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Project Juno: Advancing Gender Equality In Physics Careers In Higher Education In The UK

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The Institute of Physics (IOP) has a longstanding interest in diversity issues, particularly around the participation of girls and women in physics, who are under-represented in physics education and employment. In 2003, the Institute introduced a Site Visit scheme, in which selected panels visited physics departments and produced a dedicated report on their “gender inclusiveness”. After two years, the results of these visits were condensed into a general report: Women in University Physics Departments: a Site Visit Scheme. Building upon the best practice identified in this influential report, in 2007 the IOP established Project Juno, an award scheme that aims to promote gender equality in higher education physics departments. The Juno Principles provide a framework for specific actions to improve the participation and retention, particularly of women, in physics careers. The main aims of the scheme are to develop an equitable, open and transparent working culture in which students and staff, men and women, can all achieve their full potential; to promote open discussion of gender and other equality issues; and to encourage departments to determine priorities for action. Departments submit for the award and are assessed by an independent Panel of physicists with longstanding experience of addressing gender equality issues. There are three levels of the scheme (Supporter, Practitioner and Champion) and almost all of the 55 physics departments in the UK and Ireland are now participating, together with Research Institutes and one company. Currently, there are 22 Supporters, 14 Supporters and 15 Champions.

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