Athena SWAN Ireland

Professional, Managerial and Support Staff: Interim Process

July 2020
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1. Athena SWAN and Ireland

The Athena SWAN charter is a framework that is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality in higher education and research. The charter was established in 2005 in the UK with a specific remit to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment. This STEMM-focused process addressing women’s underrepresentation launched in Ireland in early 2015 and is referred to as the ‘original’ charter process.¹

In May 2015 the charter was expanded to include arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) and staff working in professional, managerial and support roles (PMSS). The framework was also updated to recognise work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, including consideration of the experience of trans staff and students, as well as the underrepresentation of men in particular disciplines. The expanded charter framework was introduced in Ireland in 2017 and will be the only charter process in use from the April 2021 assessment round onwards.²

Athena SWAN Ireland staff currently support 27 Irish higher education institutions (HEIs) to progress gender equality using the charter framework. Engagement with the charter is a key pillar of Ireland’s national strategy for gender equality in higher education (Gender Action Plan, 2018-20) and participation in the charter is nationally funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

2. PMSS and the expanded charter

2.1 Context

The expanded charter process staggers the required data sets for PMSS across the Bronze and Silver application frameworks. This additive approach was designed to support applicants, most of whom were beginning the process of collecting PMSS data.

Bronze applicants are required to provide high-level PMSS staff data (2/2.iii) and consider this staff cohort in the application sections addressing ‘flexible working and career breaks’ (5.5) and ‘organisation and culture’ (5.6).³ Silver applicants must fulfil the Bronze requirements while also considering PMSS data in 'key career transition points’ (5.2) and ‘career development’ (5.4) sections of the application. Institutional applicants for Silver

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¹ In the UK the original charter process is referred to as the ‘pre-May 2015’ process.
² Applications under the original charter process will not be accepted in Ireland after the November 2020 assessment round.
³ A full breakdown of the PMSS data requirements in the expanded charter process can be found in the Athena SWAN Charter Handbook (pp. 33-34) and in the relevant application forms for Ireland. An overview of these requirements can also be found below in Section 5.3.
awards must also offer comprehensive consideration of PMSS data by grade and gender, contract type and leavers in Section 4.2.

While there are different PMSS data requirements for Bronze and Silver applicants, at all award levels PMSS should be considered in the process, with PMSS full members of the Self-Assessment Team (SAT) and issues relating to PMSS specifically addressed in the application action plan.

2.2 Rationale for the interim process

Discussions at the Athena SWAN Ireland National Committee and with the Practitioner Network have made clear that there is a growing demand in the Irish sector for more comprehensive inclusion of PMSS at the Bronze entry level.

Advance HE is committed to an inclusive charter that is responsive to the needs of the higher education sector in Ireland. In the academic year 2020-21, Athena SWAN Ireland staff will be consulting with staff in eligible HEIs to establish key areas for the charter’s development.4 This consultation will feed into the development of a revised charter framework, which we anticipate will be available in academic year 2021-22.

Advance HE recognise, however, that there is an appetite for immediate enhancement of PMSS inclusion, particularly at Bronze level. As such, an interim process to facilitate more comprehensive consideration of PMSS has been developed. It is hoped that this process will encourage engagement with the charter from staff across institutions and departments and support more inclusive analysis of gender equality challenges and opportunities at all award levels.

3. PMSS interim process: introduction

3.1 Scope

This interim process is primarily designed to facilitate enhanced inclusion of PMSS at the Bronze entry level of the expanded charter process. However, some enhanced requirements for Silver applicants have also been included. The interim process is available to institutional and departmental applicants applying for a Bronze or Silver expanded charter award. There are no pre-requisites to applying (i.e. a department applicant may avail of this process before its parent institution) and the decision of an institution to use this process will not necessitate departmental participation.

In line with feedback from the sector, the interim process questions are informed by the current PMSS requirements for Silver applicants as well some additional key areas identified as pertinent. Across Bronze and Silver levels, this new interim process includes the provision

4 A list of eligible HEIs can be found below in Section 5.4.
of more detailed staff data as well as consideration of the PMSS career development and progression.

Future iterations of the Athena SWAN charter framework will require greater consideration of PMSS but until such time as this formal change is made, the PMSS interim process will remain optional for applicants.

The current expanded charter PMSS requirements for Bronze and Silver awards will continue to be applicable to all applicants. Applicants may then choose to opt-in to the enhanced requirements of the PMSS interim process.

3.2 Opting-in

Applicants availing of the PMSS Bronze interim process must signal this intent clearly by inserting the following text into their application before the Letter of Endorsement:

[Insert institution and, where relevant, department name] has chosen to opt in to the Professional, Managerial and Support Staff: Interim Process. The additional data, analysis and actions relating to Professional, Managerial and Support Staff should be considered as part of the award panel’s assessment of whether the application meets the criteria for a Bronze/Silver award.

3.3 Assessment

Applicants that opt-in to the PMSS interim process will be assessed in line with the current Bronze and Silver award criteria for institutions and departments (see Athena SWAN Handbook, pp. 22-34). This means that additional information provided by applicants on PMSS will contribute to a panel’s assessment of whether the application provides a thorough self-assessment of gender equality, identifies gender equality challenges and opportunities, and offers a four-year SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) action plan that responds to the self-assessment.

As noted above, applicants not opting in to the interim process will be expected to continue to address gender equality issues and opportunities relating to PMSS staff in the areas covered by the current expanded charter application process. Advance HE panel moderators will ensure that applicants who decide not to opt-in to the interim process are not penalised for their decision. Some additional written panellist guidelines will also be made available prior to assessment.

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5. A full breakdown of the PMSS data requirements in the expanded charter process can be found in the Athena SWAN Charter Handbook (pp. 33-34) and in the relevant application forms for Ireland. An overview of the PMSS requirements can be found below in Section 5.3.
4. PMSS Interim Process: requirements

The interim process detailed below sets out a series of questions for applicants. Applicants must complete all questions. Questions not applicable to the institution/department may be indicated by inserting ‘N/A’. Where data is not currently available, applicants may consider supplementary qualitative data or actions to address data gaps.

Answers to the following questions should be inserted into the relevant sections of the expanded charter application form. The section headings and numbering system detailed below follow those in the current application forms and can be used as a guide.

4.1 Bronze institutional requirements

4.2. Professional, managerial and support staff data (additional 1000 words)

(i) Professional, managerial and support staff by grade and gender, with consideration of intersectionality

Look at the career pipeline across the whole institution and between STEMM and AHSSBL subjects. Comment on and explain any difference between women and men, and any differences between STEMM and AHSSBL subjects. Identify any issues at particular grades/levels. Provide consideration of the intersection of gender and ethnicity.

(ii) Professional, managerial and support staff on fixed-term, open-ended/permanent and zero-hour contracts by gender

Comment on the proportions of men and women on these contracts. Comment on what is being done to ensure continuity of employment and to address any other issues, including redeployment schemes.

(iii) Professional, managerial and support staff leavers by grade and gender

Comment on the reasons staff leave the institution. Comment on and explain any differences between men and women, and any differences in schools or departments.

5. SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING CAREERS

5.2 Key career transition points: professional, managerial and support staff (additional 1000 words)

(ii) Induction

Describe the induction and support provided to all new staff at all levels. Comment on the uptake of this and how its effectiveness is reviewed.
(ii) Promotion

Provide data on staff applying for promotion. Consider, as appropriate, the progression of staff through internal vacancies and regrading. Comment on applications and success rates by gender, grade and full- and part-time status. Comment on any evidence of a gender pay gap in promotions at any grade.

5.4. Career development: professional, managerial and support staff

(i) Training

Describe the training available to staff at all levels. Provide details of uptake and how existing staff are kept up to date with training. How is its effectiveness monitored and developed in response to levels of uptake and evaluation?

(ii) Appraisal/development review

Describe current professional development review for professional, managerial and support staff at all levels across the whole institution. Provide details of any appraisal/development review training offered and the uptake of this, as well as staff feedback about the process.

(ii) Support given to professional, managerial and support staff for career progression

Comment and reflect on support given to professional, managerial and support staff to assist in their career progression.

4.2 Silver institutional requirements

5. SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING CAREERS

5.2 Key career transition points: professional, managerial and support staff (300 words)

(i) Recruitment

Break down data by gender and grade for applicants, long- and shortlisted candidates, offer and acceptance rates. Comment on how recruitment processes ensure that, as appropriate, women and men are encouraged to apply.  

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6 Recruitment data on PMSS is not currently included in the expanded charter framework for institutions or departments. As such, consideration of PMSS recruitment has been added only to the interim process for Silver institutional applicants. Advance HE will be consulting with the sector on the inclusion of PMSS recruitment data in future iterations of the charter framework.
4.3 Bronze departmental requirements

5. SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING CAREERS (additional 500 words)

5.2 Key career transition points: professional, managerial and support staff

(i) Induction

Describe the induction and support provided to all new professional, managerial and support staff, at all levels. Comment on the uptake of this and how its effectiveness is reviewed.

(ii) Promotion

Provide data on staff applying for promotion. Consider, as appropriate, the progression of staff through internal vacancies and regrading. Comment on applications and success rates by gender, grade and full- and part-time status. Comment on any evidence of a gender pay gap in promotions at any grade.

5.4. Career development: professional, managerial and support staff

(i) Training

Describe the training available to staff at all levels in the department. Provide details of uptake and how existing staff are kept up to date with training. How is its effectiveness monitored and developed in response to levels of uptake and evaluation?

(ii) Appraisal/development review

Describe current professional development review for professional, managerial and support staff at all levels and provide data on uptake by gender. Provide details of any appraisal/development review training offered and the uptake of this, as well as staff feedback about the process.

(ii) Support given to professional, managerial and support staff for career progression

Comment and reflect on support given to professional, managerial and support staff to assist in their career progression.
4.4 Silver departmental requirements

4. PICTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT

4.3. Professional, managerial and support staff data (1000 words)

It is recommended that section 4.3 only be completed by departments with 15 or more PMSS who for their day-to-day activities work in the department.

(i) Professional, managerial and support staff by grade, contract function and gender

Look at the career pipeline and comment on and explain any differences between men and women. Identify any gender issues in the pipeline at particular grades/job type or contract type.

(ii) Professional, managerial and support staff on fixed-term, open-ended/permanent and zero-hour contracts by gender

Comment on the proportions of men and women on these contracts. Comment on what is being done to ensure continuity of employment and to address any other issues, including redeployment schemes.

(iii) Professional, managerial and support staff leavers by grade and gender and full/part-time status

Comment on the reasons staff leave the institution. Comment on and explain any differences between men and women, and any differences in schools or departments.
4.5 Comparison of PMSS requirements

The following table provides an overview of the PMSS interim process requirements alongside the current expanded charter requirements for PMSS staff.\(^7\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bronze</th>
<th>Bronze with PMSS</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Silver with PMSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-level staff data</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility and managing career breaks</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation and culture</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff data by grade and contract type</td>
<td>●*</td>
<td>●*</td>
<td>●*</td>
<td>●**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment(^8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction and promotion</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and appraisal/development review</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Institutional requirement only
** Institutions and departments with more than 15 PMSS.

\(^7\) Full details of the interim requirements can be found in Section 4.1-4.4. See the *Athena SWAN Charter Handbook* (pp. 33-34) for details of the expanded charter PMSS requirements.

\(^8\) As noted above, recruitment data for PMSS is not part of the current expanded charter process and therefore has been added to the interim Silver process for institutional applicants only.
5. Additional information

5.1 Including PMSS and academic staff in a submission

Advance HE’s definition of professional, managerial and support staff and academic staff for Athena SWAN applications is as follows:

**Academic staff**: includes postdoctoral researchers, teaching only, research only or teaching and research staff, including lecturers, fellows, and professors.

**Professional, managerial and support staff (PMSS)**: includes managers, administrators and technical support staff and any other staff not included in the above definition of ‘academic staff’. For department submissions this includes all staff members who for their day-to-day activities work in the department in roles that do not have an academic function. Staff who are contracted in to the institution/department need not be included in a submission.

5.2 Inclusion of centrally managed PMSS in department submissions

The expanded charter process requires departments to reflect on the experience of those staff who, for their day-to-day work, are based in the department and/or college/faculty. This is because these staff will be exposed to, and are an active part of, the departmental culture. Departmental submissions should include PMSS that are based in, assigned to, or embedded within the department or college/faculty, regardless of where these staff are line managed. Advance HE recognises that in many instances this will not be clear cut, and data will be difficult to disaggregate; however, efforts should be made to do this wherever possible.

Where data is requested, departments can supplement the data relating to departmentally line managed staff with data for the college/faculty as a whole. The table and narrative below provides an example of how information on PMSS staff can be presented and explained:

*Table 1 - staff numbers in the department*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic staff</th>
<th>Departmental PMSS (technicians)</th>
<th>Faculty managed PMSS</th>
<th>Consolidated PMSS members assigned to the faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54.5 FTE (30 FTE female)</td>
<td>8.5 FTE (2.5 FTE female)</td>
<td>6.75 FTE (4.75 FTE female)</td>
<td>11 FTE (7 FTE female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Faculty managed PMSS staff and consolidated staff assigned to the faculty work across the five departments that make up the faculty. The only PMSS members line managed within the department itself are technicians, all other PMSS are...*
managed within the faculty or within central departments within the university such as Student Support, Marketing and Admissions.

5.3 Overview of current PMSS expanded charter requirements

In the expanded charter framework PMSS should be represented on your SAT team and the action plan should include actions relating to PMSS. There are also specific requirements for PMSS data in particular sections of the application form. The information below provides a high-level overview of these requirements. For full details please see the *Athena SWAN Charter Handbook* (pp. 33-34) as well as the relevant application forms.

**Institutional award**

**Bronze**

+ Section 2.iii: present data for academic and professional, managerial and support staff separately.
+ Section 5.5: flexible working and managing career breaks (present professional, managerial and support staff and academic staff data separately)
+ Section 5.6: Organisation and culture

**Silver**

All the Bronze requirements with the addition of:

+ Section 4.2: professional, managerial and support staff by grade and gender; professional, managerial and support staff on fixed-term, open-ended/permanent and zero-hour contracts by gender; professional, managerial and support staff leavers by grade and gender.
+ Section 5.2: key career transition points
+ Section 5.4: career development

**Departmental award**

**Bronze**

+ Section 2: present data on the total number of academic staff, professional, managerial and support staff and students by gender
+ Section 5.5: flexible working and managing career breaks (present professional, managerial and support staff and academic staff data separately)
+ Section 5.6: organisation and culture
Silver
All the Bronze requirements with the addition of:

- Section 5.2 - Key career transition points: professional and support staff
- Section 5.4 - Career development: professional and support staff
- PMSS can be included in the case studies (although only required at Gold)

5.4 List of HEIs eligible to participate in Athena SWAN Ireland

The following institutions are eligible to apply for Athena SWAN under the HEA-Advance HE agreement 2020-2023:

- Athlone Institute of Technology
- Carlow College
- Cork Institute of Technology
- Dublin City University
- Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies
- Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
- Institute of Technology, Carlow
- Institute of Technology, Sligo
- Institute of Technology, Tralee
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- Limerick Institute of Technology
- Mary Immaculate College
- Maynooth College/Saint Patrick’s College
- Maynooth University
- National College of Ireland
- National College of Art and Design
- National University of Ireland, Galway
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- St Angela’s College, Sligo
- Trinity College Dublin
+ TU Dublin
+ University College Cork
+ University College Dublin
+ University of Limerick
+ Waterford Institute of Technology
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