Athena SWAN Charter: The Expanded Criteria
Research Institute Event, July 2016

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Athena SWAN Charter

- Recognition scheme of excellence in women’s employment in STEMM

- 2005: 10 members

- 2016: 137 members

- Managed by ECU

**STEMM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Medicine**

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Athena SWAN: Research Institutes

- Pilot in 2012/2013, mainstreamed 2014
- Supported by BIS
- Application forms were amended to be made appropriate to RIs, based on feedback
- Staff member with specific responsibility to support RIs
Research Institute Advisory Group

Members

- Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
- Diamond Light Source
- John Innes Centre
- MRC National Institute for Medical Research/Francis Crick
- Natural History Museum
- MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit
- Science and Technology Facilities Council
- Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Medical Research Council
- Rural & Environment Science & Analytical Services

**Purpose:**
To meet and help Athena SWAN understand the structural and operational issues that may differ between research institutes and Higher Education Institutions.

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Athena SWAN: award levels

**Bronze**
- self-assessment and analysis
- identify issues and challenges
- plan activities on a solid foundation

**Silver**
- additional to Bronze
- evidence of progress and achievement

**Gold**
- significant record of activity and impact
- beacons for gender equality and good practice

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Athena SWAN: award holders

= 570 award holders

= 86 university awards
  = 77 Bronze, 9 Silver

= 13 research institute awards
  = 10 Bronze, 3 Silver

= 471 departmental awards
  = 314 Bronze, 150 Silver, 7 Gold

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Nov 2015 round:
  = 128 submissions
  = 84 awards
  = 66% success rate
Research Institute Awards

Pilot (award April 2014)
- British Geological Survey
- James Hutton Institute
- John Innes Centre
- Pirbright Institute
- Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute

April 2014
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Rothamsted Research

November 2014
- Babraham Institute
- MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit
- MRC Toxicology Unit

April 2015
- British Antarctic Survey
- United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

November 2015
- Institute of Cancer Research

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Athena SWAN: post-May 2015

- Recognition scheme of commitment to gender equality across institutions
- Expanded to take in AHSSBL and PSS staff
- Adapted from Athena SWAN and ECU’s gender equality charter mark trial (GEM), based on consultation

**STEMM** = Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Medicine

**AHSSBL** = Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, Law

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Expanded process for RIs

- Tailored in consultation with the RIAG
- Comprehensive guidance

**RI Transition period:**
July 2016 – April 2018
From April 2018 on, all applicants must use expanded process

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Athena SWAN: key changes

- Not just about one gender
- Not just about academics
- Not just about the sciences
- More complete data analysis

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Expanded criteria: embedding the principles

Expanded application = expanded criteria

Include all staff groups

Address all gender underrepresentation

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Athena SWAN: what is it all about?

= Commitment to removing barriers that contribute to underrepresentation
= Taking a targeted approach to issues that may be of internal or external origin
≠ Producing reports
≠ Platitudes
≠ Planning to “suggest”
≠ Operating a deficit model

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Athena SWAN: how does it work?

= Complete application; win award; repeat

= Individualised approach; not a box-ticking exercise

= Athena SWAN requires applicants to:
  1. Collect data (quantitative and qualitative)
  2. Critically analyse data
  3. Identify reasons for exclusion and under-representation
  4. Develop a 4 year action plan (post-May) to address these
  5. Show progress over time

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“[Athena SWAN is] the most effective lever for change I have come across in 12 years of equality work.”

– Institutional champion
Gold RI awards

= Draft to be circulated to RIAG in August
= Expanded criteria only
= Recognises:
  = significant & sustained record of achievement
  = addressing challenges across the institute
  = promoting gender equality internally & externally

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ECU’s Race Equality Charter

REC aims to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education.

- Formally launched in January 2016
- Eight award holders
- 21 member institutions
- Exploring expansion to faculties
- Interest from research institutes

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Further information available

Website
www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charter-marks/athena-swan/

Athena SWAN handbook
http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources/

Email
athenaswan@ecu.ac.uk

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Athena SWAN: evidence

Good applications:
- Are honest
- Depend on data reporting
- Link data, analysis and action
- Target support
- Don’t make it a ‘women’s problem’
- Always ask ‘So what?’
- Include a SMART action plan

**SMART** = **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound

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Athena SWAN: challenges

= Requirement for robust self-assessment
= Common reasons for being unsuccessful:

- Poor action plan that is not **SMART**
- Lack of senior management **buy-in**; team lacks power
- **Descriptive**, rather than analytical narrative
- Applications not **identifying** issues raised by the data
- Action plan not **targeted** to issues raised
- Inappropriate balance between process and **proactive** action