

## **Lancaster University: Athena SWAN Bronze Award May 2008**

### **The context**

Since its inauguration in 1964, Lancaster University has established a reputation for innovation in education and quality in research. The University combines a strong regional commitment including involvement with local higher and further education institutions, with an international outlook, as witnessed by the number of undergraduate and increasingly, postgraduate exchange programmes.

The University has 16,500 students (of whom 4,000 are part-time) and 650 academic staff. There are nine SET departments – biology, computing, engineering, communication systems, environmental science, geography, mathematics and statistics, physics and psychology – employing a total of 191 FTE academic staff.

### **What the data indicates**

- The percentage of women in lecturer posts markedly increased over 4 years and there has been a steady increase in female senior lecturers.
- The proportion of women appointed to academic and research posts has consistently exceeded the proportion of female applicants.
- The total number of female professors reflects national levels in the Faculty of Science and Technology, but as the positive trends feed through from lecturer numbers this is expected to increase.

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

- Training on project management, presentations, career planning, publishing and maximising research impact is provided to support to improve the transition between post-doc to first lecturer. All contract research staff receive training on writing proposals, and preparation for job interviews.
- The promotion systems have been reviewed to prevent any discriminatory barriers to progression. Candidates are now invited to declare any significant periods of “time-out” that may be relevant to their career history; for example, caring for children or other relatives, maternity leave or long-term sickness.

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

- Details of family-friendly policies are included in the information sent out to potential applicants. The availability of flexible working schemes that can be tailored to the needs of individuals is advertised on the University website.
- Women are well represented on senior decision making committees. A strong move towards gender balance is shown by all three of the recent appointees to University council being women.

### **Innovation**

- Lancaster University is planning a qualitative research project on the experiences of their dual academic career couples to help them recruit and retain such staff and provide better support for them.