The success of the Athena SWAN Charter application process depends on an institute assuming a collective responsibility for gender equality.

It is unlikely to be feasible, and not recommended, that any one individual be responsible for completing the whole application. A final submission should be the result of group work and collaboration across the self-assessment team and the institute.

Completing an application requires considerable time and effort, and this should be: factored into any workload allocation model, recognised in appraisal, considered as evidence of leadership and/or contributing to the running of the institute in promotion.
The self-assessment process itself should not be exempt from reflection, and self-assessment teams might consider the following questions:

- Are professional staff regarded as ‘full members’ of the self-assessment team or administrative support?
- Could tasks such as notetaking be rotated?
- Are there male and female champions?
- Are senior staff engaging in the process and sharing the workload?
- Do meetings allow for frank debate?
- Is the team representative of the gender profile of the institute? How does this compare to gender representation on other important committees?
- How can the views of the underrepresented gender be incorporated into the application and action plan without them writing the application?
Writing your application

There is no prescribed style for an application, but it is important to remember that panellists will be judging the application as a standalone document – therefore clarity and detail are essential. Narrative in every section of the application should be written with gender equality in mind. An honest appraisal is crucial.

You may find it helpful to review successful submissions published by current award holders. These should be made available online by the award holders.

Stay focused

The following questions can be asked of each application section, to check that content is focused:

- Is the information relevant to the recruitment, retention and progression of the underrepresented gender?
- What is the take-up by gender of provision or initiatives (for example, training, appraisal)?
- What do staff and students think of policies and provision? Are there differences between feedback received from men and women?
- How will each action specifically improve gender balance or the experience of the underrepresented gender?

Be specific and show evidence

There are two aspects of style which are commonly criticised by panels:

- **Statements without evidence**

  *For example:* ‘Recruitment to postgraduate programmes has improved, since we made open days more inclusive’.

  **Suggested alternative:** ‘In response to our open day practice audit of 2012, we implemented: students providing a talk to attendees; 30% staff and PhD students present being women; marketing materials featuring female students and alumni case-stories. Applications from women rose from 18% (2011) to 23% (2013). In our student survey, 65% of newly recruited postgraduate students identified the open day as influential in their decision to apply to our institute.’
Vague language

For example: ‘A substantial number of those who applied for promotion over the past three years received mentoring. A high proportion of applicants for promotion were successful. Mentoring guidance is being revised.’

Suggested alternative: ‘75% of applications for promotion to grade nine were successful (2012 to 2015): two women – both successful; two men – one successful. Of these applicants, two had received mentoring: a successful female and the unsuccessful male applicant. Feedback from both mentees was positive, but the male candidate stated: “I didn’t realise we could explicitly discuss promotion”. Guidance for mentees will be revised and top-up training for mentors improved.’

Use relevant good practice examples

Panels are particularly keen to see examples of innovative and inventive good practice.

There is no definitive list of measures panels expect to see in place in every institute, as actions must be appropriate to context. However, it is important to show that you recognise issues fundamental to career progression, for example, the importance of universal appraisal and equitable promotions processes.

Where good practice is cited, ensure that policies are explained in sufficient detail, so that a panel can understand the extent of the good practice. Submissions should also avoid presenting legal compliance as good practice.

While it is recognised that good practice benefits both men and women, Athena SWAN awards are designed to recognise efforts to address gender underrepresentation. Accordingly, panels expect to see evidence of gender-specific measures and commentary, and evidence of how initiatives have benefited the underrepresented group in particular, even when initiatives are applicable to all staff.
Presenting your application

Word limits

Panellists may assess up to six applications and words limits help ensure this task is manageable and reasonable.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award level</th>
<th>Bronze</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Gold</th>
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<td>Total word limit</td>
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<td>16,250</td>
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The word limit includes:

= All body text, including quotes from qualitative analysis, and words in screenshots.
= Any standalone text or prose included in tables, graphs, footnotes or references.

The word limit does not include:

= Details of your self-assessment team, providing you use a maximum of 20 words for each team member (excluding their name and job title). These can be displayed in a table.
= Tables and graphs, providing they do not include standalone prose. Examples of text excluded from the word count include: titles, data labels, data points, and event or course titles. Quotes, descriptions or analysis would be included in the word count.
= References. For example, references to data sources such as ECU’s statistical reports.
= The action plan.
= Action points quoted within the body of the application and references to action points.

Example:

A focus group of returners requested informal peer support prior to (and not just following) leave:

   Action 5.4.2: All staff planning adoption, maternity or paternity leave will be invited to the carers’ network.

[16 words included in the word count]
Section guidelines

There are no specific word limits for individual sections of the application forms. However, recommendations are provided as a guide for how words may be allocated in different sections.

You may allocate the total word allowance across the different sections, according to the amount of narrative needed to analyse and explain data and provision in your institute.

You must provide a word count at the end of each section.

Requests to extend word limits

You may request to extend your word limit in the following circumstances:

- Exceptional circumstances

  Examples of circumstances which might qualify include a recent restructure, an institute having a particularly unique or unusual structure, or an institute being subject to particular constraints.

  Additional words should always be used to explain how the circumstances have been taken into account when considering, or have impacted on, Athena SWAN activities and the progression of gender equality.

- Clinical and non-clinical staff

  Research institutes with both non-clinical and clinical staff are automatically eligible for an additional word allowance of 1000 words. These institutes must present data for clinical and non-clinical staff separately, and the additional word allowance is granted to allow them to analyse and reflect on any differences between the two staff groups.

In either circumstance applicants who wish to extend their word limit on these grounds should contact ECU’s Equality Charters Team for approval at least two months in advance of the submission deadline.

All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Where additional words are granted, the increased allowance will be at the discretion of ECU, usually to a maximum of 1000 words.

If approved, extra words can be used across the submission document, but it should be noted in the word counts at the end of each section, where they have been used.
Additional information

The panel will only consider the information provided in the application form, and will not take into account any additional information.

- Appendices are not permitted.
- Do not use links to online information. All relevant information should be included in the application form.
Presenting data

Data analysis is the foundation of the application: it indicates where issues may lie and prompts further investigation. The data are included so that the panel can see that analysis and action are rooted in evidence. Analysis and action should focus on gender inequalities and their causes.

Data should be used:

- to demonstrate positive or negative effects of existing practice and policies on particular groups of staff.
- as an evidence base for formulating proactive actions. Actions should address problems identified through data analysis.
- as a measure of the impact of actions undertaken to promote gender equality.

For all data presented throughout the application, the following are required:

- Three years of data (five for gold), with data for each year presented separately.
- Comments on, and explanations of, any differences between data for men and women.
- Analysis of trends and identification of issues.
- Description/reference to actions undertaken and planned (impact of actions undertaken is required at Silver and Gold).

If data cannot be provided, include an explanation and action to collect the data in future

General requirements

- Carefully consider which data is relevant to the application, rather than including all data collected. The self-assessment process is likely to prompt you to investigate data sets outside the basic requirements of the application process. Such data may be included where relevant.
- Where data are not available, this gap should be explained, and in most cases linked to a relevant action. Applications will not be penalised for only presenting data for the minimum number of years.
- Data must be compared to national/appropriate benchmarking data.
- Graphs and tables should be clearly cross-referenced in the narrative and trends evaluated.
If applying for Silver, it is important to demonstrate any evidence of impact to date, through:

- quantitative data (numeric), for example, an increase in the number of promotion applications from women

- qualitative data (opinions and descriptions of personal experiences), for example, feedback from focus groups becoming more positive

Where data is used to inform a particular action point, embed the rationale and action point in the narrative, and cross-referenced to the action plan. In the action plan, state how hypotheses will be tested through future activities. The panel will look at how effectively data, evaluation and action plans have been linked, to identify how well-targeted actions are.

Presentation

- Data should be presented in whichever way you feel is most effective as long as trends are clearly illustrated. Use a mix of tables and graphs.

- Percentages and raw numbers must both be presented.

- Data presentation should correspond to the section headings. Check each section of the relevant application form for the exact data requirements.

- Graphs and tables should be clearly labelled, so panellists can see what data are being presented.

- Consider the size and colours of graphs and any text in tables – it should be easy to read and understand. Remember that your applications need to be accessible to a range of audiences.

- Consider how clearly the data in the graphs is represented when viewed in black and white.
Student Data

If the institute does not have postgraduate research students, or visiting students, please enter ‘not applicable’ (n/a) under the relevant question.

Where there are students, the following are required:

- Data for different disciplines presented separately (see below)
- Benchmarking data

Including student data throughout the application

Student narrative is only required in Section 4.1 and under question 5.2 (iv) Support given to students for research career progression. You can include student data/narrative under other questions if relevant (applying for research funding, or maternity leave provision, for example) but it is not required, and student and staff data should always be presented separately.

Discipline-level data

Where students study different disciplines in an institute, data for the different discipline streams should be presented separately, and you should investigate issues in the context of the discipline. For example, separating computing student data and engineering student data.

Discipline/programme- (where a programme of study relates to a discipline, such as, Engineering MSc) level data does not need to be presented where numbers are too small to be significant (see Terminology) or where disciplines/programmes are very similar and relate to the same benchmark. Where disciplines/programmes data are not presented, include a statement about why it has been omitted.

You should examine discipline/programme-level data, even when this is not presented, to identify anomalies.

Students on non-research institute programmes/contracts

When studentships are provided by a funding body, or students are recruited and managed by universities, state the input the institute has in student recruitment and support. For example, indicate the level of input the research institute has in advertising methods, shortlisting, selection committees, mentoring and tutoring. Even when an institute has no control over recruitment or management of students, the environment and interactions with staff are likely to have an effect on students and their aspirations.
Staff Data

Throughout Section 4, and Section 5, the following are required:

- Data by gender and grade.
- State whether staff data is presented by FTE, FPE or headcount. Please refer to the Terminology section for full definitions of these terms.
- Present professional staff, technical support staff and research staff data separately (include postdoctoral researchers in the most appropriate staff category) and reflect on any differences in the support or provision available to different staff groups.
- Include postdoctoral researchers and visiting and honorary staff (see Terminology for definitions).
- Where an institute is large enough (more than 20 staff), data should also be broken down by contract type: full- or part-time, zero-hours, open-ended or permanent. You do not need to present data for all questions (only those where it is explicitly asked for).
- Where institutes contain clinical and non-clinical staff, this data should be presented separately.
- Where there are staff researching different disciplines (either STEMM and AHSSBL or different STEMM disciplines), data for the different disciplines should be presented separately.
- Discipline-level data does not need to be presented where numbers are too small to be significant or where disciplines are very similar and relate to the same benchmark.
- Where discipline data are not presented, include a statement about why it has been omitted.
- You should examine discipline-level data, even when this is not presented, to identify anomalies.
- Comment and reflect on any differences in data for full- and part-time staff.
Defining staff categories

The categories of professional staff, technical support staff and research staff are used to indicate that all staff groups should be included in the application, but that any differences in the profile of different groups should be acknowledged, and appropriate actions targeted to different groups if necessary.

You can use alternative categories if they are more meaningful and appropriate to your institution. A definition of each category should be provided. Some examples of staff categories used by research institutes include scientifically qualified support staff (for example, grant managers), operational staff (for example HR, finance) and technicians.

When designating categories, consider the following: task type, workplace (for example office or lab), qualifications and self-identification.

Different terms and conditions

Research institutes may have staff on different terms and conditions, for example research institute, government or research council. Where this is the case, any differences and their impact on gender equality should be reflected on in relevant questions. For example, are all staff at certain grades on a particular contract? Are certain contracts more likely to be fixed-term? Are there implications for equal pay audits, promotion, support mechanisms, flexible working? Is maternity/paternity/parental leave provision different? Are staff in high profile roles/committees predominately on certain contracts? Are there differences in staff satisfaction?

Where different contract data are not presented (for example, because there are no differences between staff on different contract types) include a statement about this omission. You should examine data for different terms and conditions, even when this is not presented, to identify anomalies.

Particularly unusual and complex organisations may apply for an additional word count. ECU’s Equality Charter team will provide additional advice and guidance on a case-by-case basis.
Qualitative data

At all levels of award staff and students should be consulted for their views on the broad range of issues covered by the submission. Teams should investigate views on institutional processes, in addition to issues pertaining to culture, and be responsive to feedback. Qualitative data will help you to identify key areas for improvement and to put in place actions to address them.

Consultation may take a variety of forms, for example, focus groups or surveys. Uptake/response rates of consultation should be provided with responses disaggregated by gender.

Where a survey is conducted, consider how any qualitative data will be presented. Where appropriate, qualitative responses may be presented alongside quantitative data, to provide further evidence. Data should be embedded at relevant points throughout the submission.

An honest appraisal is essential. Panels welcome reflection on good practice, as well as practice which requires development, attention or improvement. For example, if staff consultation identifies a problematic culture, outline and evaluate the results, and set out the actions you will implement, together with any successes in addressing the problems.

Benchmarking data

Benchmarking is for your benefit. It can drive aspirations, mark progress, and allow disciplines to consider common issues.

While panels are interested in the benchmarking data used, and it can help to inform their decision, the main purpose of the benchmarking data is to drive your institute’s aspirations.

Benchmarking data allows you to see how your institute’s data compares to comparators and peers across the sector or discipline, and can help identify where actions should be targeted.

Reflection on appropriate benchmarking provides assessment panels with an indication of your understanding of the scale of the issues you are facing. It can also indicate your awareness of discipline and sector-wide gender equality issues.
Benchmarking initiatives and actions

Benchmarking can be used, not only to compare the demographics of your workforce or student population, but to measure the success of the initiatives you implement. For example, you might choose to introduce a programme of work to improve the rate of promotions for women staff. Part of the evaluation of that programme could be to compare its success to programmes undertaken in other organisations (not necessarily related to higher education) tackling similar issues.

Which benchmarks should we use?

The Athena SWAN process is not prescriptive about which data are used, or how they are benchmarked, as this will depend upon the institutional context.

Be ambitious in the benchmark chosen, and use the benchmark to challenge your institute to make significant improvements, as well as to measure progress and celebrate successes. Avoid targets that simply continue to match a benchmark, especially if where these are low. Aim to surpass low benchmarks.

Make sure it is clear throughout the application which benchmarking data source has been used and the timeframe the data refers to.

Some organisations may find it particularly challenging to identify appropriate external benchmarking data, for example, institutes focusing on a particular specialism for which there are very few research centres. In these cases, benchmarking should still be attempted, and it should be explained in the submission why particular benchmarks (as opposed to the national averages) have been used.

Internal benchmarking is also a particularly important element of the action plan. Where a success measure is an increase in relation to the existing data, an indication of both the current and targeted outcome should be presented.
Application form guidance

This guidance takes you through the requirements for each question in the application, and should be read alongside the research institute application form before data collection.

We have also included suggestions and examples of how you might approach the questions. These suggestions are for guidance, and you should decide on the most appropriate approach and presentation for your application.
1 Letter of endorsement from the head of institute

Recommended word count: Bronze: 500 words | Silver: 500 words | Gold: 500 words

The letter of endorsement from the head of the institute sets the tone for the submission. It is vital that it demonstrates support, commitment and investment. The letter should explain why the institute values ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter and how the action plan will help you meet your strategic aims.

The letter should highlight key challenges for the institute, and explain how the Athena SWAN action plan will address these challenges, and contribute to the overall institute strategy. Comment on how staff at all levels have been engaged in the process, and will continue to be engaged, during the lifetime of the award.

Wherever possible the letter should outline specific activities or actions undertaken by the head to promote gender equality. Panels are keen to get a sense of individual commitment to gender equality at the top of the institute.

If the applicant already holds an Athena SWAN award, and is applying for an award under the expanded criteria reference should be made to the impact of/progress since the previous award. For higher levels of recognition, the panel will expect to hear how the institute has championed gender equality.

Although the head may wish to refer to an institute’s history and achievements, these should not be the focus of the letter, and can instead be included in 2 Description of the research institute.

The letter should include a statement that the information presented in the application (including qualitative and quantitative data) is an honest, accurate and a true representation of the institute.

If the head is soon to be/has been recently succeeded, and the incoming head has been recruited, applicants should include an additional short statement from the incoming head. An additional 200 words is permitted for use in this statement.

Letters should be addressed to:

Athena SWAN Manager
Equality Challenge Unit
First floor, Westminster Tower
3 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SP
2 Description of the research institute

Recommended word count: Bronze 1000 words | Silver 1000 words | Gold 1000 words

Assume that panellists have no prior knowledge of the institute: its size, research profile or previous Athena SWAN work.

Panellists will come from both research institutes and higher education institutions, and so a clear outline of the organisational structure, funding, staff groups (and possibly career pipeline) is important to provide the panellist with context.

Panellists will not view any institute’s previous Athena SWAN applications (either successful or unsuccessful) and will assess each application as a standalone document.

Requirement: The current numbers of professional staff, technical support staff, research staff and students in the institute. This data should be presented in a table, which will be excluded from the word count. This section is to provide the panel with context ahead of reviewing the self-assessment process. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections.

Clearly outline the institute’s structure, reporting mechanisms, research focus, partnerships and anything that may be particularly different to sector/discipline norms. Include information on any other relevant features, for example, any recent changes in structure or management, quasi-autonomous groups or split-site arrangements.

A quasi-autonomous group may include:

- A research group that receives specific external funding.
- Staff managed/contracted by a different organisation/management structure, for example, a research council or the NHS.
**Suggestion:** If the organisation is particularly complex, it may help to include a diagram of the structure to illustrate the reporting mechanisms within the institute. A brief outline of the career pipeline in the institute may be useful.

**Example:**

Staff and student numbers, September 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Professional staff</th>
<th>Tech. support staff</th>
<th>Research staff</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F%</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M+F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The self-assessment process

Recommended word count: Bronze 1000 words | Silver 1000 words | Gold 1000 words

(i) A description of the self-assessment team

Requirement:

- Members’ roles both within the institute and the self-assessment team (identifying the chair).
- How people were nominated or recruited to the self-assessment team.
- If/how the time commitment membership represents is accounted for in members’ workloads.
- Data and comment on how representative the team is of the staff working in the institute (for example, including a range of grades and job roles, professional and technical support staff as well as researchers, different genders, work-life balance arrangements or caring responsibilities)

Suggestion: The description of self-assessment team members can be displayed as a table (maximum of 20 words for each team member) which is not included in the word count. The description isn’t limited to 20 words, but anything in excess of this will be included in the word count.

Example:

The 30 words used in the additional statement (italicised) would be included in the word count.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Self-assessment team role</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Greene</td>
<td>Principle Investigator (employed 2005)</td>
<td>• Survey analysis</td>
<td>• Promoted (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus group lead</td>
<td>• Group management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Action writing</td>
<td>• Industry employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From 2005-2010, my principal investigator actively encouraged my career development through: identifying relevant training; supporting me to 'act up' for 12 months; encouraging me to apply for more senior positions.*
(ii) An account of the self-assessment process

Requirement:
- When the team was established.
- How often the team has met, including subgroup meetings.
- The purpose of meetings.
- How the team members have communicated with each other and the wider institute (for example, emails, newsletters, blogs, intranets, shared drives).
- How the team has consulted with staff and students in the institute.
- The relationship to other committees and the reporting structure (for example, if Athena SWAN is a standing item on the institute’s key decision-making board).

Suggestion: Consultation with individuals outside the institute can be useful. If a critical friend has been asked to review the application, or advice has been sought from other institutes, research councils or universities, this should be mentioned.

Example:
Timeline and scope of activities, which would not be included in the word count.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Career break data collated</td>
<td>HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.04.16</td>
<td>Staff invited to career break focus group</td>
<td>HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.05.16</td>
<td>Career break focus group</td>
<td>Work-life balance subgroup/HR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(iii) Plans for the future of the self-assessment team

Requirement:

= How often the team will meet in future.

= How the team intends to monitor the implementation of the action plan, including reporting/interacting with relevant committees and structures within the institute.

= How the team intends to keep staff (and students) updated on ongoing work.

= Succession planning including any transfer of responsibility for the work, role rotation and how the workload of the self-assessment team members (and/or those implementing actions) will be accounted for in workload allocation.
4 A picture of the institute

Recommended word count: Bronze 2500 words | Silver 3500 words | Gold 3500 words

For data requirements, see Presenting data, page 24.

4.1 Student data

(i) Numbers of men and women on postgraduate research degrees

Requirement:
- Numbers of men and women studying part-time and full-time courses (include benchmarking data).
- Course applications, offers, and acceptance rates (data on men and women analysed separately and then compared. For example, offers to women as a percentage of applications from women, and acceptances by women as a percentage of those offers).
- Degree attainment (classification, completion and non-completion rates, time taken to complete).
- Whether students are registered at a host university or the institute.

Suggestion: Where possible, include complete conversion rate data (enrolments in addition to/instead of acceptances). Where differences are found, present and/or comment on the data by gender for overseas, home, and EU students. Consider any differences in the way overseas/EU students are recruited or the relevant benchmarking for the countries where students achieved previous qualifications.

If studentships are available, comment on these, and any differences in the gender of students funded through different mechanisms. Provide information on the recruitment process (advertisement, application, selection).

Where disparities between genders are found, investigate factors behind the data. For example, if female studentship applicants are lower than might be expected (from postgraduate taught/research benchmarking data) look at how studentships are advertised and promoted.
Example:

‘Over the years, we see that female applicants are consistently less likely than male applicants to accept an offer to study at the institute (see table 4). To investigate the reasons behind this, we will run decliner surveys.’

(ii) **Number of visiting students by gender**

**Requirement:**

- Numbers of male and female visiting students (visiting students are defined as students associated with the research institute for six months or more).
- Application, offer, and acceptance rates (data on men and women analysed separately and then compared. For example, offers to women as a percentage of applications from women, and acceptances by women as a percentage of those offers).

**Suggestion:** Where possible, include complete conversion rate data (enrolments in addition to/instead of acceptances). Where differences are found, present and/or comment on the data by gender for overseas, home, and EU students. Consider any differences in the way overseas/EU students are recruited or the relevant benchmarking for the countries where students achieved previous qualifications.

If funded placements are available, comment on these and any differences in the gender of students applying for and achieving them. Provide information on the recruitment process (advertisement, application, selection). Where disparities between genders are found, investigate factors behind the differences.
4.2 Staff data

(i) Staff by grade and gender

Requirement:
- Data by grade, gender and ethnicity (see Intersectionality, page 11).
- Comment on and explain any differences between data for men and women and reflect on the career pipelines in each staff group.
- Explicitly identify any issues in the pipelines at particular grades/job type. Cross-reference to the relevant application sections and actions addressing these key career transition points.
- Compare data to the national picture for the discipline(s). Where benchmarking data does not provide meaningful comparison, a clear explanation as to why it is not included must be provided.

Suggestion: If your institute’s pipeline is atypical, provide contextual information. Where staff will later be referred to by job titles rather than grade (for example, principal investigator instead of researcher grade 10) these job titles/roles should be mapped against grades in a table. Subheadings may be helpful.

(ii) Transition between technical support and research roles

Requirement:
Number, grade and gender of staff who have transitioned between technical support and research/researcher roles.

Suggestion:
- Reflect on wider vertical and horizontal mobility (including professional roles), if appropriate.
- Consider whether staff are facilitated to change roles for development reasons or because of their interest.
- Provide any evidence as to whether staff are happy with the perceived level of horizontal mobility.
(iii) **Staff, by gender and grade, on fixed-term, open-ended/ permanent and zero-hour contracts**

**Requirement:**

- Data by grade, gender and contract type.
- Comment on the proportions of men and women on fixed-term, open-ended and zero-hour contracts (see Terminology) and explicitly identify any issues relating to gender.
- Describe what is done to ensure continuity of employment (including redeployment schemes) and to address any other issues.

**Suggestion:** When discussing continuity of employment, consider redeployment schemes and other internal mechanisms, such as bridging funding or support for grant applications. It is acknowledged that postdoctoral researchers are the staff most likely to be on fixed-term contracts. If postdoctoral researchers of all genders are on contracts of a single, mandated fixed-term, comment could focus on support provided to facilitate continuity of researcher employment in the sector (potentially including destination data) rather than the institute (or cross-reference to the relevant section of the application).

(iv) **Leavers by grade, gender and full/part-time status**

**Requirement:**

- Leaver data by grade and gender. Include the reasons staff leave the institute (for example, retirement, redundancy, end of fixed-term contract).
- Describe mechanisms for collecting data (such as exit interviews) and, if necessary, actions to address any gaps in the data.
- Explicitly identify any issues relating to gender and the number of staff leaving, or the reasons staff leave.
- Comment on, and explain, any difference for different staff groups or departments.

**Suggestion:** Destination data for postdoctoral researchers (or any staff) can be included, but is not required.
(v) Equal pay audits/reviews

Requirement:

- Comment on the findings from the most recent equal pay audit, and reflect on any disparities between male and female staff, overall and at any particular grades.
- Identify the institute’s top priorities related to disparities (where identified) and enabling equality in pay.

Suggestion: If your institute has staff on different terms and conditions, for example institute and research council funded staff, analysis may need to be more nuanced. It could involve:

- Outlining the differences between the terms and conditions of staff on different contracts. For example, are some roles particular to certain terms and conditions, or can a ‘senior researcher’ be on either contract? Are pay grades for a contract type independent of the institute?
- Analysing data for each contract type, by grade and gender.
- Identifying any gender inequalities specific to each contract type.
- Comparing the findings for the different contract types.
- Identifying any issues which arise from the institute having staff on different terms and conditions, for example more female staff being on a particular contract, resulting in this group being paid less on average.

It may be that the institute has staff on different terms and conditions for historical reasons (for example, all staff recruited after a certain point being on particular contracts). You could outline the reasons for the different terms and conditions, focus analysis on the differences within contract types or outline overall implications for different genders.
5 Supporting and advancing careers

Recommended word count: Bronze 6500 words | Silver 7000 words | Gold 7500 words

For data requirements, see Presenting data, page 24.

5.1 Key career transition points

(i) Recruitment

Requirement:
= Data for applications, longlisted candidates, shortlisted candidates, offers and acceptances. Include the success rates for men and women, with data analysed separately and then compared. For example, offers to women as a percentage of applications from women, and acceptances by women as a percentage of those offers.
= Comment on the institute’s recruitment processes and criteria for shortlisting and selection.
= Details of how applications from the underrepresented gender are being increased and encouraged (current initiatives or planned actions).

Suggestion: Consider the wording used in job adverts, advertising policies that support work-life balance and/or flexible working, how jobs are advertised including any targeted advertising, policies to ensure gender representation on recruitment panels, recruitment and selection training, appointment panel chair training and unconscious bias training.

(ii) Induction

Requirement:
= Describe the induction processes and support provided to all new staff at all levels.
= Uptake of induction (by gender and grade) in numbers and as percentages of new starters.
= How the effectiveness of induction is reviewed (including staff feedback where possible).

Suggestion: When describing induction, consider both the professional and pastoral aspects of the process. For example the training provided, resources available, introductions to other staff and the wider institute, ongoing support and information about policies and processes.
(iii) Promotion

Requirement:

= Data on applications and success rates. This should be broken down by gender, the grade being applied for and full- and part-time status. Data should be presented as proportions of the eligible cohorts (please also define the eligibility criteria).

= Whether pay is negotiable or standardised. Comment on any evidence of a gender pay gap in promotions at any grade.

= Details of the promotions process, including how candidates are identified, the decision making process (who makes the decisions), and how the process and criteria are communicated to staff.

= Commentary on the criteria for promotion, including whether the impact of career breaks on promotions, is factored into policy and practice.

= Comment on whether the full range of work-related activities are taken into consideration.

= If there are parallel promotion paths for different staff groups, detail any differences in data, criteria, processes and feedback.

= Provide details of any encouragement, support or mentoring offered throughout the process, including support for those whose applications were unsuccessful.

= Comment on staff perception of the promotions process, including whether it is considered transparent and fair.

Suggestion: Where numbers are small, consider commenting on individual cases. Data and reflection on applications for additional increments and one-off pay awards can be included in this section, including awards made to individuals for particularly onerous tasks they have undertaken. If there are no clear pathways for promotion for a particular staff group, comment on any ways these staff can progress (internal/external recruitment, role regrading) and how opportunities may be increased.
5.2 Career development

(i) Training

Requirement:

- Describe the training available to staff at all levels, in particular, training related to:
  - An inclusive workplace (for example, recruitment and selection, equality and diversity)
  - Technical skills required by the role (for example, teaching or programming)
  - Management, leadership, and/or other training linked to career progression (for example, communication or grant writing)

- Describe those delivering training (for example internal/HR/consultants).
- Uptake of training by gender and grade in numbers and, where possible, as percentages of eligible pools.
- Describe how staff are kept informed of training opportunities and continuous development is encouraged.
- Describe any initiatives to monitor the effectiveness of training (for example, leadership training participants going into leadership roles in the institute).
- How any training provided in the institute is developed and evaluated.
Suggestion: Include details of training targeted at the underrepresented gender and uptake of the training, training that the underrepresented gender find particularly useful, and any training budgets and how these are allocated.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses taken in 2015</th>
<th>F (% of eligible pool)</th>
<th>M (% of eligible pool)</th>
<th>% F participants report useful</th>
<th>% M participants report useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equality and diversity</td>
<td>10 (53%)</td>
<td>17 (85%)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3 (75%)</td>
<td>4 (67%)</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Equality and diversity course data suggest our promotion of the course to men has been successful (AP 4.5). However, the course is about broader equality issues, and female staff may not be aware that their unconscious biases can be a negative factor in perpetuating gender issues. We will aim for 95% completion for all staff (AP 4.6). We will also ask staff (particularly women) to suggest additional topics and ask HR to provide a tailored equality and diversity session. Take-up for leadership courses is too small to show statistically significant gender issues but the two staff who did not find the training useful will be asked to confidentially provide feedback (SAP 4.7).’

(ii) Appraisal/development review

Requirement:

= Describe current appraisal/development review schemes.

= Provide uptake data by gender and grade.

= Provide details of any appraisal/development review training offered (training for those conducting the review, and/or for those being appraised) and uptake data by gender.

= State whether promotion and work-life balance are discussed as part of the appraisal/development review process, and if flexible working (or other work-life balance factors) are considered when setting targets or objectives.

= Provide staff feedback on the appraisal/development review process itself, and any training offered (feedback to be disaggregated by gender and staff group).
Include procedures in place for postdoctoral researchers, or if they are included in the institute’s appraisal scheme, whether they find it useful.

(iii) Support given to staff for career progression

Requirement:
= Comment and reflect on support given to staff to assist in their career progression.
= Detail any targeted provision for postdoctoral researchers, or if targeted support is not provided, if and how postdoctoral researchers are included in career progression support provided to all staff.
= Provide uptake data by gender, and staff feedback on the support offered (feedback to be disaggregated by gender).

Suggestion: Include details of any mentoring or coaching schemes or shadowing opportunities offered, including uptake data. Include details and uptake data for support targeted at the underrepresented gender (for example a women’s mentoring scheme) or provision the underrepresented gender find particularly useful.

Example:

‘In the 2012 staff survey, 85% of women reported wanting mentoring opportunities. We therefore created a mentoring scheme (In 2016 73% of female staff and 74% male staff have a mentor). The 2014 staff survey showed staff at grades 8 to 10 were happy with mentoring support (94% women, 92% men) but postdoctoral researchers reported uneven provision due to lack of qualified mentors. In May 2015, we launched a postdoctoral network to provide peer support and enable qualified speakers to provide tailored sessions (‘Fellowship application writing’). Attendance is good and shows no gender disparities: 74-98% of eligible female and 76-95% of eligible male staff attending the 12 sessions. Postdoctoral researchers will be surveyed to ensure sessions are useful and to measure the impact of the network (for example, applications subsequently submitted).’
(iv) **Support given to students for research career progression**

**Requirement:**
- Comment and reflect on support given to students to enable them to make informed decisions about their career (including the transition to a sustainable research career).
- Detail support provided to those finishing a PhD and looking to become postdoctoral researchers.
- Provide uptake data by gender, and if feedback is available, disaggregate by gender.

**Suggestion:** If available, destination data and analysis can be included to evidence student transitions to a research career in the sector. Include details of any mentoring (peer/industry/staff) or coaching schemes, shadowing opportunities, careers events, recruitment/information activities, scholarships/studentships, teaching opportunities and development programmes.

(v) **Support offered to those applying for research funding**

**Requirement:**
- Comment and reflect on any support given to staff applying for funding and support offered to those who are unsuccessful.
- Provide application and success rate data by gender, grade and year.
- Consider any gender gaps in application or success rates, or patterns in the amount of research funding granted or applied for (per award/by staff of different genders).

**Suggestion:** Detail any internal peer review systems or processes which enable early career researchers to be named on grants. Consider mock panels, internal research funding, grant writing workshops and research mentors.
5.3 Flexible working and managing career breaks

(i) Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: before leave

Requirement:
= Outline the proactive arrangements in place to support staff prior to maternity and adoption leave.
= Describe provision which goes beyond legal compliance and statutory entitlement.
= Describe whether cover and/or support are provided as policy, or on a case-by-case basis, and indicate criteria for qualifying.
= Comment on any difference in support provided to staff on fixed-term contracts.
= Where possible, include details of uptake of support, and staff feedback.

Suggestion: Where numbers are small, consider commenting on individual cases. Consider meetings with line managers and HR, maternity checklists, health, safety and rest breaks, discussion of benefits (for example childcare vouchers, flexible working), handover periods, research strategies (applying for grants before leave), support for grant extension applications.

If an institute is small and no one has taken leave in the past three years, include details of provision and policy, and consider creating guidelines regarding the support the institute commits to providing for future leave-takers.

Example:
‘A focus group of returners requested informal peer support prior to (and not just following) leave. Action 5.4.2: All staff planning adoption, maternity or paternity leave will be invited to the carers’ network.’

(ii) Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: during leave

Requirement:
= Outline the proactive arrangements in place to support staff during maternity and adoption leave.
= Describe provision which goes beyond legal compliance and statutory entitlement.
= Details of how work is covered during leave.
Describe whether cover and support are provided as policy, or on a case-by-case basis, and indicate criteria for qualifying.

Comment on any difference in support provided to staff on fixed-term contracts.

Details of arrangements which enable staff to keep in touch during leave.

Where possible include details of uptake of support and staff feedback.

**Suggestion:** Where numbers are small, consider commenting on individual cases. Consider keeping in touch days (how these are/will be used), communication during leave (method and point of contact). If cover posts aren’t appointed, consider whether backfilling can provide development opportunities or additional rewards. Can promotion be applied for during leave?

If an institute is small and no one has taken leave in the past three years, include details of provision and policy, and consider creating guidelines regarding the support the institute commits to providing for future leave-takers.

**(iii)  Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: returning to work**

**Requirement:**

- Outline the proactive arrangements in place to support staff on their return from maternity and adoption leave.
- Describe provision which goes beyond legal compliance and statutory entitlement.
- Comment on any funding available to support returning staff.
- Describe whether cover and/or support are provided as policy, or on a case-by-case basis, and indicate criteria for qualifying.
- Comment on any difference in support provided to staff on fixed-term contracts.
- Where possible include details of uptake of support and staff feedback.

**Suggestion:** Where numbers are small, consider commenting on individual cases. Consider returner meetings, missed appraisals, handover periods, phased return, flexible working on return, breastfeeding/expressing arrangements, peer support, reduced administrative loads for research staff, extensions of cover and mentoring.

If an institute is small and no one has taken leave in the past three years, include details of provision and policy, and consider creating guidelines regarding the support the institute commits to providing for future leave-takers.
(iv) Maternity and adoption return rate

Requirement:

- Provide data and comment on the maternity and adoption return rate in the institute. Data should be presented by year, grade, gender (in the case of adoption leave), and full/part-time status (including changes on return from leave).
- Describe provision which goes beyond legal compliance and statutory entitlement.
- Comment on any difference in support provided to staff on fixed-term contracts.
- Data of staff whose contracts are not renewed while on maternity/adoption leave should be included in the section, along with commentary.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave takers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returners:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same hours</td>
<td>1 (FT)</td>
<td>2 (0.8 &amp; FT)</td>
<td>1 (FT)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different hours</td>
<td>1 (0.6→0.8)</td>
<td>1 (FT→0.6)</td>
<td>1 (0.8)*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leavers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Returner worked 0.8 full time equivalent (FTE) over three days prior to leave, and 0.8 FTE over five days following leave

Requirement for Silver and Gold applications only:

- Provide data and comment on the proportion of staff remaining in post six, 12 and 18 months after return from maternity leave.
(v) Paternity, shared parental, adoption and parental leave uptake

Requirement:

- Provide data and comment on the uptake of these types of leave by year, gender and grade.
- Describe provision which goes beyond legal compliance and statutory entitlement.
- Comment on any difference in support provided to staff on fixed-term contracts.
- Comment on what the institute does to promote and encourage take-up of paternity leave and shared parental leave.
- Provide details of the institute’s paternity package and arrangements.
- Where possible, include staff feedback.

Suggestion: Where numbers are small, consider commenting on individual cases. For paternity leave consider whether all eligible staff take leave, duration of leave, whether leave is formal or informal, awareness of policies, if staff feel leave is accepted and respected (for example, they are not expected to be available via email). Parental leave (for example, for a sick child) might be formal or informal, but comment on the awareness of this leave and staff satisfaction with provision, would be relevant.

(vi) Flexible working

Requirement:

- Comment on whether there is a formal and/or informal system in place for flexible working.
- Provide data on application and success rates by gender and grade, commenting on any disparities.
- How managers are supported and/or trained to promote and manage flexible working arrangements (for example options, fairness, consistency).
- How the institute raises awareness of the options available.

Suggestion: Where numbers are small, consider commenting on individual cases. Remember flexible working may be related to caring responsibilities, but may also be used to accommodate work-life balance, training, or personal or physical requirements.
Consider using the results of staff consultation to evidence staff awareness of, and satisfaction with, options available. Cross-reference/comment on ways flexible working is facilitated (remote desktops, skype/video conferencing, meeting timetabling), if flexible working options are limited for certain staff groups and what can be done within those limitations, any disparity in experience between those who work flexibly and those who work full-time (training, promotion, committee membership).

(vii) Flexibility in contracted hours after career breaks

Requirement:
- Outline any policies regarding staff, for example, changing from full-time to part-time working for a fixed/variable period of time.
- Outline the policies and practices that support and enable staff who work flexibly (following a career break, for caring responsibilities, or due to personal or physical requirements) to transition back to full-time working.
- Evaluate the support provided to staff wishing to transition from part-time to full-time work.
- Where available, include data or case studies (if data are small).

Suggestion: This may be relevant to maternity returners. For example, following maternity leave, a mother works part-time for six months, before returning to full-time hours. However, career breaks and temporary or extended periods of part-time working may also be related to other caring responsibilities, development opportunities, personal or physical requirements. Supportive practices might include mentoring or coaching, phased increase in workload or working pattern and relief from specific duties.

Example:

‘A male researcher was diagnosed with a serious illness in December 2014, and he remained on sick leave until June 2015. He expressed a wish to return to work slowly, over an extended period of time. His line manager set up a meeting with the researcher, occupational health (OH) and HR. All agreed he would return to work on a six-month part-time contract, with a phased return to full-time work in 2016. OH advised on the phased return, and his full-time position was guaranteed, until June 2016. Regular check-in meetings were arranged to ensure arrangements were working, and a mentor was recruited who had herself returned to fulltime work after an extended period of ill health.’
(viii) **Childcare**

**Requirement:**

- Describe the institute’s childcare provision and how the support available is communicated to staff.
- Include uptake and awareness of provision, and staff feedback where available.
- Comment on how any shortfalls in provision will be addressed.

**Suggestion:** Childcare provision can be defined broadly. Consideration for those with childcare responsibilities might include childcare voucher schemes, including a directory of local provision online, negotiating with a local provider for reduced rates for staff, setting up a carers’ network so that parents/guardians can share knowledge of services and solutions. If there is an institute nursery, describe the opening times, how many places are available and staff/student feedback.

(ix) **Caring responsibilities**

**Requirement:**

- Outline the policies and practices in place to support staff with caring responsibilities.
- Describe how support available is proactively communicated to staff.
- If available, include uptake data by gender.

**Suggestion:** Where a particular aspect of a role might disproportionately affect carers (for example, field work, shift work) describe any arrangements or provision which limits this impact.

Consider using the results of staff consultation to evidence staff awareness of, and satisfaction with, options available. Cross-reference/consider carers/emergency leave (both paid and unpaid), meeting times, additional funding to allow carers to attend external events (for example, conferences and training), reserved parking for carers so that they can meet drop off/pick up times, flexible working arrangements to facilitate caring, peer support facilitated by the institute (for example groups, mentoring, buddy schemes).

Consider whether culture is accepting of caring responsibilities (social events, senior staff role acting as role models in their working arrangements), any disparity in experience between those with caring responsibilities and those without (for example staff satisfaction, conference attendance).
5.4 Organisation and culture

(i) Culture

**Definition:** Culture refers to the language, behaviours and other informal interactions that characterise the atmosphere of the institution. The ‘culture’ of an institute is influenced by, and impacts on, all staff and students.

**Requirement:**
- Detail the ways in which the institute actively considers gender equality and inclusivity.
- Provide details of how the ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter principles have been, and will continue to be, embedded into the culture and workings of the institute.
- Provide detail of staff and (if applicable) student consultation relating to the culture of the institute. Analyse any data and evidence gathered regarding culture, highlighting any gender differences, and differences between staff groups.

**Suggestion:** Highlight any staff networks and dignity at work or health and wellbeing initiatives here. Any discipline-wide issues relating to culture can be referenced but should be evidenced and explored. For example, if a discipline has a traditionally ‘macho’ culture, is this acknowledged by a professional body or in literature, and what can the institute do to combat this? Any other factors which influence culture (working patterns, shift work, field work, split sites) can be referenced, with reflection on their impact on inclusivity.

(ii) Institutional policies, practices and procedures

**Requirement:**
- Describe how gender equality is considered when institutional policies, practices and procedures are developed, implemented and reviewed.
- Include any staff consultation regarding the fairness and transparency of institutional policies.
- Describe any mechanisms by which the positive and/or negative impact of existing and future policies is assessed and acted upon, for example, carrying out impact assessments before policies are implemented.
(iii) HR policies

Requirement:
- Describe how the institution monitors the consistency in the application of HR policies, in particular those related to equality, dignity at work, bullying, harassment, grievance and disciplinary processes.
- Describe actions taken to address any identified differences between policy and practice.
- Detail what is done to ensure that staff with management responsibilities are up-to-date in their HR knowledge.

Suggestion: Answers to this question should not be a description of the policies, but a reflection on how policies are communicated, and how consistency in their application is ensured. For example, if training or workshops are run for staff with line management responsibility, consider how frequently these are updated, take-up monitoring mechanisms and any gender discrepancies in the uptake data.

Applicants will not be penalised for identifying issues. If this question results in an answer the institute does not wish to be made public, narrative can be redacted prior to a successful application being published online. ECU does not publish applications.

(iv) Heads of units

Requirement:
- Provide data across the whole institution.
- Describe the main concerns and achievements, and any differences between different types of unit (for example, professional staff departments and research staff groups).
- Refer to the ways these posts are appointed. This could include external recruitment, internal pipelines and rotated roles.

Suggestion: For some institutes, the term ‘unit’ will refer to professional service departments (for example, HR, communications, events, facilities) and research groups. If any roles are rotated, describe the timeframes and recruitment mechanisms.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Operations</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of HR</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Leaders (6)</td>
<td>0% F</td>
<td>17% F</td>
<td>17% F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘All roles are appointed via open recruitment but one male and one female project leader (PL) were internal candidates. The percentage of female heads has improved (11% to 22%) but there is clearly room for improvement and the current role modelling risks reinforcing stereotypes: 33% of non-science heads are female but only 17% of science heads. For recruitment actions targeting female applications to senior appointments see Recruitment. Both internal PL appointments identified informal mentoring as being key to their progression, so we will implement a formal mentoring scheme to ensure other staff benefit, recording the gender of mentees and outcomes.’

(v) Representation of men and women on committees

Requirement:

= Provide committee membership data for all committees by gender, staff type (professional/research/technical support) and grade.

= Indicate the gender, staff type and grade of each committee chair.

= Identify the influential committees and the senior management committee.

= Outline the ways committee members are identified/recruited.

= Comment on how ‘committee overload’ is addressed.

= Describe initiatives in place (or planned) to improve any gender imbalance on committees, for example role rotation, deputising, shadowing.
**Suggestion:** When looking at the ways members become part of committees, consider whether they nominate themselves, if they are approached to join, who approaches them and on what basis. If membership is ex officio (part of a job), could additional members be recruited? Where gender imbalances are found on certain committees, target actions to these particular committees, as well as broader membership good practice.

**(vi) Participation on influential external committees**

**Requirement:**

- Describe how staff are encouraged to participate on influential external committees.
- Detail any procedures/initiatives in place to encourage women (or men if they are underrepresented) to participate on these committees.

**Suggestion:** The self-assessment team is in the best position to decide which external committees are ‘influential’ for your discipline and sector. The institute could consider working with their sector or discipline to improve gender balances on committees and boards.

Applicants do not need to provide a list of committee memberships held by staff.

**(vii) Workloads**

**Requirement:**

- Describe how workloads and different types of task are distributed.
- Comment on ways in which workloads and tasks are monitored for gender bias.
- Mention whether workloads are taken into account at appraisal/development review and in promotion criteria.
- Comment on the rotation of responsibilities and if staff consider the allocation of responsibilities to be transparent and fair. Use any staff consultation to evidence this and comment on any gender discrepancies.

**Suggestion:** Institutes without a workload allocation model can focus on the quantity of work staff undertake (Is this monitored to ensure consistency? Do staff report that their workloads are manageable in surveys?).

Reflect on whether certain tasks (administrative, leadership) are more often carried out by a certain gender. Reflect on whether workloads are consistently related to job descriptions, or whether the quantity and complexity of tasks carried out may be independent of job descriptions or role titles. For example, do all research assistants have similar workloads, made up of similar...
tasks, or do some undertake particularly onerous tasks (either due to the project they are working on or tasks outside their research role – such as self-assessment team membership)? If workloads and roles do evolve, details of how this is monitored, officially or unofficially recognised, and regulated and rewarded should be provided.

(viii) Timing of meetings and social gatherings

**Requirement:**

- Describe the consideration given to those with caring responsibilities, and part-time staff, when scheduling meetings and social gatherings.
- State whether the institute has formal core hours, and if so, what these are.
- Use consultation to evidence whether staff consider timings of events to be inclusive and core hours (where applicable) adhered to. Reflect on any differences in opinion between staff who work part-time versus those who work full-time.

**Suggestion:** Where there are key staff meetings and away days, consider whether these are planned far enough in advance for those with caring responsibilities to attend. If there are formal social gatherings at the institute, give details including when are they held, how many people attend, if staff feel they are inclusive and are held at appropriate times. Detail any systems in place to prevent staff being excluded from activities, for example rotating the days on which a meeting is held to enable part-time staff to attend, polling staff for availability and use of video conferencing.

(ix) Visibility of role models

**Requirement:**

- Describe how diversity is considered in publicity materials, including the institution’s website and images.
- Comment on how the institute builds gender equality consideration into its organisation of events.
- Provide data and comment on the gender balance of speakers and chairs in seminars, workshops and other relevant activities.

**Suggestion:** Consider the visibility of men in underrepresented disciplines, for example, nursing, primary teaching, and social work. When organising events, the institute could consider gender equality in the speakers invited, timing and scheduling (not during school holidays and within core hours), themes of events, targeted advertising, recording speakers for those who cannot attend.
(x) Outreach activities

Requirement:

= Provide data by gender and grade for staff and students involved in delivering outreach and engagement activities.

= Describe how staff and student contribution to outreach and engagement activities is formally recognised and if it is a recognised part of workloads.

= Where available, provide gender data for those participating in and attending outreach and engagement activities.

= Comment on the ways in which gender equality is considered when planning and delivering activities (events targeting the underrepresented gender, asking schools to be aware of gender equality when selecting participants, surveying participants).

Suggestion: Where outreach is targeting schools, include participant data by school type (for example, private, comprehensive, grammar, single sex) and gender. While it is important to have underrepresented groups involved in outreach, people from these groups can end up doing a lot of outreach, which can impact on other aspects of their jobs. Detail any ways this is being considered. Consider reflecting on the evidence base for activity, and how outreach is evaluated.
6 Supporting trans people

For guidance, see Trans staff and students, page 13

Recommended word count: Bronze 500 words | Silver 500 words | Gold 750 words

(i) Current policy and practice

Requirement:
= Provide details of the policies and practices which ensure that staff and students are not discriminated against on the basis of gender presentation.
= Describe any policies or initiatives aimed at tackling inappropriate and/or negative attitudes.

Suggestion: Policies relating to trans people and those who are transitioning can be referenced, as well as policies which are designed to ensure equality more generally, and protect those with protected characteristics (for example equality and diversity, recruitment and selection, staff and student support, bullying and harassment). Consider practical issues, such as facilities, data storage and mechanisms for monitoring gender identity.

Example:

‘At the line managers forum, we asked managers if they felt they could confidently apply the ‘Supporting trans staff’ policy. Most reported limited knowledge of legislation, different gender identities and issues relevant to trans equality. To address this, a training session will be developed and delivered to all line managers.’
(ii) Monitoring

Requirement:

= Provide details of how the institute monitors the positive and/or negative impact of these policies and procedures, and acts on any findings.

Suggestion: Institutes should consider trans issues in the development of policies and procedures. It is acknowledged that numbers of trans staff and students are likely to be small so quantitative monitoring of the impact of policies and procedures may not be appropriate. Qualitative data, including research from other organisations can be used instead. Consideration can also be given to how staff and students are able to provide feedback on policies and procedures.

(iii) Further work

Requirement:

= Provide details of further initiatives that have been identified as necessary to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Suggestion: Where relevant, consider initiatives to increase understanding of gender identity and promote trans equality.

Example:

‘The application writing process has highlighted a general lack of awareness and the fact that gender identity is not something that has been discussed before. This lack of awareness could result in people experiencing unfair treatment.

We will therefore be including additional information in our equality and diversity training, and writing a leaflet, designed to raise awareness of the different ways our working environment and behaviours might be experienced by trans people (‘Through my eyes: applying for the job, working in the building, interacting with you’).

In addition to this, we will investigate the ways we can promote discussion of gender identity, to combat the impact of gender stereotyping on cisgender staff.’
7 Case studies: impact on individuals

Silver and Gold applications only.

Recommended word count: Silver: 1000 words | Gold: 1500 words

Requirement:

- Two individuals (three for Gold applications) working in the institute should describe how the institute’s activities have benefitted them. Additional case studies cannot be included, even if they are within the word limit.
- One of the case studies must be a member of the self-assessment team and all must be from within the institute.
- The case studies can be male or female, and at Gold, both men and women should be included.
- At Silver, a member of the professional or technical staff can be included, but the other case study should be a research staff member.
- At Gold, a member of professional staff or technical support staff should be included as one of the case studies.
- The case studies should be written by the individuals, or a narrative drafted from an interview with the individual.
- They should describe how the institute’s activities have benefited them and demonstrate the support they have received.

Suggestion: Case studies provide an opportunity to focus on the career progression of individuals working in the institute, and to show how the inclusive culture and working practices of the institute have enabled these people to pursue their careers.

Try to include people who have benefitted from different policies/practices. A student can be included, however, consider whether they are the most appropriate to illustrate the benefits of the widest range of policies/practices tailored to benefit the underrepresented gender.

You can cross-reference to actions in the application, but this is not required. If you include negative experiences in the case study, it is strongly recommended that these be linked to actions.

If you are drafting a narrative based on an interview, ensure your questions are open and not leading, and that the individual confirms the final case study faithfully reflects their interview answers and experience.
8 Further information

**Recommended word count:** Bronze: 500 words | Silver: 500 words | Gold: 500 words

This section can be used to provide additional relevant information which has not already been discussed. Use of this section is not compulsory in Bronze and Silver applications. For Gold applications, a short supporting statement explaining why the institute should be conferred a Gold Athena SWAN award, should be included.

Examples of content at any award level include:

- Gender equality-related initiatives not already discussed.
- Commitment/involvement with other equality work.
- Work being undertaken with external partners (not covered by the outreach section).
- Future changes to the submitting unit that will provide an opportunity to extend gender equality work.
9 Action plan

The action plan is a crucial part of a submission. The action plan should be considered an integral part of the submission and the primary goal of the application. It should outline what the institute want to achieve.

Action plans, or issues linked to action planning (for example, not clearly identifying what issues need to be addressed) are the most common reason Athena SWAN applications are unsuccessful.

- Action plans should be aspirational and innovative, particularly at higher levels of award.
- Actions and action plans should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).
- Issues identified as requiring action in the submission document should be clearly highlighted and cross-referenced, so that when a panellist reads the action plan the rationale for the actions are clear.
- There is no right or wrong number of actions. However, panels will want to see that all the issues identified in the application are linked to actions.
- Action must reflect the gender specific analysis but need not be closed to people outside the underrepresented group. However, targets should be gender-specific.
- The panel will expect to see evidence of prioritisation, informed by the self-assessment undertaken. Action plans may be ordered by priority level rather than chronologically or thematically.
- It is important to indicate how the success of an action will be measured. ‘Success measures’ should be included as a column in all action plan documents, and include a measureable target. Successful Athena SWAN renewals do not depend on every target having been achieved.
- Responsibility for completing and overseeing actions should be distributed across a range of staff. Action plans where HR and equality and diversity practitioners are responsible for all actions are not well received by panels. While a group of people may undertake work on an action (and can be included in a ‘responsibility’ column), ownership should be clear.
- Actions should be scheduled across the four-year duration of the award. Longer-term goals may be referenced where there is relevant activity within the award period. Such actions should include milestones that refer to the award period.
- Descriptions of measures already in place should not be included in the action plan unless they include detail regarding future development.
= Action plans should not be weighted towards investigation and monitoring, which should be considered part of the self-assessment process.

= Within the action plan, it is important to balance conciseness with a sufficient level of detail. For example the action ‘Start a mentoring scheme’ is complex and needs to be broken down, both in terms of activity and outcome milestones. Panels need to be assured that an appropriate level of consideration has gone into planning, rather than the plan appearing as a ‘shopping list’ of initiatives.

= Action plans should be organic documents, constantly reviewed and updated (not just prepared as part of an award submission).

**Embedding actions within the application**

Panellists will be looking to see that appropriate actions have been put in place to address the issues and challenges identified throughout the application.

There is no need for the narrative to describe each action in full. However, it is very helpful for a brief description to be provided of a key action formulated to address the issue identified. These descriptions should be cross-referenced to the full action plan. The action plan should form a comprehensive summary of all actions.

Action points referenced and quoted in the application are not included in the word count.

---

**Example of referencing an action point:** [33 words]

65% of line managers reported limited knowledge of legislation, different gender identities and issues relevant to trans equality. To address this, a training session will be developed and delivered to all line managers (Action 6.3).

**Example of quoting an action point:** [16 words]

A focus group of returners requested informal peer support prior to (and not just following) leave.

*Action 5.4.2: All staff planning adoption, maternity or paternity leave will be invited to the carers’ network.*
An example action plan template is provided below. This can be used as a model, or alternatively, applicants can create their own template. The example below is not an exemplar, and many applicants have successfully used a variety of alternative formats. While Athena SWAN actions may be embedded into other institutional action plans (for example, ‘HR Excellence in Research Award’ action plans and institute strategic plans), for the purposes of the application, all actions should be collated and presented in one consistent document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Planned action/objective</th>
<th>Rationale (ie what evidence prompted this action/objective)</th>
<th>Key outputs and milestones</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Person responsible (include job title)</th>
<th>Success criteria and outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference
Planned action/objective
Rationale (ie what evidence prompted this action/objective)
Key outputs and milestones
Timeframe
Person responsible (include job title)
Success criteria and outcome

Start
End
Implementation
Oversight
**Terminology**

**Within individual institutes terminology may be applied in different ways. The definitions below are for the purposes of clarification in the Athena SWAN application.**

**AHSSBL:** Arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law.

**Career break:** A career break is a period of time out from employment or career. Career breaks are often taken by parents and carers, but are also used to take time for personal or professional development.

**Cisgender:** Cisgender is a term used to refer to someone whose gender identity aligns with the one they were assigned at birth.

**Fixed-term contract:** A contract of employment that ends on a particular date, or on completion of a specific task. For example, a contract for a specific research project, or covering a period of maternity leave. This includes staff on rolling fixed-term contracts.

**Full person equivalent (FPE):** Looks at how much of the (whole) person’s time is engaged in a particular activity. FPE is measured on 1 December. State which reporting periods or census points they have used in their application.

**Full time equivalent (FTE):** A unit which indicates a person’s proportion of study/ work time as compared to a standard full-time, full-year contract. For example, someone working FTE 0.5 is working half of a standard full-time, full-year contract- perhaps 2.5 days a week instead of 5. FTE describes the reporting year 1 August – 31 July. State which reporting periods they have used in their application.

**Headcount:** Looks at the number of people.

**Horizontal mobility:** Sometimes referred to as lateral mobility. The extent to which staff can move to different roles/career paths, which may not result in an increase in pay or responsibility. Examples of this include a grade 7 researcher becoming a grade 7 administrator (moving from a research staff to professional staff role) or a grade 7 technician becoming a grade 7 researcher (moving from a technical support staff role to a researcher role).

**Impact:** A positive effect on staff and/or student representation, experience, or attainment. In Silver and Gold applications, applicants are asked to demonstrate the measurable impact of the actions they have undertaken. They should document improvement, quantify this improvement, and reference the action or initiative this improvement is attributed to.
Institute/research institute: A research institute that is independent of a higher education institution and which may be funded and governed by various bodies, for example, research councils, charities or government. Research institutes may or may not teach and/or supervise students.

Open-ended (permanent) contract: A contract without a fixed term (end date). Open-ended/permanent staff are those who are employed on a contract of employment that states the member of staff is permanent or on an open-ended contract. This includes term-time-only staff who are employed on an open-ended contract.

Professional staff: Staff whose primary function is operational support and management. Examples of professional departments include human resources, finance and corporate communications. Professional staff may also work as part of research or technical teams, for example in administrative, engagement, contract or funding support roles. You can use terminology of your choice, as long as a definition is provided.

Qualitative data: Opinions and descriptions of personal experiences, for example, feedback from focus groups.

Quantitative data: Numerical data, for example, the number of male and female research associates.

Research staff: A person who is employed to carry out research. Researchers may be employed at different grades and levels of responsibility, and on open-ended or fixed-term contracts. Roles may include research assistants, research fellows, principle investigators, co-investigator or faculty. Within this guidance, ‘researcher’ is used to refer to all staff who conduct research. You can use different terminology appropriate to your context as long as a definition is provided.

Statistical significance: For Athena SWAN purposes, assessing statistical significance is about considering whether a difference in data (from past data or benchmarking data) can be attributed to actions and factors particular to the institute, rather than to chance. If data have improved over three years, you may wish to argue that improvements evidence the impact of your actions, rather than random variation which would occur even if no action had been taken. Statistical significance testing calculates how likely it is that differences are due to random events, rather than direct action. **Note: Statistical analysis does not take in to account the lived experience of staff, so applications should include qualitative data as well.**

STEMM: Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine. Athena SWAN uses the Department for Business, innovation and skills’ definition of STEMM as set out in their *Science, engineering and technology skills in the UK* report (2nd Report of session 2012–13).
Technical support staff: Staff (often with qualifications and/or training in the research discipline) who are not primarily directly involved research but whose skills enable research to be conducted. Roles may include laboratory technicians and managers, scientific officers, designers and engineers. You can use different terminology appropriate to your context as long as a definition is provided.

Trans: Trans is an inclusive umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the gender they were assigned (male or female) at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, transgender people, genderfluid or genderqueer people, intersex people and anyone who does not see themselves as clearly fitting into a binary male or female identity. Trans people may or may not alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically. The term trans should only be used as an adjective, for example, ‘trans people’.

Zero-hours contract: There is no legal definition of a zero-hours contract in UK domestic law. In general terms, a zero-hours contract is an employment contract in which the employer does not guarantee the individual any work, and the individual is not obliged to accept any work offered. Staff on these contracts are entitled, at minimum, to national minimum wage and statutory holiday pay.

For more information about terminology used in ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter, please contact ECU’s Equality Charters team.
About ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter

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