



## **Extension to Post-May 2015 Athena SWAN award renewal dates**

*FAO institutions and departments holding Post-May 2015 type Athena SWAN awards due for renewal in November 2019 and April 2020*

Following the expansion of the remit of the Athena SWAN Charter in May 2015, Advance HE's (then Equality Challenge Unit's) intention was to develop a renewals process appropriate to the new structure of the award framework. These processes remained in development until the formation of Advance HE in 2018. Following the formation of Advance HE, a Steering Group was established in July 2018 to lead an independent review of Athena SWAN and report to the Board of Advance HE. The Steering Group will undertake a formal consultation with the sector in Spring 2019 and we expect the group to present its findings and recommendations in September 2019.

Advance HE has decided that the planned renewals process should be informed by the formal sector consultation, and under these circumstances, that publication of a renewals process will be postponed until late 2019 when the Steering Group has presented its recommendations. Therefore, Post-May 2015 type Athena SWAN awards that are due for renewal in November 2019 and April 2020 will be extended to November 2020, to enable appropriate preparation for a renewal application using the planned process. During this time, the important gender equality work of the award-holding department or university should be continued through an extended action plan.

Affected universities and departments (those which hold Post-May 2015 type Athena SWAN awards that are due for renewal in November 2019 and April 2020) have been contacted directly to inform them of the extension to their award. This extension does not restrict the department's or university's eligibility for a period of grace in the event of a subsequent unsuccessful submission.

Affected universities or departments who wish to apply for a higher level Post-May 2015 award should use the standard process to apply for a new award. Similarly, if affected universities or departments do not wish to take up the offer of an extension and prefer to apply for the same level of Post-May 2015 award in advance of November 2020, the standard process should be used.

Please note that Pre-May 2015 type Athena SWAN awards are not affected by this. Applicants whose Pre-May 2015 type awards are due to expire should use the standard process to apply for a new award under the May 2015 criteria.

Advance HE is keen to ensure our processes are effective and valuable for applicants and during this time will continue to make other improvements to the operation of the charter, including improving the feedback returned to applicants (in line with the learning from ongoing sectoral consultation) and improving the guidance provided to review panellists.

Advance HE would like to thank award-holding units for their patience during this period, and look forward to supporting them to continue to advance gender equality.

For more information, please contact the Equality Charters team:

[athena.swan@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:athena.swan@advance-he.ac.uk)

10 January 2019

### **Update, 14 January 2019**

This award extension is targeted to departments and institutions holding Post-May 2015 Athena SWAN awards that expire in November 2019 and April 2020, who wish to renew their award at the same level. These award-holders have been implementing their action plans and working towards their next application within the timeframe set by their original award validity. However, due to the delay to the publication of a new renewal process, this timeframe must be extended to enable appropriate preparation for a renewal application.

Award-holders seeking to upgrade to a higher level of award are unaffected, as applications for upgrades use the standard process. Therefore, we encourage such award-holders to adhere to their original award validity period.

We understand that evidence may emerge during self-assessment that informs a decision to apply for a higher level of award. Therefore, if a department or institution currently planning to renew their award subsequently decides to seek an upgrade using the standard process, they will be permitted to do so even having utilised the extension.