



Equality Challenge Unit



Athena SWAN: Improving gender diversity in STEMM

Gender Summit 10, Tokyo, May 2017

Sarah Dickinson Hyams

Head of Equality Charters, Equality Challenge Unit

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges



Equality Challenge Unit



History of the Charter, and recent changes

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

Athena SWAN Charter



= Recognition scheme of excellence in women's employment in STEMM

= **2005**: 10 members

= **2017**: 143 members



STEMM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Medicine



Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

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

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 impact and achievement

Gold

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

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

Athena SWAN awards

688 award holders in total (as of May 2017):

Bronze

- 81 Bronze universities
- 13 Bronze research institutes
- 378 Bronze departments

Silver

- 13 Silver universities
- 3 Silver research institutes
- 172 Silver departments

Gold

- 8 Gold departments
- Uni criteria released in July 2015**



325 applications in 2016
Success rate \approx 67%

Nov 2016 round:
= 167 submissions
= 114 awards
= 68% success rate

- 67% Pre-May
- 70% Post-May



Equality Challenge Unit



Benefits and impact of Athena SWAN

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

How does it work?



= Athena SWAN framework requires you 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 to address these
5. Show **progress** over time



= individualised approach; not a box-ticking exercise

Data → Analysis → Action

Athena SWAN

Questions

= Analyses requested in four main sections:

- = Key career transition points
- = Career development
- = Flexibility and managing career breaks
- = Organisation and culture



Equality Challenge Unit



Athena SWAN

Process

- = Peer reviewed
- = Two submission rounds per year
- = Applications grouped by subject area
- = Five panellists: academics, E&D/HR, subject specialists (drawn from volunteers who are all trained)
- = Conflicts of interest accounted for
- = One chair, one moderator, one note taker
- = Applicants have right to appeal decision
- = ECU may put application to new panel if decision is inconsistent



Why does it work?

- = Set up by the academic and research community
- = Led and championed by senior academics: buy-in from the top
- = Requires the whole unit to pull together to deliver sustainable change
- = Requires thorough self-assessment and reflection to understand individual data and challenges
- = Promotes staff consultation and engagement
- = Awards only valid for 4 years - framework for continuous action



Equality Challenge Unit



What is Athena SWAN all about?

- = Commitment to removing barriers that contribute to underrepresentation
- = Taking a targeted approach to issues that may be of internal or external origin
- = Good practice and honesty

- ≠ Hiring or promoting people because they are underrepresented
- ≠ Producing reports and winning awards
- ≠ Planning to “suggest”
- ≠ Operating a deficit model

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges



Equality Challenge Unit



The benefits of Athena SWAN



- = Highlights areas to make positive changes
- = Provides a focal point for existing informal good practices
- = Increases awareness of career progression issues
- = Encourages increased transparency
- = Demonstrates good working environment to job applicants
- = Flexible to context - subject, country, size, type of university

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

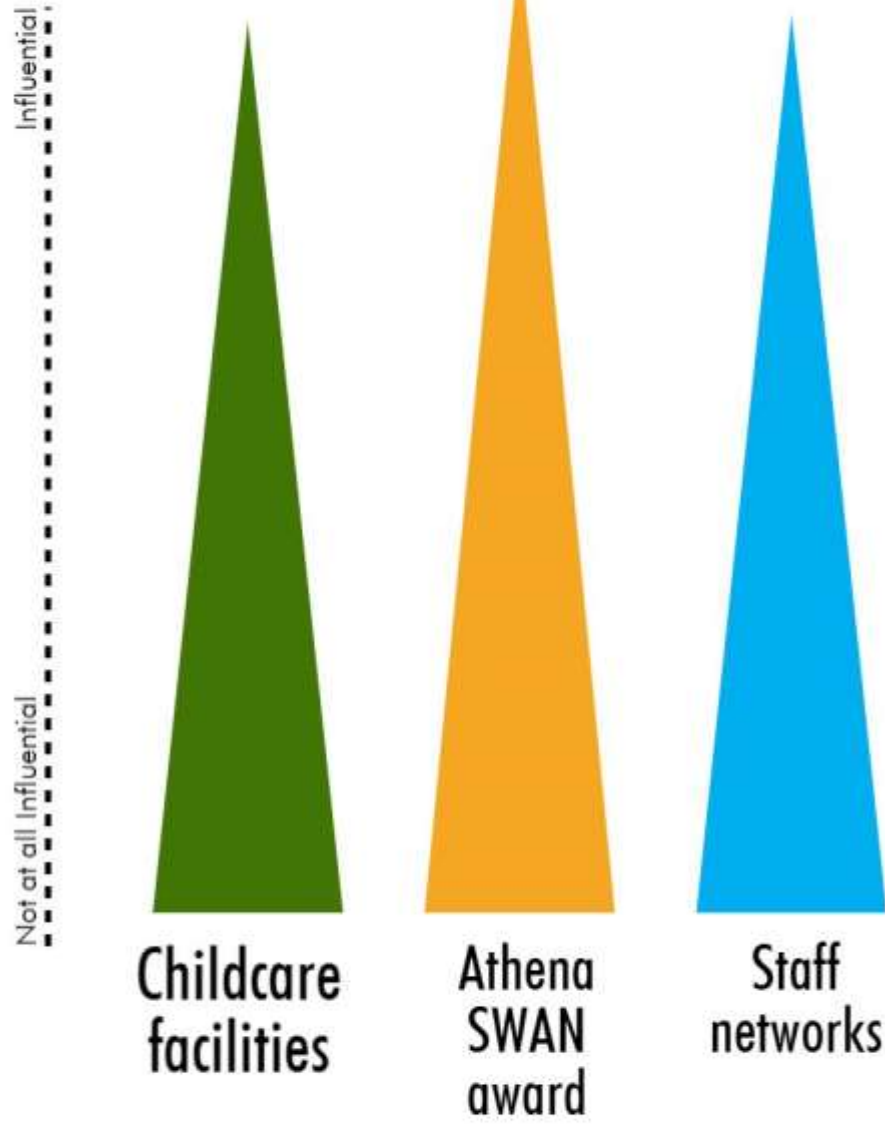
Benefits: Evaluation report (2014)

- = Evidence of **sustainable** change
- = Women – improved visibility, increased self-**confidence**, enhanced **leadership** skills
- = All staff – positive differences in career **satisfaction**, **development** opportunities
- = Administrative and technical staff report a greater sense of **belonging**



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

– Institutional champion



WOMEN RATED HOLDING AN ATHENA SWAN AWARD AS THE TOP EQUALITY ITEM TO CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING TO TAKE A POST

The benefits of Athena SWAN

= Equality work delivers benefits to research

“We began a program of change in our practices and culture to enhance our position as a world-leading, research-led Chemistry Department. The Athena SWAN process has been immensely helpful in this... Our increased collaborative working has led to our Research Volume increasing from £8M in 2007-8 to £13M this year.”

**Department of Chemistry,
Imperial College London**



Equality Challenge Unit



Recognition of impact



= 2011 - NIHR funding and Athena SWAN silver

- = Biomedical Research Centres (\leq £110M per centre)
- = Biomedical Research Units (\leq £10M per unit)
- = Patient Safety Care Centres (\leq £10M per centre)



= 2012 - Welsh National Institute for Social Care and Health Research (NISCHR) funding and Athena SWAN silver

- = NISCHR Centres and Units

= 2016 - HEA National Review of gender equality

- = HEIs should achieve an Athena SWAN award within 3 years
- = The HEA should establish Athena SWAN in Ireland on a permanent basis
- = Research-funding agencies should require HEIs to have attained a bronze Athena SWAN award within 3 years and a silver award within 7 years in order to be eligible for funding

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

Recognition of impact



- = Royal Society of Edinburgh report
 - = 3 of 6 key recommendations mention Athena SWAN
- = SFC outcome agreements ask about AS activity



“It is estimated that a doubling of women’s high-level skill contribution to the economy would be worth as much as **£170M/yr** to Scotland’s national income.”

- = Nuffield Council on Bioethics report
 - = Investigated culture of scientific research in UK
 - = Recommends for all HEIs to commit to Athena SWAN



Equality Challenge Unit



Efficacy in other jurisdictions

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

GENDER-NET: creating a framework



= ECU was involved in a European Commission FP7 funded project: **GENDER-NET** - aimed to address challenges facing research institutions in achieving gender equality in research and innovation



- = 12 partners to the project, which was led by CNRS in France; 2 non-European partners in Canada and US
- = Part of the project explored Athena SWAN methodology & other schemes. Athena SWAN was the only scheme to be assessed as both **successful and transferable** -
Next steps: GENDER-NET will draft a framework for a transnational award

Athena SWAN: Republic of Ireland



- = Cross-sector initiative, supported by the Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- = Committee established to advise and act as conduit between ECU and HE sector
- = STEMM focused
- = Reviewed and tailored processes, delivered regional workshops
- = Since April 2015, five universities and six departments have been successful in gaining Bronze awards



Athena SWAN: Australia



- = STEM focused pilot includes 40 institutions: universities, medical research institutes and publicly-funded research agencies
- = Adapted to Australian culture and context e.g. inclusion of indigenous Australians
- = Pilot launched in Sept 2015, will run until Sept 2018
- = ECU is supporting SAGE a programme in the Australian Academy of Sciences who is managing the pilot, including delivering regional training and workshops



Final thought - Good practice benefits all



Equality Challenge Unit



“I know that some are unhappy with its focus – some are men worried about unfairness, and some are women who sense they might become victims of tokenism.

But most of the changes proposed by departments – such as holding key meetings during core hours, or promoting flexible working – end up benefitting both sexes, especially those who are parents and caregivers, making the profession a little bit more friendly.”

Dr Jenny Rohn, UCL



Equality Challenge Unit



Thank you

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges

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

Advancing equality and diversity in universities and colleges