

## **University of Bristol, Department of Physiology and Pharmacology**

### **Athena SWAN Silver Award May 2008**

#### **The context**

Founded in August 2007 through the merger of the Departments of Physiology and Pharmacology, the Department has just over 100 academic and research staff and over 200 students. Four members of staff are joint appointments with other departments in the School of Medical Sciences.

#### **What the data indicates**

- Highest ratio of female professors of any department in the university, and well above the average of UK science departments
- A female majority of undergraduates and postgraduates, which is not reflected at post-doctoral level

#### **Support for women at key career transition points**

- Mentoring – the Department promotes the British Pharmacological Society's mentoring scheme, as well as providing a departmental mentor for all new academic staff. Mentoring circles will be introduced where groups of 4 or 5 staff with a mix of gender and experience regularly meet to discuss aspects of an academic's tasks and career.
- The Department is arranging a series of meetings for each academic with the Head of Department and Director of Research to identify barriers or gaps in CVs that could potentially hold up career progression.
- The Staff Review process will be linked to the annual promotions process as it will be beneficial for all staff, including women aspiring to be promoted to Reader or Professor, to have constructive mentoring in advance of applying.

#### **Changing the culture and gender balance in decision making**

- Open and transparent decision making processes – the agendas for the Departmental, Research and Teaching Committees are open to suggestions from all departmental members and the minutes are available to all in the department. This has increased women's involvement in decision-making.
- The Department is mindful of 'committee overload' - the pressures placed on the time of senior women who are often invited to sit on committees - not only because of their experience, but also to provide a gender balance. Consideration of this issue will be built into the revised Staff Review process to ensure that staff are supported in balancing such commitments against the demands of their 'day jobs'.

#### **Champions, responsibilities and accountabilities**

- The Self-Assessment Team members will continue to meet and champion the principles of the Charter. The group will oversee the action plan and develop SWAN web pages to promote and publicise the achievements and evidence progress against the action plan.