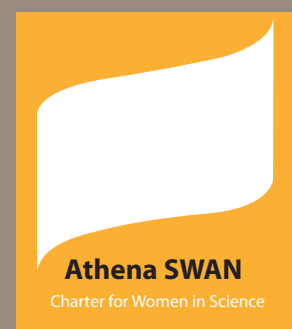


Athena SWAN

Charter for Women in Science



Foreword

The UKRC has been a supporter and funder of the Athena SWAN Charter from the outset because it dovetails perfectly with our strategic priorities for improved retention and progression practices for women in science, engineering and technology.

Equality Challenge Unit has been promoting equality for staff in the higher education sector since 2001 and, since 2006, we have expanded our role to include equality and diversity issues for students as well. Promoting gender equality is central to our work and for this reason we are committed to supporting the Athena SWAN Charter.

Bringing our organisations together to consolidate the excellent work done since the Athena SWAN Charter was launched just two years ago makes good sense. We want to use all our contacts and skills to strengthen and promote the Charter so that it becomes widely recognised as the mark of outstanding employment practice for women in academic science throughout the UK. We also want to see the good practice recognised by the awards process brought to a wider audience, both in higher education and beyond.

The creation of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills acknowledges the ever closer connections between science and higher education. Women have a critical role to play here, but are still seriously under-represented in science, engineering and technology roles in universities, particularly at senior levels. Joining the Athena SWAN Charter is an important step for any university or research institution which is committed to gender equality in the workplace and we urge you to spread the word and encourage others to sign up.



Nicola Dandridge
Chief Executive
Equality Challenge Unit



Annette Williams
Director - UK Resource
Centre for Women in SET

What is the Athena SWAN Charter?

The Athena SWAN Charter is a scheme which recognises excellence in science, engineering and technology (SET) employment for women in higher education. The Charter was launched in June 2005 with 10 founder members. Any UK university which is committed to the advancement and promotion of the careers of women working in SET in Higher Education and research can apply for membership.

Charter Principles:

The six principles which Charter members are asked to accept and to incorporate into their action plans are:

- To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action from everyone, at all levels of the organisation
- To tackle the unequal representation of women in science requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation
- The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine
- The high loss rate of women in science is an urgent concern which the organisation will address
- The system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of women in science, which the organisation recognises
- There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career in science, which require the active consideration of the organisation.

10 reasons to join the SWAN Charter

- To be recognised as an employer of choice, attracting and retaining talent
- To enhance the organisation's external reputation, including the public relations and marketing opportunities offered by gaining an award
- To help fulfil statutory equal opportunities responsibilities, e.g. the Gender Equality Duty
- To identify and publicise initiatives that exist but are not known about outside the department concerned
- To stimulate change at organisational and departmental levels
- To receive individual, expert feedback when submitting annual reports and recognition award submissions
- To have the university's achievements profiled positively on the Athena SWAN website
- To gain access to the Charter's network of contacts and events
- To underline your commitment to gender equality to students, funders, research councils and industry
- There is no charge for Charter membership

Recognition awards

Charter members are encouraged to apply for SWAN recognition awards, which are assessed on five key areas:

- Knowing the baseline and the SET academic profile
- Providing positive support for women at key career transition points
- Changing the culture and gender balance in decision making
- Work-life balance practices, their introduction and uptake
- Champions, responsibilities and accountabilities

Bronze SWAN awards recognise a university's achievement in the collection and analysis of key data and the development of action plans on gender equality in SET in the first three areas.

Silver SWAN awards recognise achievement in the collection, analysis and comparison of key data, the development and implementation of action plans, and a clear demonstration of progress on gender equality in SET in four of the five key areas.

Gold SWAN awards recognise achievement in the collection, analysis and benchmarking of key data, the development, implementation and evaluation of action plans and a clear demonstration of significant progress on gender equality in SET in all five key areas.

Bronze awards are only available at university level. But individual departments can apply for awards at Silver or Gold level. This enables them to profile their own achievements, as well as set out an action plan which takes account of differences between departments within a single university.

SWAN Charter awards are judged annually by a panel of experts. Past panellists have included:

*Brenda McLaughlin,
Queen's University Belfast*

*Professor Helen Gleeson,
Manchester University*

*Dr Alison Mostyn,
Nottingham University*

Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell

*Joanne Pardoe,
GlaxoSmithKline*

*Professor Gillian Lovegrove,
British Computer Society*

*Professor Malcolm MacCullum,
Queen Mary University of London*

SWAN Award Holders

Gold

- University of York, Department of Chemistry

Silver

- University of Bristol, Department of Biochemistry
- University of Edinburgh, Department of Chemistry
- Imperial College, London
- Keele University
- Queen's University, Belfast
- University of York, Department of Biology
- University of York, Department of Psychology

Bronze

- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- Heriot Watt University
- University of Nottingham
- University of Oxford
- University of Plymouth
- Queen Mary, University of London
- University of Southampton
- University of Sunderland
- University College, London
- University of York

Dr Caroline Dessent, a laser spectroscopist working in the Department of Chemistry at the University of York, has directly benefited from York's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity. Since arriving 10 years ago, she has juggled her research fellowship and teaching commitments with raising two young children.

"There is broad understanding in my department that prejudice isn't tolerated – and that is not the case everywhere," Dr Dessent cautions.

"There have always been a lot of women in chemistry at York and the tradition of women scientists here is well-established. I believe that York's supportive environment owes much to successive Heads of Department. Incremental changes in procedure and practice have also helped to ease the logistical burden on women scientists trying to balance domestic and professional pressures."

Events

Awards ceremonies: 2 ceremonies have been held at the Royal Society to present the ground breaking universities with their awards. The first presentations in March 2006 were made by Lord Rees of Ludlow, President of the Royal Society. Sir David King, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, presented the awards at the second ceremony in March 2007.

Workshop: 21 members attended a workshop in March 2007 for members who were planning or thinking about making SWAN recognition submissions. The workshop included sessions on what the recognition panel looked for as well as a presentation by a university who had been successful in the previous round of submissions.

Seminar: In March 2007 38 people attended a seminar on Gender Awareness in SET and new developments in HE and beyond.

Scottish Meeting: 33 people attended a seminar on Athena SWAN hosted by Napier University in March 2007. Members and non-members had the opportunity to hear how other universities had promoted gender equality in SET and to put their questions to a panel of experts.

Transnational: Working with the UKRC and the Jive Project, Athena SWAN has been involved in a European Equal project to increase the participation of female scientists in education and research. SWAN was represented at meetings in Brussels, Amsterdam, Bradford and Valencia.

How the Charter is managed

The Athena SWAN Steering Committee

Oversees the strategic direction of the Athena SWAN Charter in cooperation with the main funders, Equality Challenge Unit and UKRC

Selects the members of the recognition panels for each round of awards

Provides expert input to the recognition scheme and the annual awards process

Current members of the Steering Committee are:

- Margaret Adams, Chair. Mechanical Engineer with an MBA and over 15 years of international experience
- Dr Louise Archer, Kings College, London. Deputy Chair. Founder and co-Director SWAN Charter 2005-07
- Dr Birgit Brandt, Royal Society
- Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Equality Challenge Unit
- Dr Bob Ditchfield, Director of Education Affairs and Diversity at the Royal Academy of Engineering
- Caroline Fox, Co-Founder and Programme Manager of the Athena Project. Founder and co-Director SWAN Charter 2005-07
- Dr Katharine Hollinshead, Diversity Programme Leader at the Institute of Physics
- Norma Jarboe, Director of Opportunity Now, the UK employers' forum working to create an inclusive workplace for women across the public, private and education sectors
- Dr Nancy Lane. Co-founder and Chair of Athena Project and past Director of WiSETI at Cambridge University. Co-author of the Greenfield Report
- Prof Robin Perutz, President of Dalton Division of the Royal Society of Chemistry and former Head of Chemistry Department at York University
- Annette Williams, Director of the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET

Until March 2007 the SWAN Charter was managed by the Athena Project, based at the Royal Society. In April a Coordinator, Julie Ashdown, was appointed to manage the Charter and recognition process as a stand-alone project, now based at the offices of Equality Challenge Unit. Julie previously worked as an adviser to the Education Sector at Opportunity Now.

Margaret Adams, Chair of the SWAN Charter Steering Committee "In a world where science and technology are the key competitive drivers, it is imperative that the UK takes concrete steps to unleash the untapped potential of its women in Science, Engineering and Technology. The SWAN Athena Charter is a strategic tool which enables academic institutions to do just that. Through a systematic approach of identifying and removing the artificial barriers which hinder women's career progression, the Charter encourages equity of access within SET Departments and thus stimulates the career advancement of women."

Sources of support

The Athena SWAN Charter is jointly funded by the UKRC and Equality Challenge Unit, with occasional support from the Royal Society. Its original development was also made possible by funding from the European Social Fund under the Equal Initiative.

Partnership work

Since its launch, the Athena SWAN Charter has worked with the following organisations to promote excellence in science, engineering and technology employment for women in higher education:

- Institute of Physics
- Royal Society of Chemistry
- JIVE Partners
- Scottish Resource Centre for Women in SET
- Royal Academy of Engineering
- Royal Society
- London Metropolitan University

Website

The Athena SWAN website includes...

- Information about Charter members
- Best practice case studies and reports
- Information about how to join
- The awards and recognition process
- Links to other sources of good practice
- News on SET issues
- A definition of SET

See www.athenaswan.org.uk

For the last two decades, Queen's University Belfast has actively addressed issues relating to equality of opportunity. In 2000 the University recognised the priority and focus needed to be given to the representation of women and has made significant progress and improvements on a wide range of policies and procedures. This has included the establishment of the Queen's Gender Initiative and Women's Forum, which has been at the centre of ensuring practical steps and action plans are put in place and implemented. Work has included a review and enhancement of policies supporting work life balance; a programme of mentoring; the review and amendment of the academic promotion process; annual monitoring of recruitment and promotion outcomes; and a comprehensive programme of equal pay audits. Queen's has also commissioned portraits of women in the Great Hall and a single large canvas celebrating the achievement of women in the Council Chamber.

[Queen's University Belfast, Silver SWAN holders since March 2007]

Plans for 2008

Membership

A major recruitment drive will be held in 2008 to substantially increase the number of members. This will include events and visits across the UK.

Awards

Members will be encouraged both to submit for a recognition award, if they have not already done so, and those who are already award winners will be urged to apply for recognition at a higher level. A workshop in early 2008 will include advice on entering for an award.

Scotland

Building on a successful event in 2007, a membership drive will also take place in Scotland.

Website

The website will be updated and revised to make it more user friendly and accessible.

Events

- An Awards Ceremony will be held in October 2007 for the presentation of awards made in the latest recognition round. The ceremony will follow on from the Athena Conference at the Royal Society.
- A workshop will be held in March 2008 to promote best practice and to encourage applications for the 2008 awards.
- Smaller events will be held in the regions.

Athena SWAN Charter Membership

- University of Bath
- University of Bedfordshire
- **University of Bristol**
- Brunel University
- **University of Cambridge**
- Cardiff University
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Edinburgh
- **Heriot Watt University**
- **Imperial College, London**
- Institute of Cancer Research
- Keele University
- Lancaster University
- Leicester University
- **Loughborough University**
- University of Nottingham
- **University of Oxford**
- **University of Plymouth**
- **Queen's University Belfast**
- Queen Mary University of London
- **University of Southampton**
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Sunderland
- University of Swansea
- **University College London**
- University of York

Founder members are highlighted



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