

The logo for AdvanceHE, featuring a small teal circle and a purple dot to the left of the text "AdvanceHE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

AdvanceHE

The Athena SWAN Charter

October 2018

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Purpose of Advance HE

To advance the professional practice of higher education to improve outcomes for the benefit of students, staff and society

- ***Charitable object***
 - *to support strategic change and continuous improvement through the development of individuals and organisations of higher education*

Athena SWAN Charter

+ Origins:

- + Legacy of Athena Project: ‘Advance and promote the careers of women in science, engineering and technology in higher education and research and to achieve a significant increase in the number of women recruited to top posts in the UK’
- + Athena SWAN: Recognition scheme of excellence in women’s employment in STEMM (2005–2015)

Athena SWAN Charter

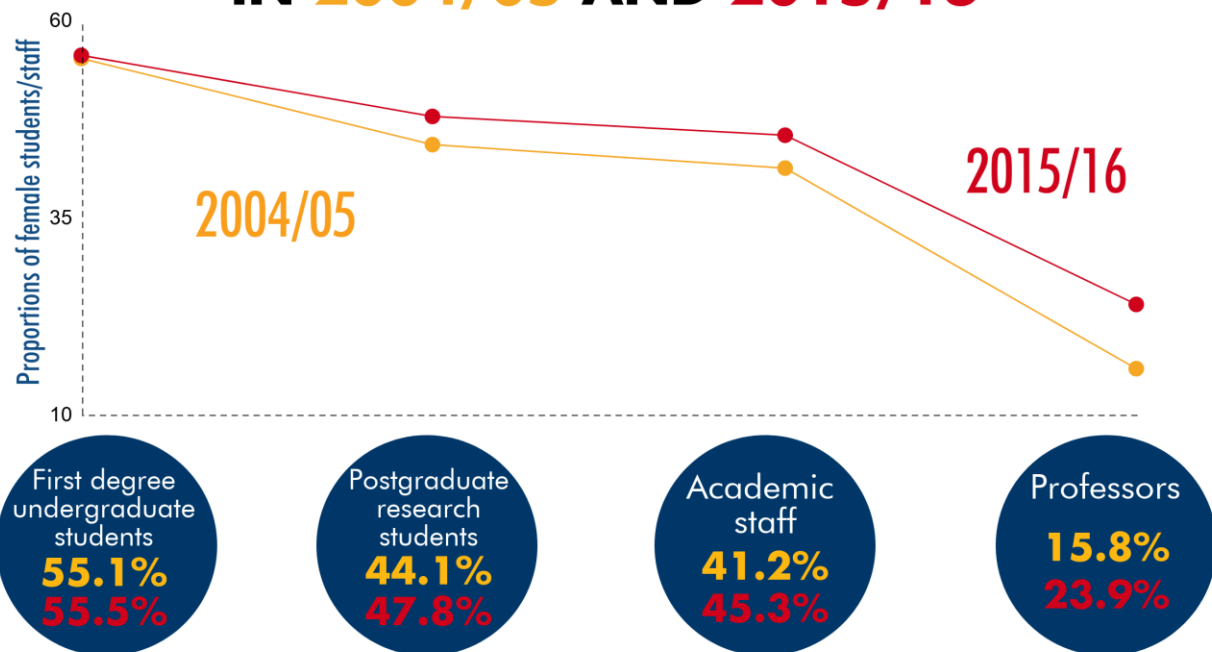
- + 2015 expansion:
 - + Now recognises commitment to gender equality across all disciplines
 - + Covers professional and support staff (PSS)
 - + Institutions also required to consider the intersection of gender & ethnicity/race, and the experience of trans people



Athena SWAN Charter

- + Principles remain true to original aim. Women being recruited to top posts still an issue

PROPORTIONS OF FEMALE STUDENTS/STAFF IN 2004/05 AND 2015/16



Proportions of female students and staff, 2004/05 and 2015/16

Athena SWAN Charter

+ Head of member institutions commit to the principles of the charter

- + Advance gender equality
- + Demonstrate senior commitment
- + Make structural and cultural changes
- + Remove obstacles
- + Tackle the gender pay gap

- + Address short-term contracts
- + Recognise disciplinary differences
- + Tackle discrimination against trans people
- + Consider intersectionality
- + Recognise talents of all



Athena SWAN Process

1. Institution works to address the Athena SWAN principles, drawing on materials provided by Advance HE to conduct a robust self-assessment
2. The institution applies for a Bronze award

Awards require:

- = Robust self-assessment
- = Identification of issues
- = SMART action plan to address issues
- = Positive impact of previous activities (Silver & Gold)
- = Beacon/championing activities (Gold)

Athena SWAN Process

3. Peer-review panels assess award submissions and provide feedback to applicants

- + Two rounds each year: c. 50 peer-review panels per round (c. 200 submissions, institutional and departmental)
- + Five panellists: academics, EDI/HR, subject specialists
- + All panellists receive training and conflicts of interest are accounted for
- + Advance HE staff ensure consistency of decision-making and record detailed feedback
- + Applicants have right to appeal decision

Athena SWAN Process

4. Having received Bronze, the institution continues to work to address the Athena SWAN principles and undertake its four-year action plan. After four years, they submit to renew or upgrade
5. Once an institution holds an award, its departments can begin this process themselves:

+ Combined top-down and bottom-up approach embeds gender equality in standard practice, and allows discipline-specific consideration and action

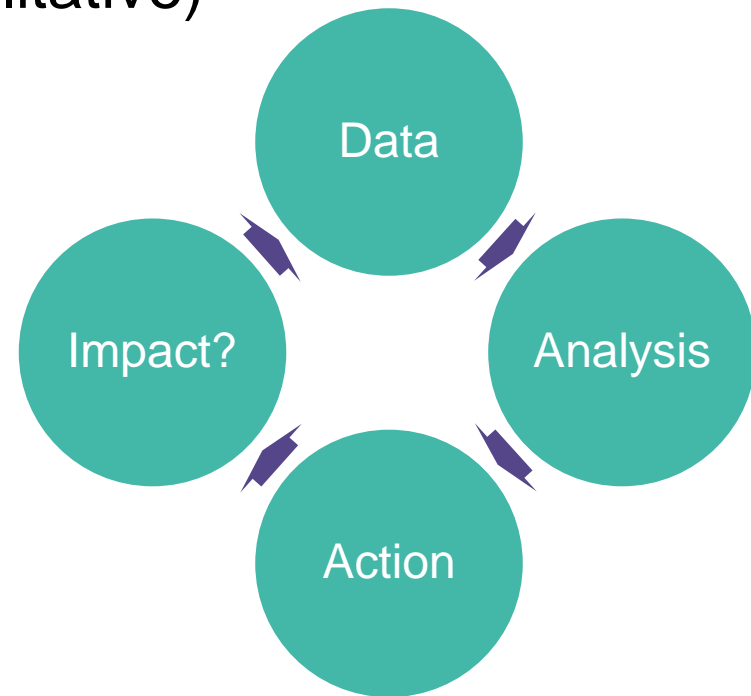
Athena SWAN is alive!

- + 145 members are engaged in our framework for continuous action
- + This is rewarded through awards that recognise steps on the journey
- + Every applicant can be recognised for their work
- + Every applicant must take ownership of their progression
- + Applicants are accountable to their staff/students for their commitments

Athena SWAN is alive!

Athena SWAN is an individualised approach, not a box-ticking exercise. Requires applicants to:

- + Collect data (quantitative and qualitative)
- + Critically analyse data
- + Identify reasons for exclusion and under-representation
- + Develop a 4 year action plan
- + Show progress over time
- + REPEAT!



Athena SWAN drives good practice

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
A thorough self-assessment using qualitative and quantitative analysis	●	●	●
Identify key issues	●	●	●
Actions in place to address key issues and carry the institution forward	●	●	●
Demonstrates the impact of previous activity		●	●
Sustained impact and serves as a beacon in the sector and beyond			●

Athena SWAN drives good practice

2006 Examples:

- + Formal induction
- + Reviews & feedback on draft promotion paperwork
- + Personal development encouraged

2017 Examples:

- + Bridging-funds to ensured contract extensions for fixed-term staff post maternity leave
- + Changing modes of student assessments
- + Protected research time on return from a career break

Athena SWAN drives good practice

2018 Examples:

- + Funds for childcare costs, crèches for conferences hosted and provision for interviewees
- + Gender balanced reading lists, review of teaching materials to ensure that gender stereotypes not enforced
- + Diversity observers in interviews, all posts advertised as flexible and welcoming of part and full-time applicants, candidates required to show commitment to EDI principles
- + Staff are not expected to read emails outside of core hours
- + Mapping of diverse routes to career progression, development of individualised promotion plans, CV sharing project to allow colleagues to see others' career paths

Athena SWAN is democratic

+ Over 750 panellists support our work

Athena SWAN panellists November 2017 round



633

Registered panellists



211

Panellists took part in
Nov 2017 round



45

Panels in Nov 2017
round

Athena SWAN is democratic

- + The sector drives its own standards through the peer reviewers



Athena SWAN is democratic

“Dear Equality Charters Team

Thank you for your response to our recent Athena SWAN application.

Whilst understandably disappointed with the outcome, we appreciate the time that has been spent in considering our application, and value the feedback that has been provided.

Our experience of the application process, and your analysis of our submission, provide a firm foundation for the further work that is required to achieve Athena SWAN recognition.

Best wishes

[Dean of School]”

Athena SWAN is successful

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

(Evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the Athena SWAN Charter, Loughborough University, 2014)

Athena SWAN is successful

- + Set up by and for the academic community
- + Led and championed by senior academics
- + Promotes staff consultation and engagement
- + Increases awareness of career progression issues
- + Gives people permission to challenge managers
- + Highlights areas to make positive changes
- + Awards are recognised by candidates
- + Awards are flexible to context and only valid 4 yrs

Athena SWAN is successful

- + 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**

(Evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the Athena SWAN Charter, Loughborough University, 2014)

Athena SWAN award holders following November 2017 round

All awards currently held:

- 731 Total awards
- 617 Department awards
- 96 University awards
- 18 Research institute awards



Athena SWAN is international

Expansion to the Republic of Ireland

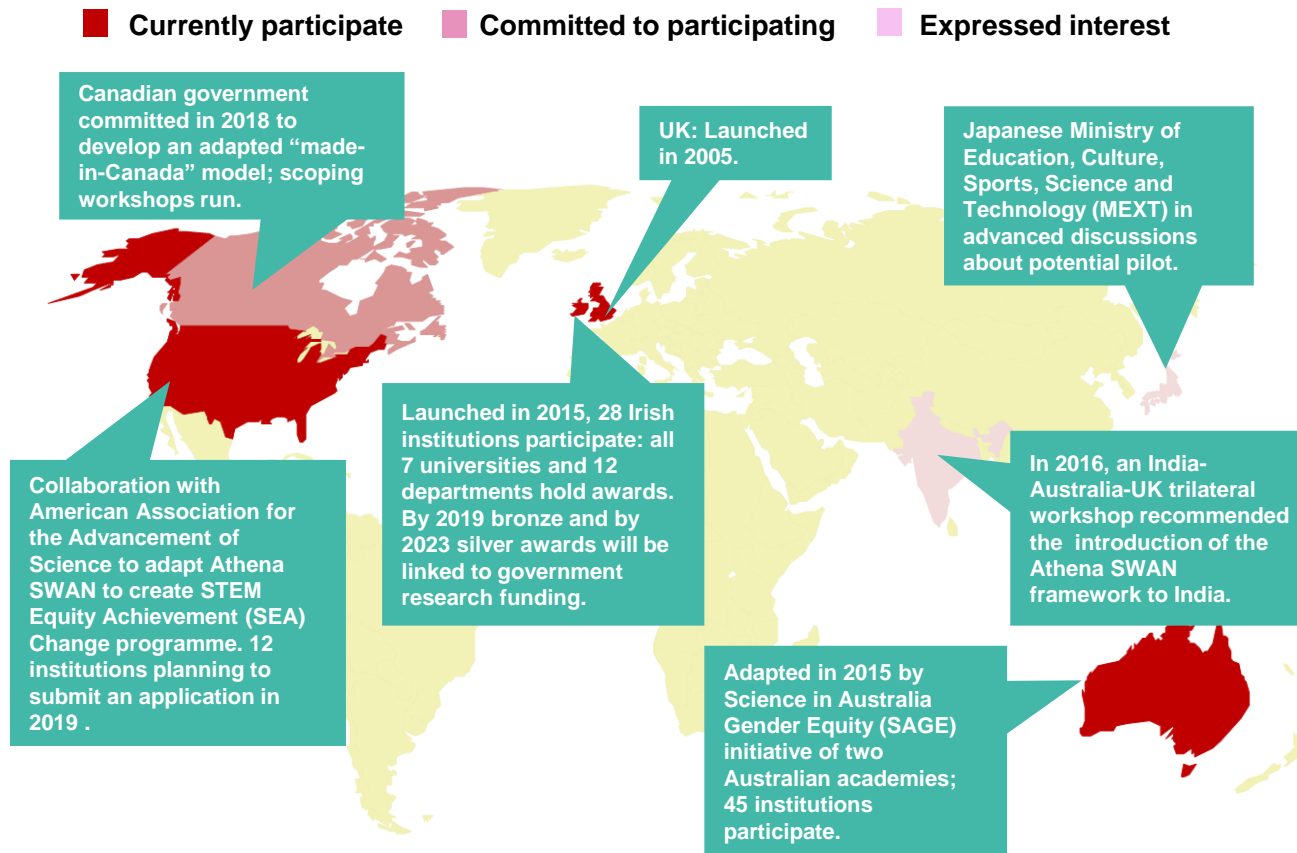
+ Since April 2015, seven universities and 12 departments have been successful in gaining Bronze awards

A post-pilot survey asked:

‘Do you think that the Athena SWAN pilot has helped to raise awareness of gender equality issues in Irish higher education?’

96.2% answered affirmatively

Athena SWAN is international



Athena SWAN is international

Gender-NET project

- + European Commission FP7-funded project which aimed to address challenges facing research institutions in achieving gender equality in research and innovation
- + Part of the project explored Athena SWAN methodology and other schemes
- + Athena SWAN was the only scheme to be assessed as both successful and transferable

Athena SWAN has some challenges

- + New impact study commencing imminently
- + Steering Group will make recommendations in September 2019. Expect recommendations to:
 - + harness strengths and further improve design
 - + address an increasing expectation for standardisation
 - + consider applicant workload
- + Opportunity: increasing professionalisation of equality work, through formation of Advance HE

Further reading

- + Munir, F., Mason, C., McDermott, H., Morris, J., Bagilhole, B., and Nevill, M. (2015) 'Advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine: evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the Athena SWAN Charter', Loughborough University for Equality Challenge Unit.
- + Equality Challenge Unit staff (2015) 'GENDER-NET Analysis report: Award schemes, gender equality and structural change', Equality Challenge Unit for GENDER-NET consortium
- + Ovseiko, P.V., Chapple, A., Edmunds, L.D. and Ziebland, S. (2017) 'Advancing gender equality through the Athena SWAN charter for women in science: An exploratory study of women's and men's perceptions', *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 15(12). doi: 10.1186/s12961-017-0177-9.
- + Caffrey, L., Wyatt, D., Fudge, N., Mattingley, H., Williamson, C. and McKevitt, C. (2016) 'Gender equity programmes in academic medicine: A realist evaluation approach to Athena SWAN processes', *BMJ Open*, 6(9). doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012090.
- + Woods, A. and Harris, A. (2018) 'The impact of Athena SWAN on Humanities Departments', King's College London for the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Thank you

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For more information
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