



An Impact Evaluation of the Athena SWAN Charter

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Glossary of terms

Term	Meaning
AHSSBL	Arts, Humanities, Social Science, Business and Law
Champion	The nominated 'lead' for Athena SWAN work (in this report)
ECU	Equalities Challenge Unit (now Advance HE)
EDI / E&D	Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity / Equality and Diversity
EPVC	Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor
FPE	Full person equivalent
FTE	Full time equivalent
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE)
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IOP	Institute of Physics
JACS	Joint Academic Coding of Subjects
KEF	Knowledge Exchange Framework
LMS	London Mathematics Society
MRC	Medical Research Council
PDR	Performance and Development Review
PDRA	Post-doctoral Research Associate
PGR	Postgraduate Research (i.e. Ph.D)
PGT	Postgraduate Taught (i.e. Masters)
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RSC	Royal Society of Chemistry
SAT	Self-Assessment Team
SMT	Senior Management Team
STEMM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UG	Undergraduate

I. Executive Summary

I.1 Introduction and Methodology

In 2018, Advance HE commissioned Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University to evaluate the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter across the higher education (HE) and research sector to determine its effectiveness as a vehicle for sustainable change, and to identify areas for further development. The study focussed on five key aspects of impact in UK HE: on gender profiles, on recruitment and promotion of women, and on culture change, as well as on engagement with the Charter in the sector and on experiences and perceptions related to the awards process and implementation of the Charter.

The study involved:

- a quantitative strand, in which data about Athena SWAN submissions and success were linked to Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on staff and students and to Research Excellence Framework (REF) intensity data
- a qualitative analysis of a sample of Athena SWAN applications for information about approaches to evidencing impact and collection of quantitative data beyond that available from HESA
- a survey of students and staff
- a set of case studies involving interviews.

I.2 Key findings

- From the analysis of HEI and departmental engagement with Athena SWAN, it is clear that the charter is widely used throughout UK HE as a tool for addressing gender challenges in higher education. In particular, 70% of HEIs in the UK have engaged with the Athena SWAN Charter. The majority of those that have not engaged are speciality arts schools. At the department level, 53% of STEMM cost centres in HEIs that have submitted an Athena SWAN application have submitted at least one application at the department level. In addition, approximately 17% of full or partial AHSSBL cost centres in HEIs that have submitted an Athena SWAN application have submitted at least one application at the department level.
- Where the Charter is most effective, it is implemented as a tool to ensure that practices and policies present no disadvantage to any member of staff or student. This 'holistic' approach targets cultural change through the modification of behaviours and attitudes of all involved. This was evidenced in case study interviews, which revealed that the Charter is commonly perceived as a key tool to help in the process of delivering real behavioural and cultural change, as well as in the survey, which found that:
 - 93% of Champions believed that the Charter has had a positive impact on gender issues in their university, department or research institute,
 - 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on equality and diversity issues, and
 - 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on the career progression of women.
- Additionally, the survey showed that, when compared to Silver and Bronze departments/institutes, women in Gold departments/institutes are more satisfied with performance/development reviews, more familiar with criteria and processes for promotion,

more likely to have been encouraged to apply for promotion, to believe that there are more flexible working practices, to be more optimistic about career prospects and to have a mentoring scheme available to them.

- There is some numerical evidence linking the Charter to higher levels of engagement by women, with departments with an award having on average 7% more female staff compared to no award departments. However, staff numbers are subject to many influences, and it is likely that substantial increases will require more time. It is likely that numerical evidence will become apparent more quickly in the data that is not available from HESA. For instance, analysis of data requested in AS applications shows some trend towards promotions to level of senior lecturer/reader and associate professor becoming more gender balanced in submitting departments over the period leading up to submission. There is also a trend towards an increase at Departmental level in percentages of women on job shortlists, and in percentages of appointments to women. The current application format makes it difficult to collate this data efficiently to extract trends. It is therefore suggested that in the future, Advance HE moves towards an online submission system in which the data can be directly entered in an appropriate format for such analysis.
- The Charter is seen as a tool that unlocks open communication, honest discussion, real scrutiny of practices and commitment to a common purpose, and there is strong evidence that the Charter processes and methodologies have supported cultural and behavioural change – not just around gender equality, but equality and diversity in all its forms. Thus it would be useful in the future if the Charter were to find methods also of collecting standardised measures of culture in order to evidence its effectiveness in this area and to help HEIs and departments benchmark their culture against national data.
- Although the study found that there have been a huge number of actions and benefits identified by participants, it also revealed some considerable challenges which threaten ongoing engagement. These include resource requirements and lack of leadership support. Therefore, it is important that future developments of the Charter seek to address these issues in order to increase permeation and solidify the pre-eminence of the Charter as the key award in the field of gender equality.

A full impact evaluation summary, including details of the recommendations arising from the research, can be found in section 9 (page 115) of this report.

2. Introduction

This document presents the findings from the study to evaluate the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter. Delivered by Ortus Economic Research in partnership with Loughborough University, the study was delivered over the period of December 2018 and April 2019.

The outcomes of this research are designed to inform the future development of the Athena SWAN Charter and thus enhance the support Advance HE gives to institutions that are committed to promoting gender equality.

Advance HE has appointed a steering group of sector representatives to review the charter systems. This evaluation of the impact of Athena SWAN will inform the steering group's consultations and recommendations. This report is designed to inform the work of the steering group and to provide Advance HE and the Athena SWAN community with useful insight regarding the current impact of the Charter and how these might be enhanced in the future.

The document is structured as follows:

- The remainder of this section describes aims and objectives of the study and the methodology employed.
- Section 3 outlines the findings of the first element of the study – an analysis of HESA data matched to Athena SWAN Charter data to investigate the permeation and take up of the Charter and the wider national trends in key data on gender representation in staff and students.
- Section 4 presents findings from surveys of staff and students in HEIs and research institutes, designed to investigate the experiences and opinions around career development, support, progress and equality and diversity.
- Section 5 presents findings from a number of depth case studies which have been undertaken with 13 departments and institutes across the UK, examining the impact of the Charter in detail and the experience of applying for and working to it.
- Section 6 presents the findings from a process that involved capturing data on recruitment, promotion and leave from a sample of applications and analysing these data to identify trends and impacts.
- Section 7 outlines the findings from a qualitative assessment of the approaches identified to evidencing impact drawn from 10 Gold and Silver applications.
- Finally, section 8 presents key conclusion and recommendations for the development of the Charter in the future.

2.1 Aims and objectives

The Athena SWAN Charter has now been running for fourteen years. Whilst there have been a number of studies of the impact of the Charter, Advance HE has decided that there is now an opportunity to look again at the impact the Charter has had on gender equality within HEIs, with a particular focus on measuring longitudinal impact. The key aim of the study is to generate knowledge and learning that can be used for the future development of the Charter.

In addition to the growing body of evidence and time series of data and applications, the new study recognises that the Charter has undergone a number of changes since the previous independent evaluation undertaken in 2014. The main changes are the expansion of the Charter principles, the expansion of the Charter to include staff in non-academic roles, and the expansion of the Charter beyond STEMM to include staff and students in Arts and Humanities subject areas. The number of

people engaged with Athena SWAN in UK universities, departments and research institutes continues to grow and this presents an opportunity to evaluate the impact that the wider and larger reach is having on individuals in higher education and research.

To further examine the impact of Athena SWAN in the sector more broadly, in 2014 ECU commissioned a research team from Loughborough University to undertake an independent evaluation of the Charter¹. The research team found that the Athena SWAN process is a driver for improving gender diversity in UK institutions, and found evidence that the Charter brings about sustainable change. The research highlighted that women in Athena SWAN award-holding departments report improved visibility, increased self-confidence and enhanced leadership skills, while all academic and research staff – regardless of gender – noted positive differences in career satisfaction and access to career development opportunities. In Silver award-holding departments, the positive benefits were felt beyond the academic and research cohort, with administrative and technical staff also reporting a greater sense of belonging.

Given the changes that have occurred to the Charter and the time since the last formal evaluation of its impact, Advance HE decided in 2018 that a new impact evaluation should be commissioned.

The aim of this study is therefore to deliver:

An independent evaluation of the impact of the Charter in the UK in quantitative and qualitative terms

To support this aim, the study will address the following objectives:

1. To establish the effectiveness of the Charter in facilitating improvement in the gender profile of universities and research institutes, including:
 - Evidence of the effectiveness of the Athena SWAN Charter in advancing women's careers in STEMM.
 - Early indicators of the effectiveness of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving gender equality in AHSSBL.
2. To identify the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in processes such as recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training.
3. To identify the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in changing the culture and attitudes across the participating institutions to address gender inequality and unequal representation, and any other indirect impacts on particular groups.
4. To identify the permeation, quality and longevity of engagement with the Athena SWAN Charter in participating institutions, including:
 - The extent to which Athena SWAN practices and learning have been incorporated into mainstream strategies and processes in participating HEIs.
 - The sustainability of the changes that HEIs are making as a result of their participation in the Athena SWAN Charter.
5. To undertake an exploration and testing of the experiences and perceptions of HEIs of implementing the Athena SWAN Charter and awards process.

¹ Undertaken by Loughborough University

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Methodology overview

The study has been delivered across three related strands of activity, each with its own methodology. These are:

1. HESA matched data analysis.
2. Athena SWAN applications data capture and analysis. This involves two elements:
 - identifying and collating common quantitative data across a sample of applications.
 - Identifying and collating qualitative data regarding evidence-based impact arising from equality and diversity policies and practices.
3. Mixed methods fieldwork. This combines:
 - Large scale surveys of students and staff across the HEI and research institute landscape.
 - Delivery of targeted case studies.

2.2.2 Methodology detail

Each of the individual methodological elements is described in detail below.

2.2.2.1 *HESA matched data analysis*

The purpose of this stage was to establish key trends and changes in gender representation across staff and students in STEM and AHSSBL subject areas and then to identify any relationships between observed changes and the profile of Athena SWAN awards across the HE landscape.

This stage involved matching HESA staff and student data to the Athena SWAN master record dataset. This is challenging because the two datasets are not 100% compatible, given that HESA 'staff record' data are structured by 'cost centre' and the Advance HE data are structured by school or department. These two categories do not match in every instance. A similar problem is encountered when matching the student data, where the HESA data are structured by JACS code.

HESA data from the period 2013-14 to 2016-17 were used to identify trends.

2.2.2.2 *Athena SWAN applications data capture and analysis*

The first stage in this element involved identifying a random sample of 150 applications across levels and subject areas. This task was undertaken by Advance HE based on existing data sharing arrangements with the applying departments and institutions. Applications for departments, institutions and institutes were included within the sample.

The aim of this stage was to test the effectiveness of collating application data to support analysis of impact, identify any impact that was evidenced by the data and to comment on the nature of the data available (as this informs us of both the challenge of engaging with the application process and also whether impact is being evidence using such data).

It was decided to focus on data related to recruitment, promotion and maternity/parental/other leave data as these are comparatively consistent across applications and represent data that are not available at a national level to assist in benchmarking.

Once the sample was agreed and the process confirmed, data were then extracted from applications and collated in a spreadsheet. The process aimed to capture data for the most recent three years as presented in each application, and were collated as data for year 1, year 2 and year 3, allowing data from different calendar years to be brought together.

The second stage involved selecting a random sample of 10 successful Gold and Silver applications to support the qualitative analysis of evidence-based impact of the Charter as presented in applications from some of the leading proponents of the scheme. The aim was to review and comment on the approaches taken and how successfully these evidenced the wider impact of the Charter within specific departments.

The 10 applications selected were all from STEMM departments as there were no successful Silver or Gold AHSSBL applications available to the study.

The approach adopted was to review each application to identify examples of evidence-based impact and, where these were found, to collate information related to:

- The action which led to the impact
- Evidence of the impact
- The challenge which the action was designed to address

From this information, coupled with a review of the data presented in charts and tables to support impact claims, we then created a short overview of each application which was then drawn together to inform the results write up.

2.2.2.3 *Mixed methods fieldwork*

The first part of this element involved the design and execution of a survey exercise targeted at institutes and departments with and without Athena SWAN awards. This stage of the research followed an approach which mirrored that used in the 2014 evaluation study, in order to create a consistent set of results.

The aim of the surveys was to capture primary data regarding the opinions and experiences of staff and students across the HE and Research Institute landscape. The surveys were designed to cover career progression, workplace culture and awareness and understanding of Athena SWAN (where present) and/or other equality Charters. An example questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

Departments and institutes were categorised into three groups:

1. Departments or institutes with an award
2. Departments in and institutions with and award but without an award themselves
3. Department in institutions without awards and institutes without awards.

Fourteen individual questionnaires were designed, each one based on a similar set of questions but tailored to address specific issues according to the nature of the respondent (academic staff, research staff, professional support staff, second year undergraduates, postgraduate research students, Athena SWAN Champions or EDI Champions) and the context for each set of respondents (department/research institute with an award, departments/research institute without an award).

Departments with awards were approached through their institutional champion and asked to participate in the research study. Departments without awards were either approached through their Athena SWAN Champion (if they had unsuccessfully applied or were in the process of applying for the first time) or their Head of Department or EDI lead. The invitation asked departments and institute to take part in the surveys and to express a willingness to take part in case studies (if selected).

Figure 1 identifies the number of invitations sent and the number of resulting participants by group.

Figure 1: Survey invitation and participation

Group	Category	Invited	Participated
1	Research Institutes with awards	18	6
1	Athena SWAN departments	150	39
1	Athena SWAN Institutional Champions	82	49
2	Departments without awards (in institutions with awards)	37	2
3	Departments without awards (in institutions without awards)	96	1

The surveys were disseminated between 15th December 2018 and end of January 2019 and were closed on 11th February 2019. Overall, the surveys generated a sample of 2,293 responses. However, the low number of participating departments without an award has limited any comparisons between departments/institutes with awards and those without. Comparisons within the analysis have therefore been focused on responses from men and women and from departments/institutes with different levels of award.

The case study programme was designed to investigate all research questions using depth interviews and discussion groups. In total, 13 case studies were delivered covering 10 departments and institutes with awards and three without awards.

Conducted in strict confidence, the case study interviews were conducted across the following institutes or departments²:

- 1 Silver award AHSSBL department in a Russell Group University
- 2 Bronze award AHSSBL departments in non-Russell Group Universities
- 1 Gold award STEMM department in a Russell Group University
- 2 Silver award STEMM departments in Russell Group Universities
- 1 Bronze award STEMM department in a Russell Group University
- 1 Bronze award STEMM research institute
- 2 Bronze award STEMM departments in non-Russell Group Universities
- 1 non-award holding AHSSBL department (unsuccessful Charter applicant) in a Russell Group University
- 2 non award-holding AHSSBL departments (not yet applied) in Russell Group Universities³.

All discussions were conducted via telephone except for the Gold STEMM department, which involved a site visit and a mix of individual interviews and group discussions. Eleven of the case studies were conducted in England with one each in Wales and Scotland.

² The departments and institutes are located in England unless otherwise stated

³ These case studies involved interviewing the lead for equality and diversity (or Athena SWAN lead/coordinator) only

3. Research Findings: Analysis of matched HESA data

Section summary

Research question 1 – The effectiveness of the Charter in improving the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women’s careers:

- The statistical analysis of trends in the proportion of female staff and students over the period 2013-2017 identifies significant differences between departments with an award and those departments with no award. For example, departments with an award have on average 7% more female staff compared to no award departments (i.e. 32% cf. 25% respectively). And award departments have on average 4% more female MSc students than no award departments.
- However, when the HESA analysis examined whether the length of time engaged with Athena SWAN was related to increases in the proportion of female academic staff in STEMM departments over time, it found that it is not a significant predictor of change. In other words, the analysis did not indicate a statistical relationship between the Charter and increases in the proportion of female staff over time.
- It is not possible to test causality (in either direction) with the data available. However, the results suggest that it is more likely that a higher proportion of female staff and students leads to an award than the other way around, given the lack of evidence of change over time in departments with awards compared to departments without awards.

Research question 4 - The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement (incorporation of learning and sustainability of changes):

- The analysis of matched HESA data demonstrates that permeation in the sector is very good, suggesting that the Athena SWAN Charter has been very successful in engaging institutions and departments.
- The Charter has been crucial in raising the profile of gender equality across the HE and research institute sectors. It is important that future developments of the Charter seek to increase permeation and bolster the pre-eminence of the Charter as the key award in the field of gender equality.
- Later sections of the study show that there have been a huge number of actions and benefits identified by participants but there are some considerable challenges which threaten both ongoing permeation but also future efforts to demonstrate impact, such as department size, resource requirements and leadership support, for example.
- The analysis also identified evidence of barriers to engagement with the Charter. In particular it found that engagement with small departments is comparatively low, as it is with departments with a lower Research Excellence Framework (REF) intensity. The analysis also suggests that departments struggle to maintain engagement with the Charter. These challenges point to ways in which the Charter could be redesigned to address these, particularly around the balance of responsibilities between institutions and departments.

○ [Link to Recommendations 5 and 9](#)

3.1 Introduction

The datasets used for the analysis in this section were created by merging HESA data with the Athena SWAN master record and the 2014 REF ranking by intensity. Each department engaged with Athena SWAN (whether they hold an award, have applied unsuccessfully or have signed up to the Charter but have not yet applied) was matched to HESA data using the appropriate subject classification. The HESA Staff Record was matched using HESA cost centre codes, while the HESA Student Record was matched using Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) principal subject codes. In both cases, the process was the same. Appropriate codes were identified based on the subject areas covered by the department, with reference to online prospectuses where subject areas were not clear from the department’s name.

There is not always a perfect match between Athena SWAN departments and the codes used in HESA data. Some departments were represented by a single code. Some departments were represented by multiple codes. Other departments were represented by a single code, but it was noted that the department related to *part* of that code (this was more common in the HESA Staff Record in which cost centre categories are relatively broad compared with the degree of detail in JACS subject codes). Where several departments were partially matched to the same code (e.g. in medical subjects in some HEIs), this cost centre or JACS code was duplicated in the analysis dataset⁴.

REF ranking by intensity data was matched to HESA data following a similar process, where REF categories were matched to cost centres and JACS principal subject codes.

3.2 Relationship between Athena SWAN award status and gender profile

This section is aimed at the following study goal:

1. To establish the effectiveness of the Charter in facilitating improvement in the gender profile of universities and research institutes, including:

- a. Evidence of the effectiveness of the Athena SWAN Charter in advancing women's careers in STEMM.*
- b. Early indicators of the effectiveness of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving gender equality in AHSSBL.*

In addition, we give an overall picture of gender trends in HESA data over time.

Key points from this section

Research question 1 – The effectiveness of the Charter in improving the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women's careers:

- The quantitative analysis does not show a strong national upward trend in the proportion of female staff and students.
- However, the analysis does demonstrate some differences in the proportions of female staff and students between award departments and no award departments but does not provide evidence of causality.
- Controlling for subject, institution and research intensity (as captured by REF category) the analysis did find that having an award is a significant predictor of having a higher proportion of female staff (32% in STEMM award departments vs. 25% in STEMM no award departments. The equivalent data for AHSSBL is 35% in award departments and 31% in no award departments).
- The results are similar for students (where the analysis focuses on STEMM subjects as there is insufficient data for AHSSBL subjects). Having an award is a predictor of having a higher proportion of female students, with a difference of 2% at undergraduate levels and 4% at MSc level. There was no relationship evidenced at PhD level.
- Length of time having an award is not a significant predictor of the change in the proportion of women, meaning that there is no evidence in this analysis of the Charter leading to improvements in the proportions of female staff and students over a period of engagement.

It is important to note that observational data such as we are working with *cannot be used to determine effectiveness*, i.e. we cannot determine a causal relationship between the Athena SWAN Charter and any sector improvements observed over time. However, we can examine if there is a *correlation* between engagement of departments with the Charter and diversity data for those departments as

⁴ Further detail of the three categories in which departments were coded is provided in the Appendix (page 85).

evidenced by HESA data. *Where no correlation is observed, there is unlikely to be any causal relationship.* Where correlation is observed, there may be a causal relationship, but this cannot be concluded from the analysis.

3.2.1 Athena SWAN award status and percent of women academic staff

Due to rounding of available data, it was only possible to study overall percentages of female academic staff in HESA cost centres and not percentages of women staff at various academic levels.

For STEMM departments we used a statistical model that controls for subject, HEI and REF rating. Using this model, we find that holding an award or not is a significant predictor of the proportion of women with award departments having on average 32% women staff and no award departments having on average 25% women staff. The differences among award levels was not significant.

For AHSSBL departments we used a statistical model for that controls for subject, HEI and REF rating. Using this model, we find that holding an award or not is a significant predictor of the proportion of women with award departments having on average 35% women staff and no award departments having on average 31% women staff. The differences among award levels was not significant.

Using a similar model to examine whether the length of time engaged with Athena SWAN was related to increases in the proportion of women academic staff in STEMM departments over time (from 2013–2017), we found that it is not a significant predictor of change. Institutional level Athena SWAN engagement is also not a significant predictor of increases in the proportion of women academic staff at department level. However, the analysis does reveal where HEIs have a higher level of award (silver or Gold), a greater number have experienced higher increases in the proportion of women academic staff than have experienced large decreases. So whilst not statistically significant, there is evidence that HEIs with higher awards are more likely to see large increases in the proportion of women academic staff at the departmental level.

There was not a sufficient number of AHSSBL departments who had a long period of engagement to analyse the impact of engagement.

The proportion of women academic staff in both STEMM and AHSSBL departments is correlated to if they hold any level of Athena SWAN award or not. However, the fact that length of engagement is not correlated to changes in percent of women academic staff in STEMM departments suggests that if there is a causal relationship, it is that having a higher proportion of women staff makes an award more likely rather than that engaging with the process increases the percentage of women staff.

3.2.2 Athena SWAN award status and percentages of women students at undergraduate (UG), postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) levels.

We used a linear mixed model to examine how proportions of women students relate to Athena SWAN award status, controlling for other factors, such as the type of programme, REF intensity, and country (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), which may have a confounding effect.

For students on first degrees, the country in which the institution is located is important, with Scotland having about 60% women students generally and Wales having about 54%. Northern Ireland and England are between the two. REF intensity rating, although marginally significant at the 5% level according to the calculated p-values, has a minimal effect on proportions of women.

The relationship to award level is hard to discern. The effect is positive for Bronze and Gold and negative for Silver, and it is difficult to draw firm conclusions because of the small numbers of Silver and Gold departments.

We follow this up with a model just for STEMM departments in which we consider only if the department has an award or not. This tells us that for STEMM departments, controlling for subject area, those with awards have about an extra 2% women than those without. Country remains an important predictor, with Scotland having higher proportions and Wales having lower. REF rating is not important. Note that this is only providing information about correlation between award and proportion of females - it is not evidence of causation in either direction.

Finally, comparing whether an Athena SWAN application was ever submitted by the department rather than if one is currently held, tells us that having submitted an application or not is not correlated to the proportion of female students.

We have completed the same analyses for MSc programmes (with the same cautions) and again, we see that having an Athena SWAN award of any type is related to a somewhat higher proportion of women. Location in Scotland is associated with a somewhat higher proportion of women and location in Wales is associated with a somewhat lower proportion.

Among STEMM departments, having an award is associated with having an additional 4% of women MSc students. Again, this does not imply causality. Unlike for first degrees, for MSc programmes, just being engaged with the Athena SWAN process is associated with about the same additional proportion of women students (4%). However, for PhD programmes, neither award level, having an award nor engagement (nor REF rating nor country) is an important predictor.

When we examine changes in proportions of female students over time (only considering first degrees and MSc here, as the data is not robust enough to provide reliable results for PhDs), we find that for BSc degrees we see no effect on change in proportion of women students between 2012-13 and 2016-17. For MSc's we also see no effect on change in proportion of women students between 2012-13 and 2016-17.

The proportion of women UG and PGT students in STEMM departments is correlated to if they hold any level of Athena SWAN award or not, but with a very small difference – just 2%. As with the proportion of staff, length of engagement is not correlated to changes in the proportion of female UG and PGT students, which suggests that if there is a causal relationship, it is that having a higher proportion of women UG and PGT students makes an award more likely rather than that engaging with the process increases the percentage of women UGs and PGTs. There is no correlation between percentage of women PGR students and Athena SWAN status.

3.2.3 Data presentation

This section uses 'box plot' diagrams to present the analysis and findings. Each 'box plot' is made up of:

1. A bold centre line which indicates the median proportion of female staff (or students) in each set of cost centres, i.e. where half of all cost centres have a proportion of female staff (or students) above the level the line indicates and half have a proportion below this.
2. A box around the heavy centre line which identifies the upper and lower quartiles, i.e. a quarter of departments have proportions of female staff (or students) in between the level of the median (heavy centre line) and the top of the box and a quarter of departments have a proportion of female staff (or students) in between the median and the bottom of the box.
3. The horizontal line at the top shows the maximum proportion of female staff (or students) among all cost centres within a subject area (except for a few outliers, indicated by circles). The horizontal line at the bottom indicates the minimum proportion of female staff (or students) among all cost centres within a subject area (except for outliers, which are indicated by circles).

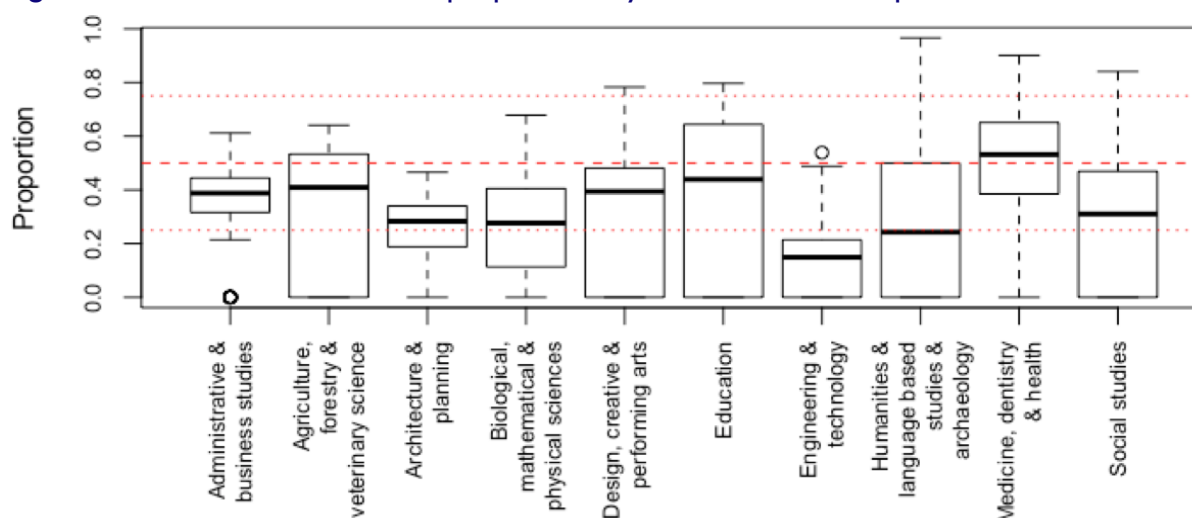
4. The red dotted lines indicate 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75, i.e. where a quarter, a half and three quarters of staff or students are female.

3.2.4 Benchmarking data comparison between 2012-13 and 2013-14

3.2.4.1 Change over data period in proportions of female staff by subject

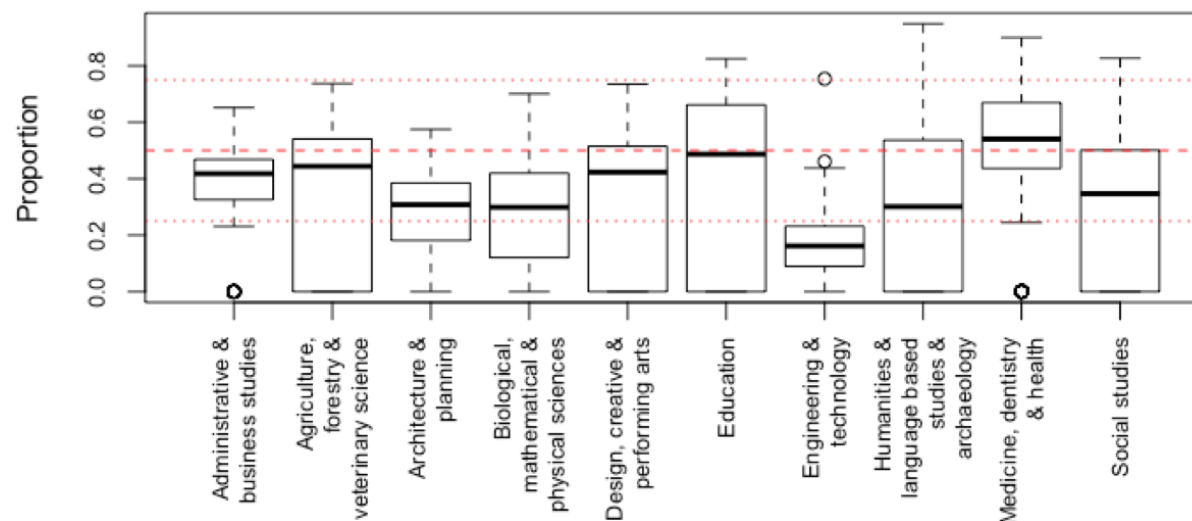
For HESA Cost Centres at UK HEIs with at least 20 members of staff we have the following distributions of proportions of female staff depending on Cost Centre Group.

Figure 2: Quartiles of female staff proportions by Cost Centre Group in 2012-13



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

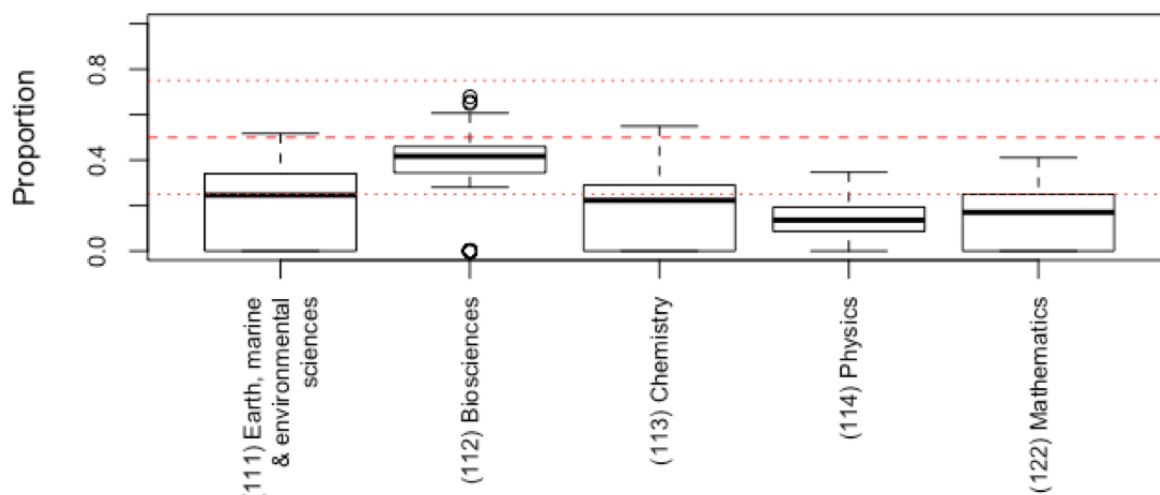
Figure 3: Quartiles of female staff proportions by Cost Centre Group in 2016-17



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

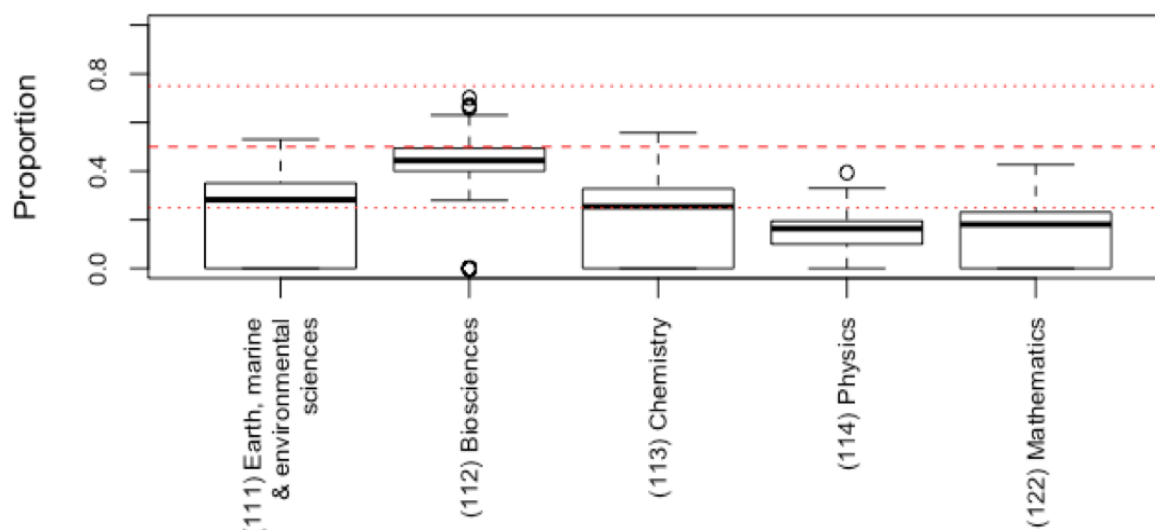
For Biological, mathematical & physical sciences we have the further detail presented in Figure 4 and Figure 5 below.

Figure 4: Quartiles of female staff proportions by Science Cost Centre in 2012-13



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

Figure 5: Quartiles of female staff proportions by Science Cost Centre in 2016-17



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

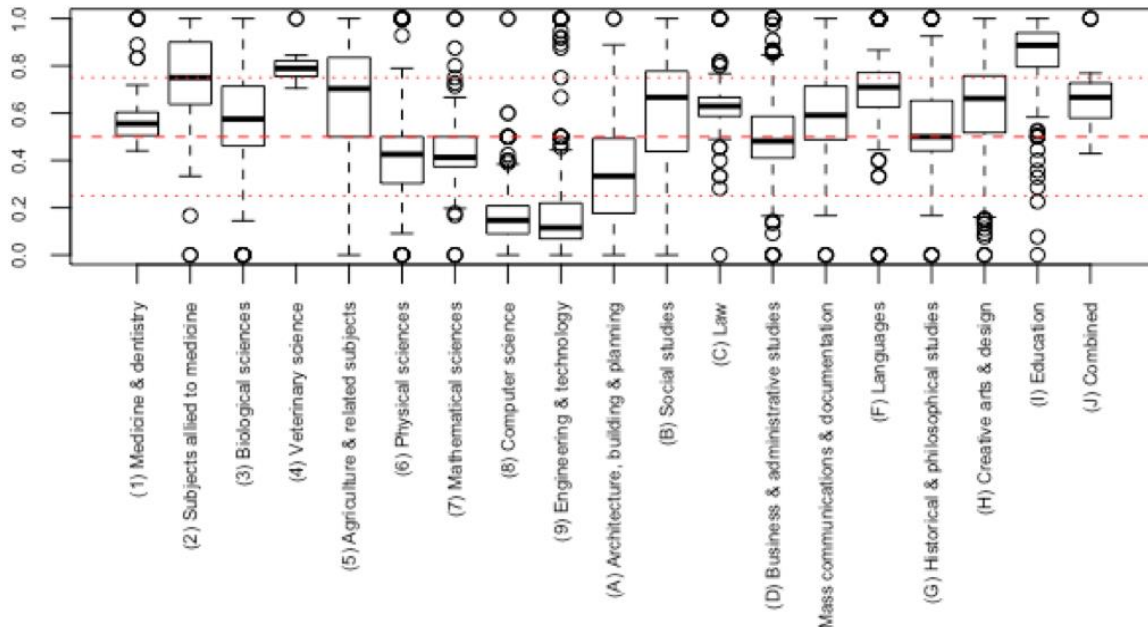
These figures evidence minor improvements in proportions of female staff in all areas, but still a long way to go to parity except in Medicine, dentistry & health, where in fact female staff are more likely to be in a small majority. Engineering & Technology, mathematics and physical sciences remain stubbornly low.

3.2.4.2 Change over data period in proportions of female students by subject

Figure 6 and Figure 7 show that both in 2012-13 and 2015-16, more women than men are enrolled at UG level in most subjects. Exceptions are physical sciences, mathematical sciences, computer science, engineering & technology and architecture, building and planning. A comparison of the proportions

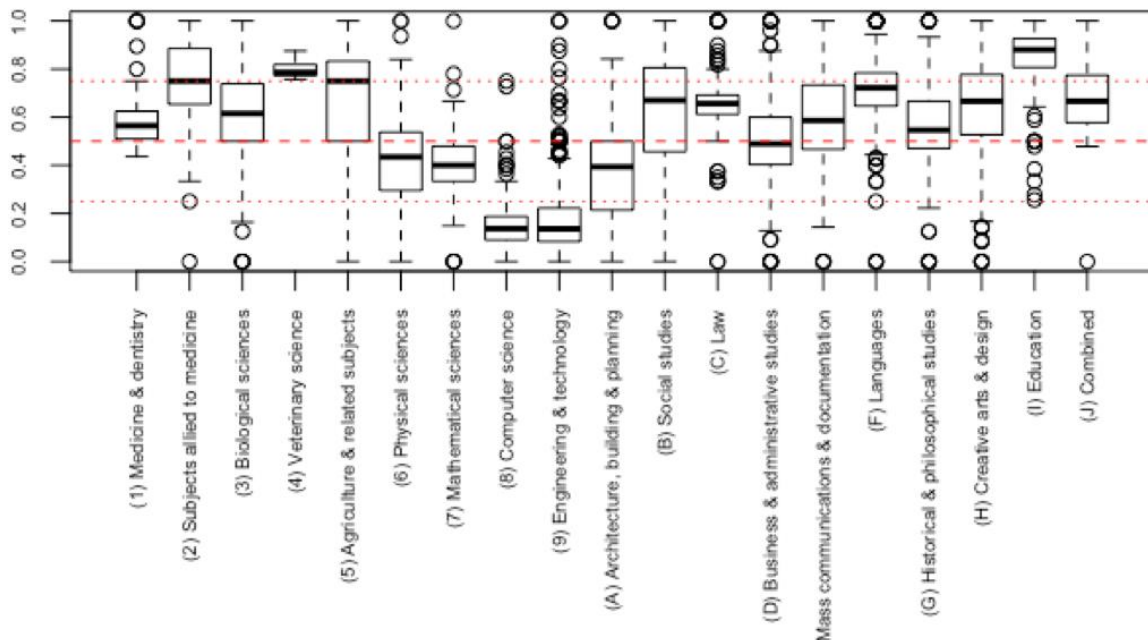
between the two years evidences a moderate improvement in proportions of UG women in physical sciences and architecture, building and planning over the period considered, but no change or even a decrease in mathematical sciences, computer science and engineering & technology.

Figure 6: Quartiles of proportions of women in first degree programmes JACS subject areas 2012-13



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

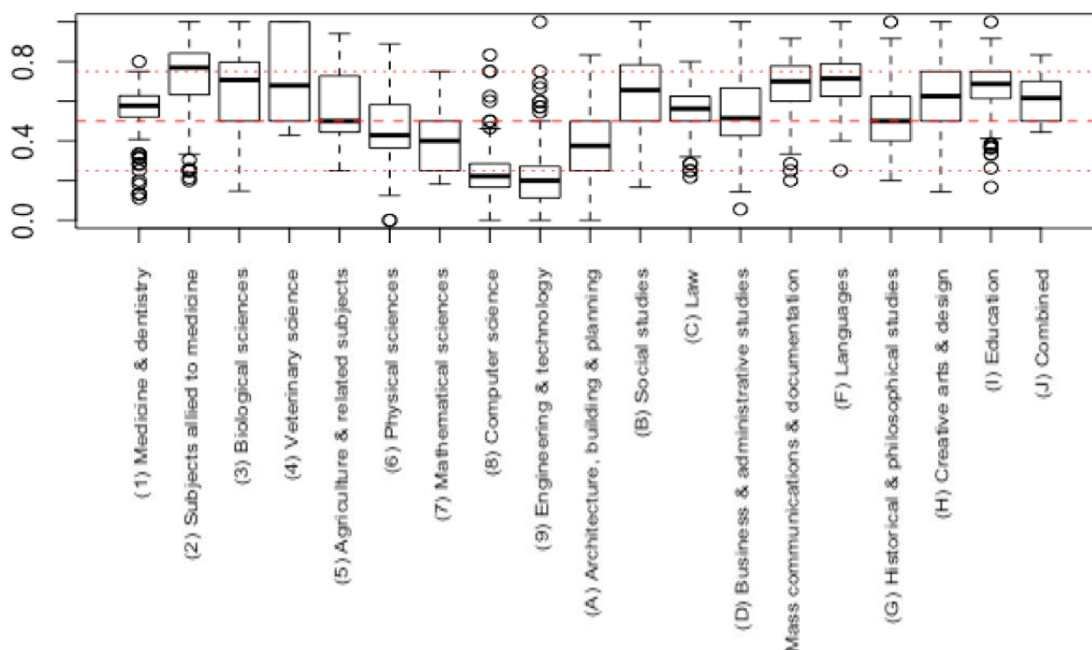
Figure 7: Quartiles of proportions of women in first degree programmes JACS subject areas 2016-17



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

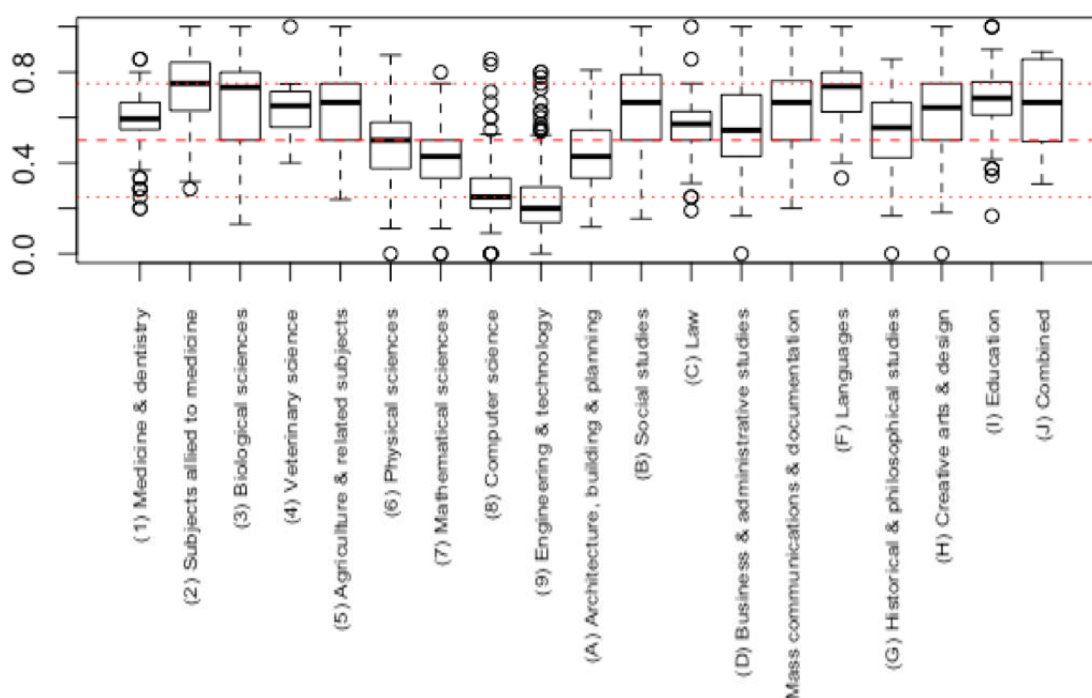
Figure 8 and Figure 9 evidence a slight trend towards a higher proportion of women in science and engineering MSc programmes between 2012-13 and 2016-17. Veterinary science has become somewhat less skewed towards women whilst other areas have become more skewed towards women.

Figure 8: Quartiles of proportions of women in MSc programmes with >19 students by JACS subject areas 2012-13



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

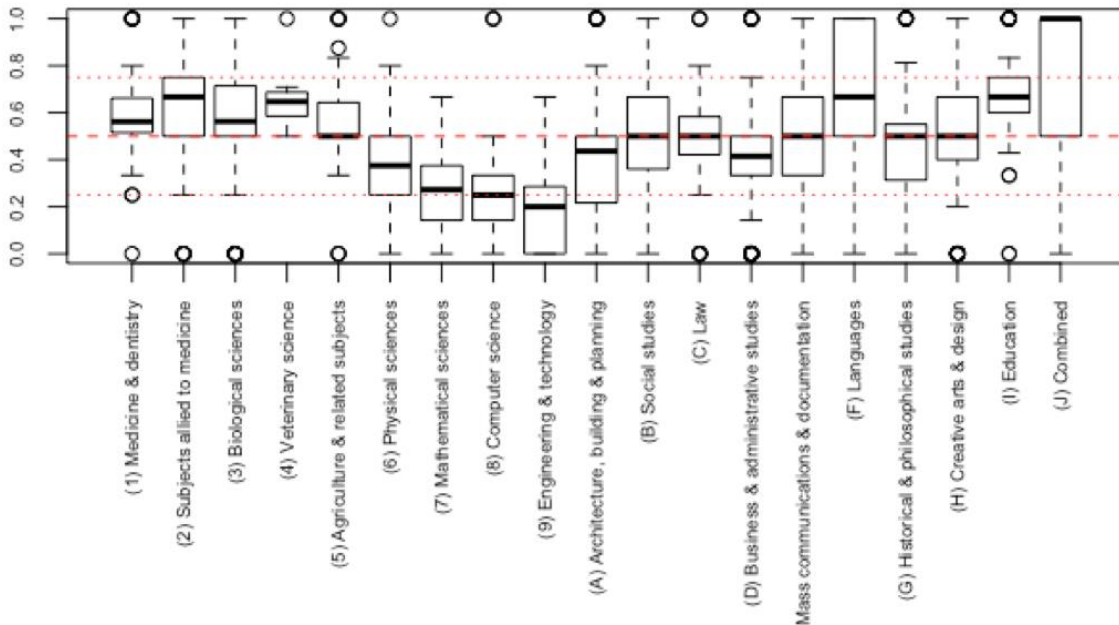
Figure 9: Quartiles of proportions of women in MSc programmes with >19 students by JACS subject areas 2016-17



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

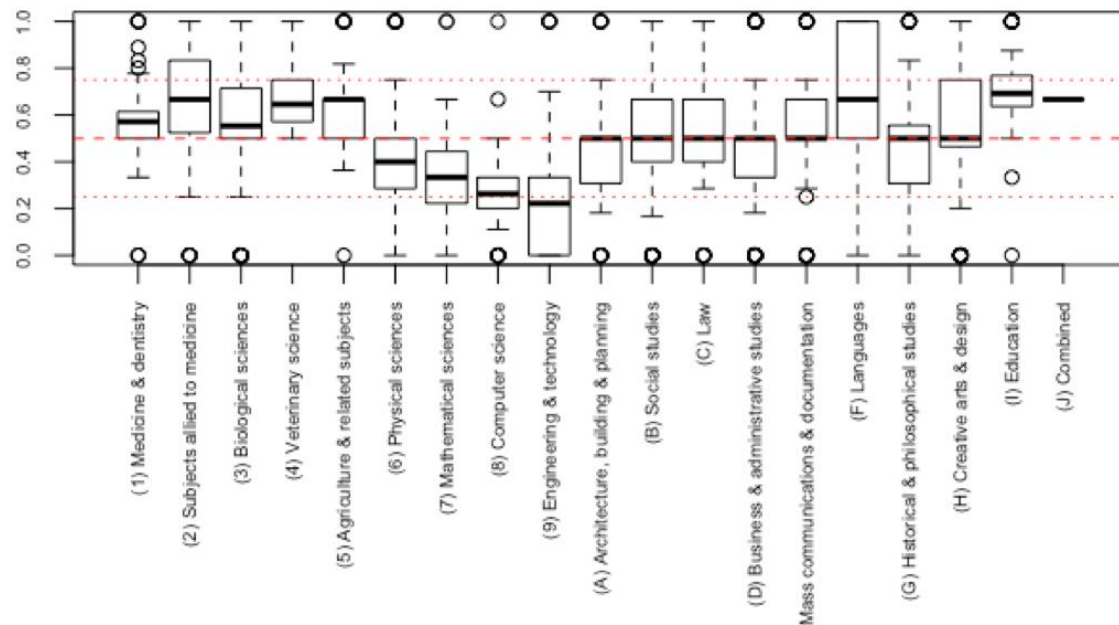
Figure 10 and Figure 11 show that there has been a moderate increase in proportion of female PhD students in science and engineering subjects over the time period considered. Some other areas have become more skewed towards women at PhD level.

Figure 10: Quartiles of proportions of women in PhD programmes by JACS subject areas 2012-13



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

Figure 11: Quartiles of proportions of women in PhD programmes by JACS subject areas 2016-17



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

3.3 Permeation, quality, longevity of engagement, barriers to engagement

This section is aimed at the following study goal:

4. To identify the permeation, longevity and quality of engagement with the Athena SWAN Charter in participating institutions, including:

- a. The sustainability of the changes that HEIs are making as a result of their participation in the Athena SWAN Charter.

In addition, it investigates barriers to engagement of departments with the Charter.

Key points from this section

Research question 4 - The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement (incorporation of learning and sustainability of changes):

- The Athena SWAN Charter has very good permeation in the HEI sector and good permeation among STEMM departments, though with room to increase. Permeation among AHSSBL is increasing, but is still low compared to STEMM departments.
- The Charter has grown since its initiation, and continues to attract new departments at a rate of about 150 each year. Given the combination of new and renewal applications this implies, serious consideration needs to be given to the resource required by Advance HE, the time commitment of panellists to review applications, and the time taken by departments to prepare applications.
- Although higher rated departments tend to have been engaged for longer, there is evidence that many departments struggle to maintain a consistent engagement with the Charter.
- The evidence supports existing perspectives that small departments may struggle to engage.
- Lower level of HEI engagement may be a barrier to departmental engagement.
- Lower research ranked departments may struggle more to engage.

3.3.1 Permeation of Athena SWAN Charter in HEI sector

The analysis reveals the following key findings regarding the penetration of Athena SWAN into the HEI sector:

- 50 HEIs have not engaged and 116 have. Many of the HEIs that have yet to engage are specialist arts schools.
- 1,359 STEMM cost centres are in HEIs that have engaged and 115 are in HEIs that have not.
- 1,591 AHSSBL cost centres are in HEIs that have engaged and 259 are in HEIs that have not.
- There is clearly a very significant number of cost centres (and therefore schools/departments) within the core HEI market.
- The analysis indicates that approximately 53% of STEMM cost centres in HEIs that have submitted an Athena SWAN application have submitted at least one application at the department level.
- In addition, approximately 17% of full or partial AHSSBL cost centres in HEIs that have submitted an Athena SWAN application have submitted at least one application at the department level.
- Clinical Medicine has the largest proportion of Silver departments, likely a result of the link between NIHR funding and Athena SWAN status. Physics is the next highest subject in terms of proportion of Silver departments. This likely relates to the reciprocal arrangement between Athena SWAN and the Project Juno scheme run by the Institute of Physics (IOP) which provides additional gender diversity support for physics departments. Under this reciprocal arrangement,

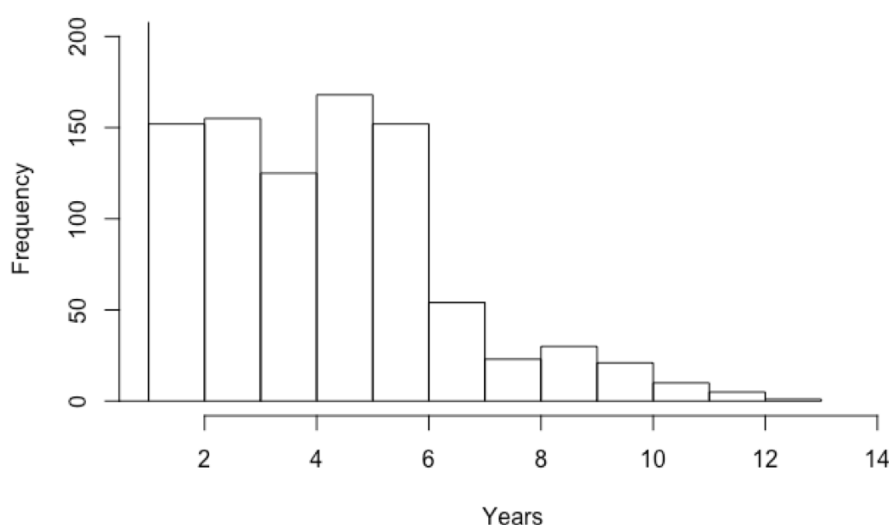
successful participation in one scheme can be recognised by the other. Juno Practitioner and Champion award holders can apply for a Bronze or Silver Athena SWAN award and vice versa.

The Athena SWAN Charter has very good permeation in the HEI sector and good permeation among STEM departments, though with room to increase. Permeation among AHSSBL is increasing, but remains low compared to STEM departments.

3.3.2 Length of engagement

Most departments have engaged with the process within the past 6 years, but there are a nontrivial number that have engaged for longer. The number of new departments engaging each year has levelled off to about 150/year over the past six years.

Figure 12: Histogram of length of department engagement



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

The Charter has grown since its initiation and continues to attract new departments at a rate of about 150 each year. Given the combination of new and renewal applications this implies, serious consideration needs to be given to the resource required by Advance HE, the time commitment of panellists to review applications, and the time taken by departments to prepare applications. In particular, the Charter should aim to streamline its application submission and review processes as well as ensure adequate resourcing at all levels.

3.3.3 Quality of engagement

There is a significant relationship ($p < 2.2e-16$) between length of engagement and award level as we would expect, with Bronze departments having been engaged on average about 3 years longer than no award departments, Silver departments having been engaged on average 2 years longer than Bronze, and Gold departments having been engaged on average about 3.5 years longer than Silver.

However, award level accounts for less than half of the variation in engagement length. Analysis also shows that there are departments with a long engagement and no current award, as well as departments with Silver status and only 1 year of engagement. An area of concern would be the departments that have submitted 2 or more applications and have no award, or who have been engaged for a long time with no award.

Of the 172 departments that have been engaged since at least April 2013, 74 (43%) have had a consistently upward progression in their award level (16 departments progressed from no award to

Bronze, 10 progressed from no award to Bronze to Silver, 34 progressed from Bronze to Silver, 10 from no award to Silver and 4 from Silver to Gold). A further 61 departments (35%) have remained at the same level (4=no award, 31=Bronze, 25=Silver, 1=Gold) throughout their engagement. The remaining 37 (22%) have had their award status fluctuate.

Although higher rated departments tend to have been engaged for longer, there is evidence that many departments struggle to maintain a consistent engagement with the Charter.

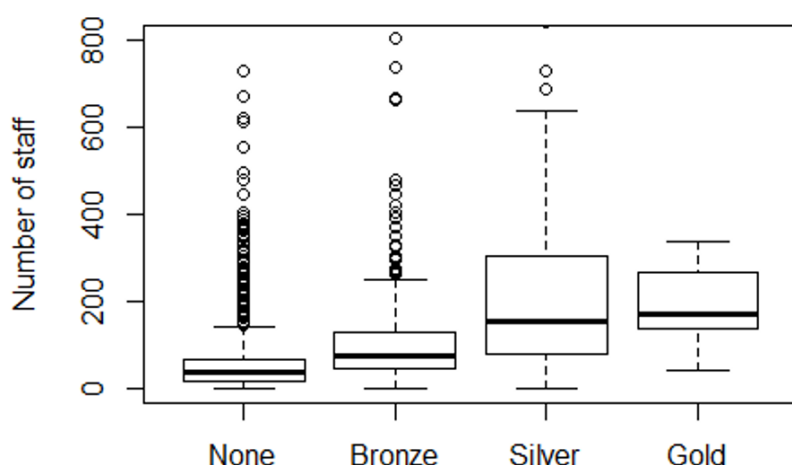
3.3.4 Barriers to engagement

3.3.4.1 Relationship between size of cost centres and departmental award level

The analysis has found that award level is strongly related to size (p-value: $< 2.2e-16$). The mean department size for no award departments is 59 staff, for Bronze is 164 staff, for Silver is 411 staff and for Gold is 189 staff (though this is not a reliable estimate due to the low number of Gold cost centres).

However, as staff numbers are very skewed towards low numbers, the median department sizes for each award level are more telling, as indicated in the figure below (shown by the bold horizontal lines).

Figure 13: Boxplot of award level and size of department



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Analysis of HESA and Advance HE data

The analysis does not suggest a clear relationship between length of engagement and department size. In addition, when length of engagement is controlled for, department size remains an important predictor of award level.

Although it is statistically possible that Athena SWAN status influences size, it seems more likely that size influences Athena SWAN status, with smaller departments having more difficulty achieving an award, and more difficulty achieving higher awards, than larger departments. An analysis of size of cost centre related to the number of applications also suggests that smaller departments are less likely to make repeated applications.

We also investigated whether cost centre size relates to success rates. To examine this, we looked at the relationship between a group of ‘persistently unsuccessful’ departments (categorised as HESA cost centre which have put in at least two applications and has had at least two consecutive no award results) and size category. Whilst the analysis is not especially conclusive, the results suggest that the largest departments are less likely to have consecutive failed applications when compared to other departments. The evidence supports existing perspectives that small departments may struggle to engage.

3.3.4.2 *Relationship between HEI award level and departmental award level*

There is strong evidence of a relationship between HEI award level and department award level (p -value = $5.79e-14$), with a tendency for departments in Silver award HEIs to have higher Athena SWAN departmental awards than those in Bronze award HEIs. Note that we cannot deduce a causal relationship from this but suspect that it is related to eligibility criteria for Silver and Gold awards⁵. This evidence suggests that lower level of HEI engagement may be a barrier to departmental engagement.

3.3.4.3 *Relationship to REF intensity*

REF intensity was utilised as a proxy for resourcing. It was selected in preference to University grouping (Russell Group, etc) because REF intensity is a uniform rating rather than a fairly random agglomeration of HEIs. As the REF is a method of allocating about £1.6 billion research funding to departments, it is effectively related to resourcing. However, the overall REF rating is not the number used in the allocation of funding, which is derived from the set of numbers used for the allocation which are not publicly available. Therefore, REF intensity rating has been used as a proxy variable for research funding allocation through REF.

When we control for department size, REF intensity increases the probability that a department will hold a higher level award. In particular, departments with a REF ranking of 1 have a bit less than twice the odds (1/0.58) of having an award than departments with REF ranking of 2, keeping size constant. The same odds ratio relates to REF ranking of 2 versus 3 and each of the other Athena SWAN award boundaries. Of course, REF intensity rating depends to some extent on (previous) Athena SWAN status, so these are not independent. The evidence indicates that lower research ranked departments (and by proxy, departments with lower financial resource) may struggle more to engage.

⁵ For example, the eligibility criteria for those applying for Silver institutional award includes that the majority of departments must hold an award, and at least one must be a Silver department. To apply for a Gold institutional award, the majority of departments must hold Silver awards, and at least one must be a Gold department.

4. Research Findings: Surveys of staff and students

Section summary

- The study faced a significant struggle to engage, within the project timetable, with institutions and departments which do not hold an Athena SWAN award. This means that the survey analysis does not allow for comparisons of experience and opinion between staff and students in departments with and without awards.
- Nonetheless, the survey has identified some useful insight regarding the impacts of the Charter and the experience of departments and institutions in engaging with the Charter and awards process.

Research question 2 - The effectiveness of the Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training:

- One of the key mechanisms for identifying the impacts arising from the Charter is to examine the views and opinions of those working in Gold departments/institutes compared to those in Silver and Bronze departments/institutes. Overall, the study finds that women working in departments with Gold awards respond more positively to the survey questions than those in departments with lower awards.
- For example, when compared to Silver and Bronze departments/institutes, women in Gold departments/institutes are more satisfied with performance/development reviews, more familiar with criteria and processes for promotion, more likely to have been encouraged to apply for promotion, to believe that there are more flexible working practices, to be more optimistic about career prospects and to have a mentoring scheme available to them.
- In some areas, including satisfaction with performance or development review, or familiarity with criteria and processes for promotion, the responses from women in departments and research institutes with a Gold award are more positive than men's. The survey results make it clear that an Athena SWAN award at the Gold level signifies more effective practice in these areas than awards at lower levels.
- The results also indicate that departments with higher awards are more successful at ensuring both male and female staff engage with the following key areas of career development: availability of and satisfaction with development/performance reviews, familiarity with criteria and processes for promotion, encouragement to apply for promotion, belief that promotion policies are flexible and optimism about career prospects.
- However, the surveys also identify a number of areas where the results for women are less positive than those for men. These include satisfaction with their performance/development review, familiarity with their university's or research institute's criteria and processes for promotion, encouragement to apply for a promotion and likelihood of success, and optimism about career prospects. Women are also generally less likely than men to believe they have adequate opportunities for training and development, and to report that they have been encouraged to take up the training and development opportunities that are available.

Research question 3 - The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in changing the culture and attitudes across the participating institutions to address gender inequality and unequal representation

- The surveys found that 93% of Champions believed that the Charter has had a positive impact on gender issues in their university, department or research institute, 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on equality and diversity issues, and 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on the career progression of women.
- Academic staff and administrative or support staff are also broadly positive about the Charter's impacts, though less so than their Champions. 55% of academic staff and 50% of administration or support staff believed that the Charter had a positive impact on the work environment, while 57% of academic staff and 54% of administration or support staff believed that the Charter had a positive impact on work practices.

- Female staff were often less positive about the impact of the Charter than male staff, though this was not always the case. For example, female staff were less likely than male staff to agree that their university department or research institute had a positive work environment, and less likely than male staff to agree that the work environment had become more positive in the last three years.
- While staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Gold level tended to be the most positive about the impacts of the Charter, staff in departments and institutes with an award at Silver level were often less positive than those in departments and institutes with a Bronze award. It is not clear from survey analysis why this is the case.

Research question 5 - Experiences and perception of implementing the Charter:

- Other schemes promoting equality and diversity and/or the career progression of women are common in universities, departments and research institutes engaged in Athena SWAN. Athena SWAN is generally considered to be of similar or greater value than these other schemes.
- The workload involved in preparing an Athena SWAN application is substantial. This is particularly the case for Athena SWAN Champions and colleagues involved in writing the application, and particularly in the final stages prior to submission.
- The resource required is not always recognised in workload allocation models (where these are adopted), and the process often relies on the motivation and commitment of a small number of individuals.
- Obtaining, analysing and presenting the required data is the most commonly cited barrier to the Athena SWAN process. Engagement of senior management in driving the implementation of action plans was also cited as a barrier.
 - [Link to Recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 7](#)
- Some Athena SWAN Champions also identified a lack of understanding of how to effectively demonstrate 'impact', with a small number suggesting this was complicated by colleagues' differing experiences of the expectations of assessment panels.

4.1 Introduction

Surveys of staff and students were conducted in order to provide evidence in two of the research areas:

2. *The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in processes such as recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training.*
5. *An exploration and testing of the experiences and perceptions of HEIs of implementing the Athena SWAN Charter and awards process.*

Although they provide limited direct evidence of change, the surveys also allow some analysis in response to a further research aim:

3. *The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in changing the culture and attitudes across the participating institutions to address gender inequality and unequal representation, and any other indirect impacts on particular groups.*

Surveys were conducted online between 15th December 2018 and 11th February 2019. Table 1 shows the number of respondents to each survey.

Table 1: Survey response rates

Survey	Responses
Academic staff in departments with an Athena SWAN award	571
Admin/Support staff in departments with an Athena SWAN award	452
Institutional Champion in HEIs with an Athena SWAN award	38
Department/school Champions in departments with an Athena SWAN award	33
Postgraduate Researchers in departments with an Athena SWAN award	428
Undergraduate students in departments with an Athena SWAN award	287
Academic/Research staff in research institutes with an Athena SWAN award	293
Admin/Support staff in research institutes with an Athena SWAN award	142
Institutional Champions in research institutes with an Athena SWAN award	4
Academic staff in departments <i>without</i> an Athena SWAN award	32
Admin/Support in departments <i>without</i> an Athena SWAN award	12
Department/school Athena SWAN/Equality & Diversity Champions in departments <i>without</i> an Athena SWAN award	1
Total responses	2,293

While it is highly positive to see that the surveys attracted almost 2,300 responses overall, the process struggled to engage departments (and institutions) that do not hold Athena SWAN awards. This might partly be attributed to the project timetable, which meant a restricted window of opportunity to recruit such departments. It is also possible that lack of engagement in the survey reflects departments' or institutions' wider lack of engagement with the Athena SWAN Charter. The small number of responses among departments without an award means it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from analysis of these surveys, and they are excluded from this analysis.

4.2 Engagement and success of women in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training

Surveys of academic staff and administrative or support staff in university departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award offer insight into the impact of the Charter on the engagement and success of women in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training.

Key points from this section

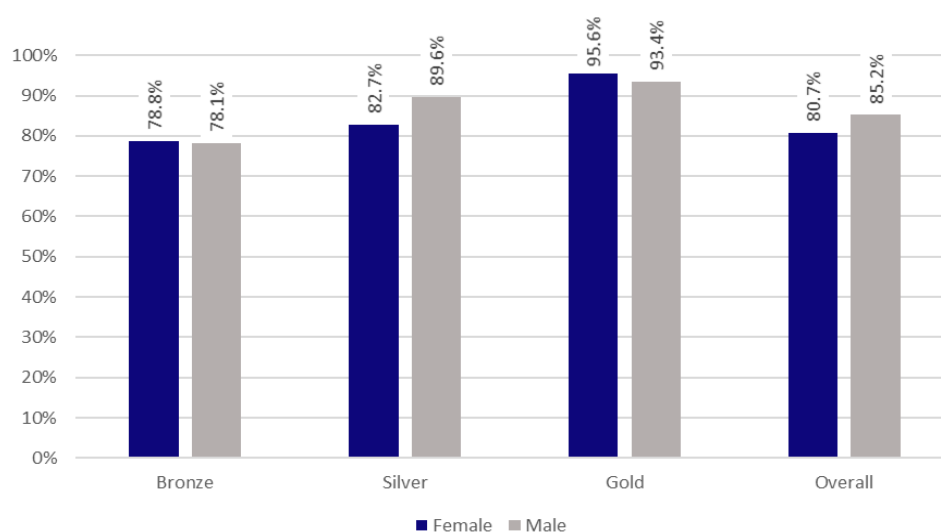
Research question 2 - The effectiveness of the Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training:

- Survey responses from male academic and administration or support staff are generally more positive than those from their female peers.
- There is little difference between the proportion of women and men receiving a performance or development review, but women are less likely to be satisfied with their latest review than men.
- Women generally feel less familiar with their university's or research institute's criteria and processes for promotion than men feel.
- Women are less likely to have been encouraged to apply for promotion than men. They are no less likely than men to have applied for a promotion, but are less likely to have been successful, and are less optimistic than men about their career prospects.
- Women are less likely than men to believe they have adequate opportunities for training and development, and less likely than men to report that they have been encouraged to take up the training and development opportunities that are available.
- Women are, nevertheless, more likely to engage in mentoring than their male colleagues.
- Responses from women working in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Gold level are generally more positive than those from female staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Bronze or Silver level.
- In some areas – satisfaction with performance or development review, or familiarity with criteria and processes for promotion, for example – the responses from women in departments and research institutes with a Gold award are more positive than men's.
- It is clear that an Athena SWAN award to Gold level signifies more effective practice in these areas than awards at lower levels.
- On the other hand, responses from women working in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level are often less positive than those from female staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Bronze level.

4.2.1 Appraisal

The survey found that 82% of academic staff and 84% of administration or support staff responding to the surveys had a performance or development review in the previous 12–18 months. Women (81% of academic staff and 82% of administration or support staff) were slightly less likely to have had such a review than men (85% of academic staff and 86% of administration or support staff). In departments and research institutes holding an Athena SWAN award, the proportion of staff who had a review rose according to the level of award, and only at Silver level was the proportion of men who had a review higher than the proportion of women.

Figure 14: Development/performance review in last 12–18 months by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

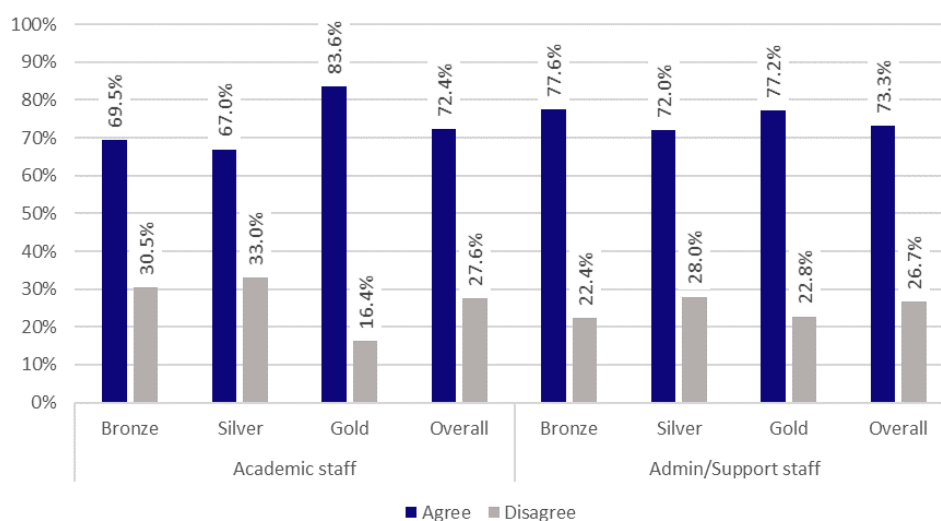
Male academic staff were slightly more likely to say they were satisfied with their most recent performance or development review than women (75% of male academic staff gave a positive response, compared with 71% of female academic staff⁶). There was a similar gender difference among administration or support staff, with 76% of male administration or support staff expressing satisfaction with their most recent performance review compared with 69% of female staff.

Among both academic staff and administration or support staff, the overall proportion⁷ expressing satisfaction with their most recent performance or development was slightly lower in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level than in those with a Bronze award, but higher again in departments and research institutes with a Gold award. In particular, the proportion of academic staff who reported that they were satisfied with their performance or development review was notably higher in departments and research institutes with an award at Gold level.

⁶ Responses were measured on a 6-point Likert scale, from 1 'strongly disagree' to 6 'strongly agree'. Points 1–3 are considered negative responses, and points 4–6 are considered positive.

⁷ Response rates do not allow analysis by both gender and award level.

Figure 15: Satisfied with most recent performance or development review by level of Athena SWAN award

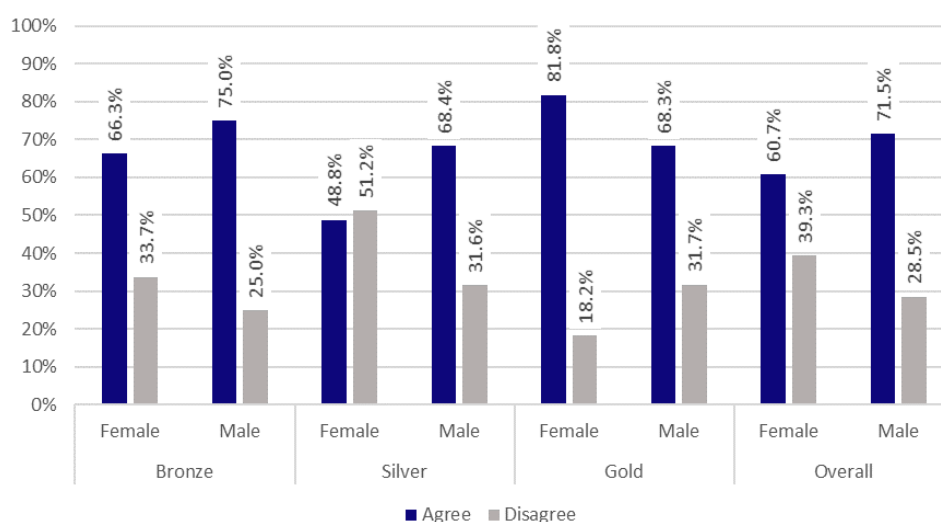


Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

4.2.2 Promotion

Overall, female academic staff (61%) were less likely to agree that they were familiar with their university's or research institute's criteria and processes for promotion than male academic staff (72%). This pattern was consistent in departments and research institutes at Bronze and Silver levels but in departments and research institutes with a Silver award, female academic staff were less likely to agree that they were familiar with criteria and processes for promotion than male staff. In departments and research institutes with an award at Gold level, on the other hand, female academic staff were notably more likely to agree that they were familiar with their university's or research institute's criteria and processes for promotion than male academic staff.

Figure 16: Familiar with criteria and processes for promotion by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Asked to describe their university's or research institute's criteria and processes for promotion, women tended to be less likely to select positive words and more likely to select negative words than men.

Figure 17: Descriptions of criteria and processes for promotion by gender among academic staff

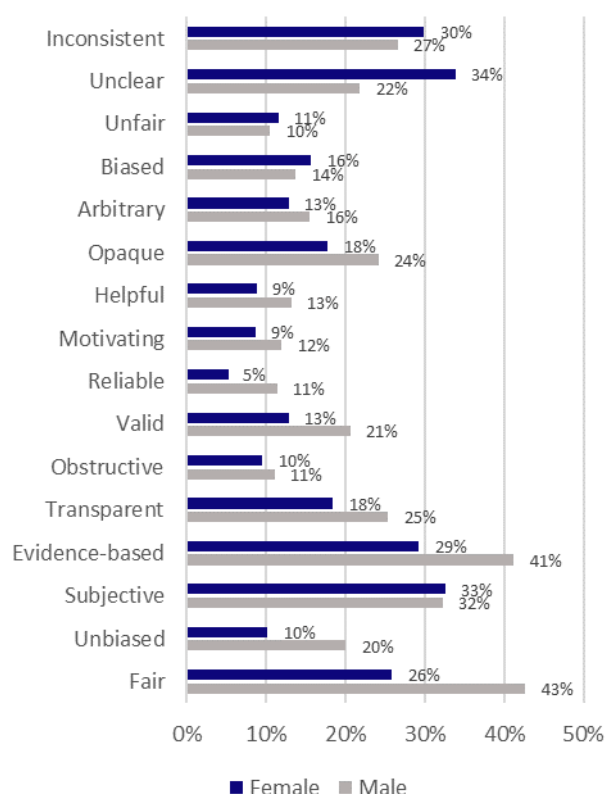
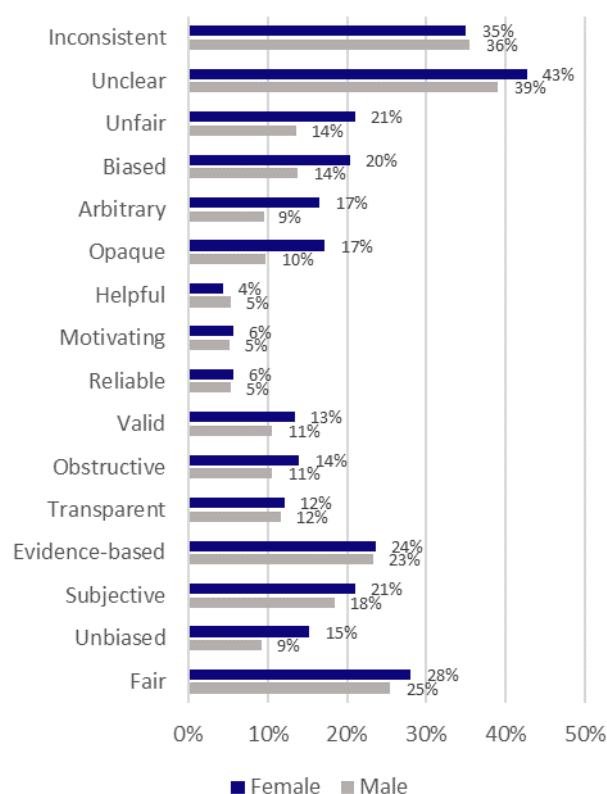


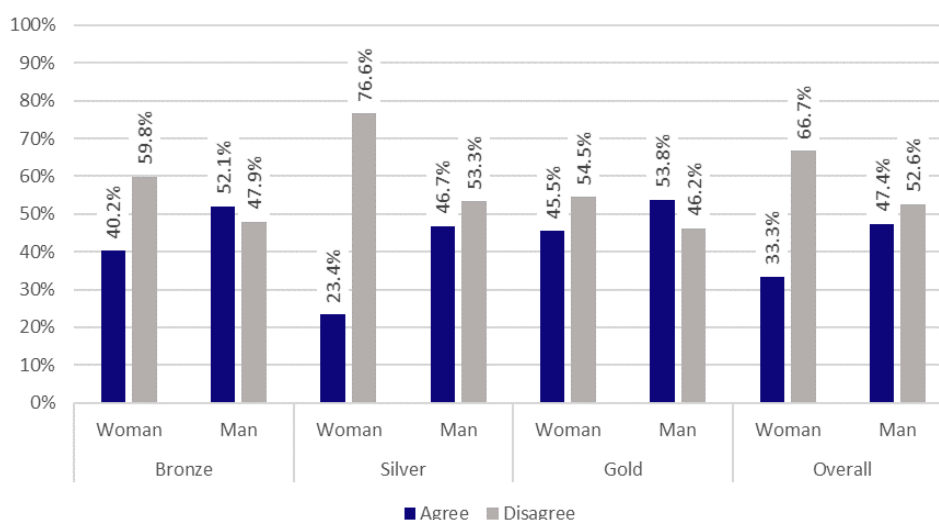
Figure 18: Descriptions of criteria and processes for promotion by gender among administration or support staff



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Overall, female academic staff were less likely to agree (33%) that they had been encouraged to apply for promotion than male academic staff (47%). This was consistent at all levels of award. Female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level were less likely to agree that they had been encouraged to apply for promotion than female academic staff in departments and research institutes with a Bronze award. Those in departments and research institutes with a Gold award were most likely to agree that they had been encouraged to apply for promotion.

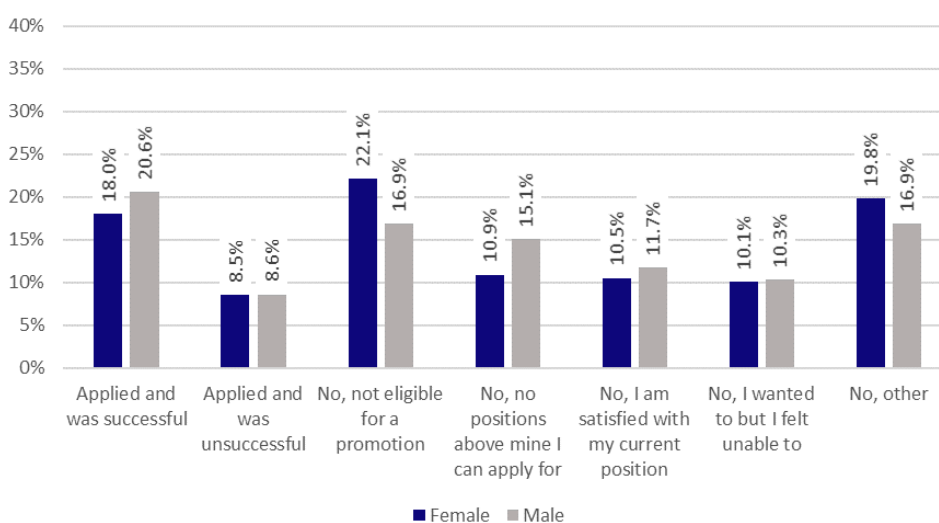
Figure 19: Encouraged to apply for promotion by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Overall, 28% of academic staff and 21% of administration or support staff had applied for a promotion in the last three years. Female academic staff were slightly less likely than male academic staff to have applied for promotion, and less likely to have been successful. Female academic staff were less likely to have been eligible to apply for promotion than male academic staff.

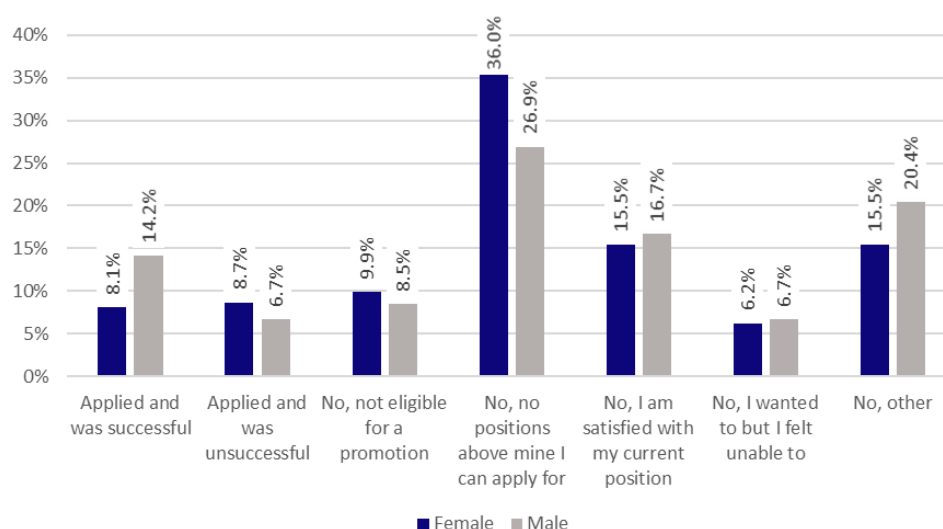
Figure 20: Academic staff applying for promotion by gender



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Similarly, female administration or support staff were less likely to have applied for promotion than male administration or support staff, and less likely to have been successful. Female administration or support staff were notably more likely to report that there were no more senior positions to apply for than male administration or support staff.

Figure 21: Administration or support staff applying for promotion by gender

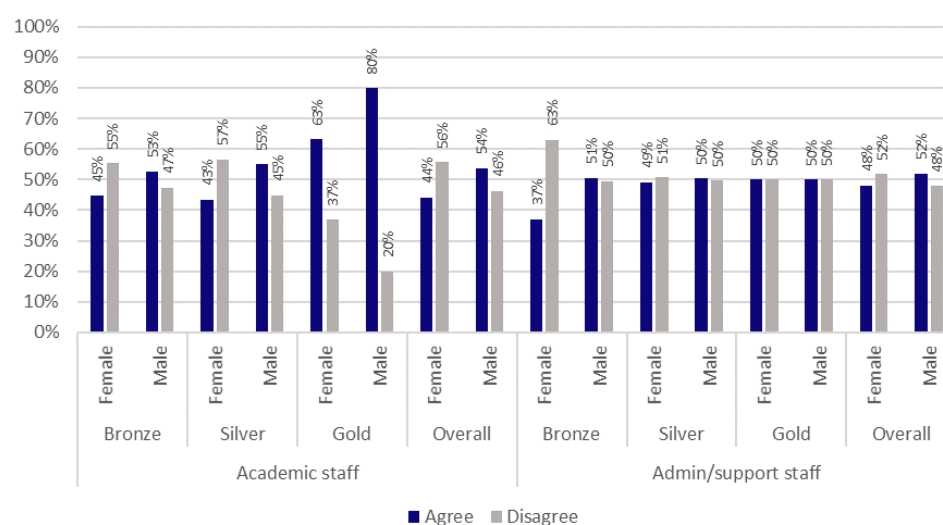


Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff (44%) were less likely to agree that there are flexible promotion policies (e.g. taking into account part-time work, career breaks, etc.) at their university or research institute than male academic staff (54%). Female administration or support staff (48%) were also slightly less likely to agree that there are flexible promotion policies at their university or research institute than male administration or support staff (52%).

The proportions of female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Bronze or Silver level who agreed that there were flexible promotion policies at their university or institute were similar. A higher proportion of female academic staff in departments and research institutes with a Gold award believed flexible promotion policies existed. Female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with a Bronze award were less likely to agree that there were flexible promotion policies in place than female administration and support staff in departments and research institutes with a Silver or Gold award.

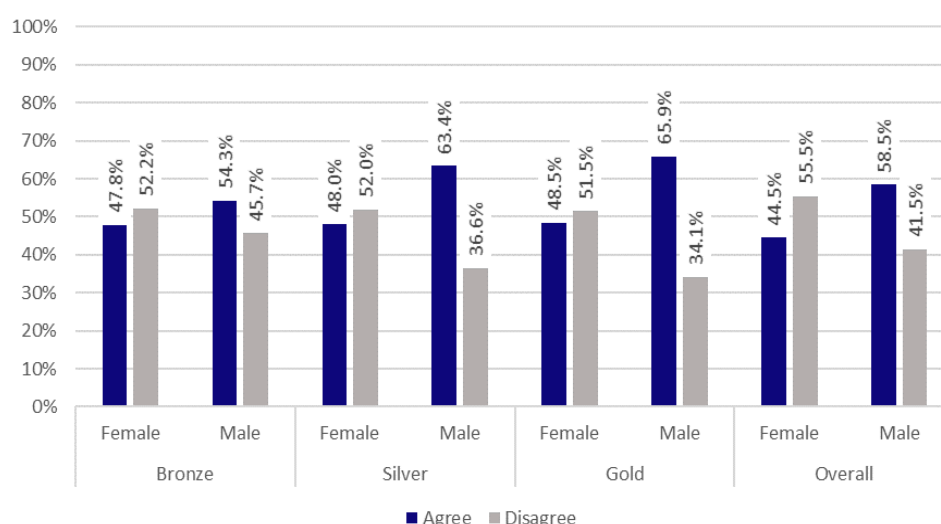
Figure 22: Flexible promotion policies by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Overall, female academic staff (45%) were less likely to say they were optimistic about their career prospects than male academic staff (59%). This was also consistent at all levels of award. There was little difference in the proportions of female staff who were optimistic about their career prospects in departments and research institutes with different levels of Athena SWAN award. Male academic staff in departments and research institutes with a Silver or Gold award were more likely to say they were optimistic about their career prospects than men in departments and research institutes with a Bronze award.

Figure 23: Optimism about career prospects by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



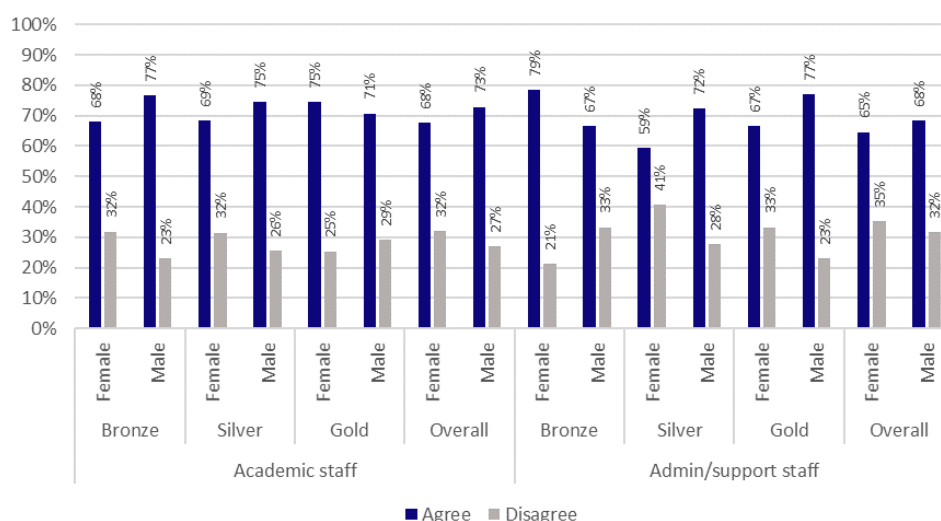
Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

4.2.3 Training and mentoring

Overall, 69% of academic staff and 66% of administration or support staff agreed that adequate opportunities for personal development and training were available in their university or research institute. Female academic staff were less likely to agree that adequate opportunities exist than men, except in departments with an Athena SWAN award at Gold level. Female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Gold level were more likely to agree that there were adequate opportunities for personal development and training than female academic staff in departments and research institutes at Bronze and Silver level.

Female administration and support staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Bronze level were more likely than male administration or support staff in their departments and research institutes to agree that adequate opportunities for personal development and training were available. They were also more likely to agree that adequate opportunities exist than female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with awards at Silver and Gold level. Female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with a Silver award were notably less likely to agree that adequate opportunities exist than female administration or support staff in departments with awards at other levels, and notably less likely to agree than male administration or support staff in their departments.

Figure 24: Adequate opportunities for personal development and training by gender and level of Athena SWAN award

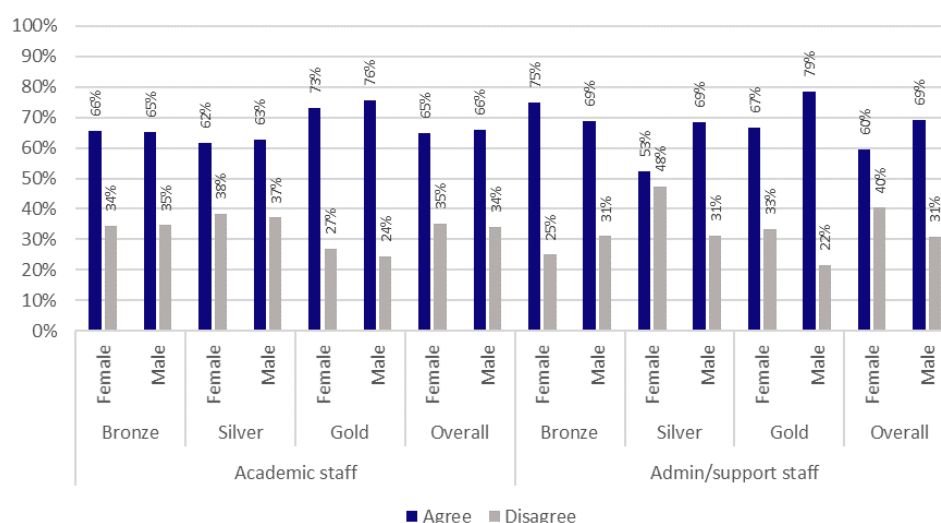


Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Gold level were more likely to agree that they are encouraged to undertake further training and development relevant to their career than female academic staff in departments and research institutes with awards at other levels. Female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Silver level were least likely to agree. Except in departments and research institutes with an award at Bronze level, female academic staff were slightly less likely to agree that they are encouraged to undertake further training and development than male academic staff.

Female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Bronze level were more likely to agree that they are encouraged to undertake further training and development than male administration or support staff in their departments and institutes, and more likely to agree than female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with awards at Silver or Gold levels. Female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Silver level were notably least likely to agree. Except in departments and research institutes with an award at Bronze level, female administration or support staff were less likely to agree that they were encouraged to undertake further training and development than male administration or support staff.

Figure 25: Encouraged to undertake personal development and training by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



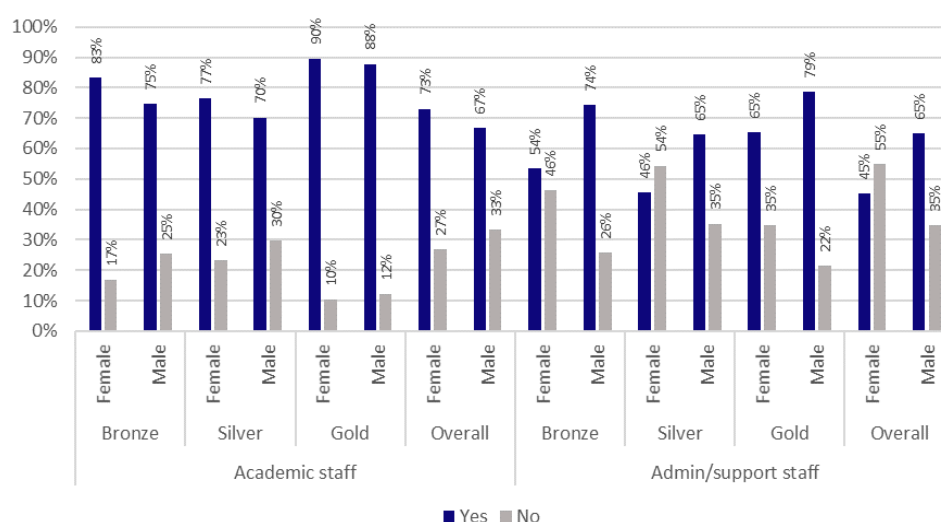
Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Overall, 71% of academic staff and 59% administration or support staff responding to the surveys reported that there is a mentoring scheme available to them at their university or research institute. 19% of academic staff and 8% of administration or support staff were being mentored at the time of the survey, while 31% of academic staff and 16% of administration or support staff had previously been mentored at their university or research institute.

Female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN at Bronze level were most likely to report that a mentoring scheme is available to them. Female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Silver level were least likely to agree. At all levels of award, female academic staff were more likely to report that they have access to a mentoring scheme than male academic staff.

In contrast, female administration or support staff were less likely to report that they have access to a mentoring scheme than male administration or support staff, regardless of the level of Athena SWAN award held by their department or research institute. As with academic staff, female administration or support staff in departments and institutes with a Silver award were least likely to agree that a mentoring scheme is available, while those in departments and research institutes with an award at Gold level were most likely to do so.

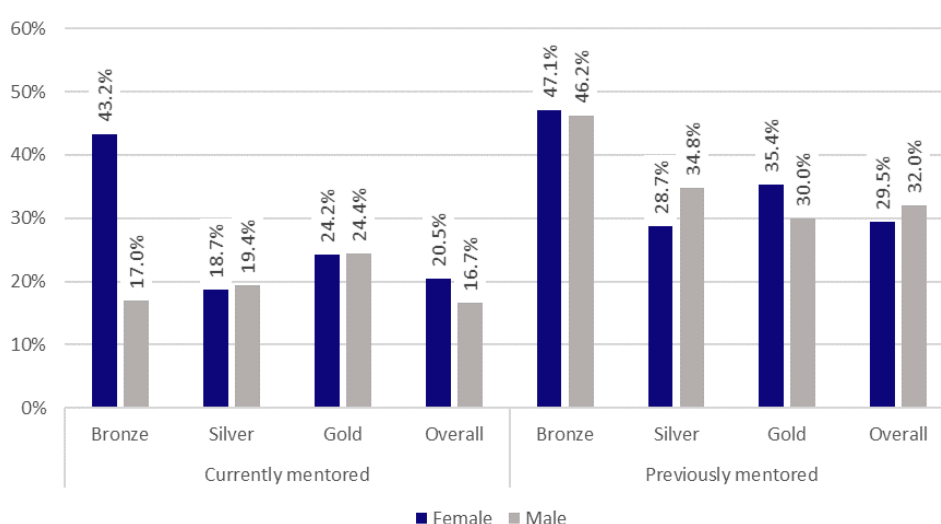
Figure 26: Mentoring scheme available by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Bronze level were notably more likely to be mentored at the time of the survey, or to have been mentored previously, than female academic staff in departments and institutes with awards at Silver or Gold level. Female academic staff were more likely to be mentored, or to have been mentored previously, than male academic staff – notably so in terms of current mentoring in departments and research institutes with a Bronze award. Female administration or support staff, on the other hand, were less likely to be mentored at the time of the survey or to have been previously mentored than male administration or support staff⁸.

Figure 27: Academic staff currently or previously mentored by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

⁸ The number of survey responses from administration or support staff being mentored or previously mentored is too small for analysis by level of Athena SWAN award.

It is notable that mentoring of academic staff appears most common in departments and research institutes with a Bronze award (among women currently, and previously among both men and women). Mentoring also appears more common in departments and research institutes with a Gold award than in those with a Silver award (currently among both men and women, but previously only among women). Compared with the availability of mentoring schemes at different levels of Athena SWAN award, this appears to reflect varying levels of take-up among academic staff. It may also be the case that mentoring schemes are sometimes introduced as a result of institutions engaging in Athena SWAN, as a 'quick win' at Bronze level (although the surveys do not provide evidence to test this hypothesis).

4.3 Implementing the Athena SWAN Charter and awards process

Surveys of Athena SWAN Champions in universities, university departments and research institutes provide evidence on their experiences of implementing and coordinating the Athena SWAN process. The relatively small number of respondents to these surveys means analysis should be treated with some caution.

Key points from this section

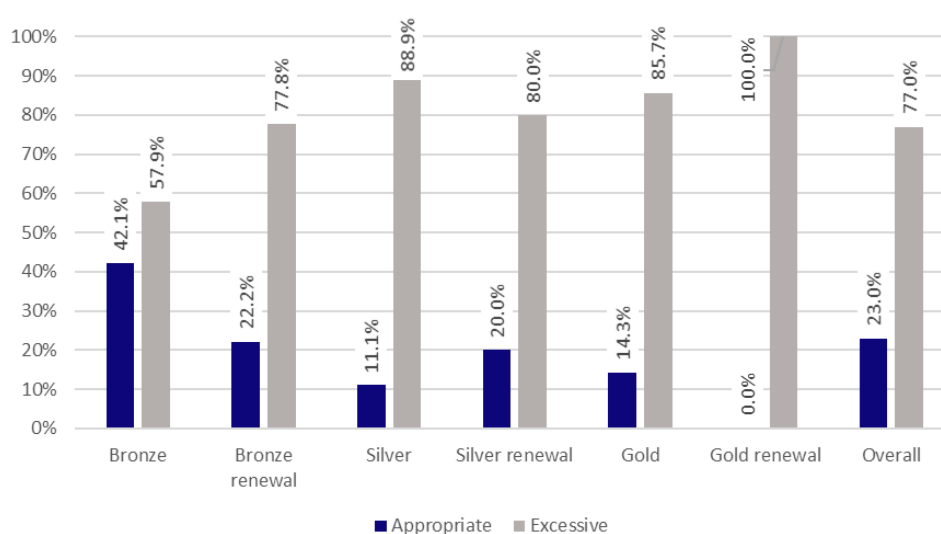
Research question 5 - Experiences and perception of implementing the Charter:

- The workload involved in preparing an Athena SWAN application is substantial. This is particularly the case for Athena SWAN Champions and colleagues involved in writing the application, and particularly in the final stages prior to submission.
- The resource required is not always recognised in workload allocation models, and the process often relies on the motivation and commitment of individuals.
- Obtaining, analysing and presenting the required data is the most commonly cited barrier to the Athena SWAN process. Engagement of senior management in driving the implementation of action plans was also cited as a barrier.
- Some Athena SWAN Champions also identified a lack of understanding of how to effectively demonstrate 'impact', with a small number suggesting this was complicated by colleagues' differing experiences of the expectations of assessment panels.
- Other schemes promoting equality and diversity and/or the career progression of women are common in universities, departments and research institutes engaged in Athena SWAN. Athena SWAN is generally considered to be of similar or greater value than these other schemes.

4.3.1 Workload

Athena SWAN Champions, whether for a university, a university department or a research institute, were more likely to consider their workload in the process of applying for their latest award (whether successful or not) to be excessive than to be appropriate. No Champion responding to the survey considered their workload to be light. This was true at all levels of application. Overall, 77% of Champions considered their workload to be excessive.

Figure 28: Workload of Athena SWAN Champions by level of application



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

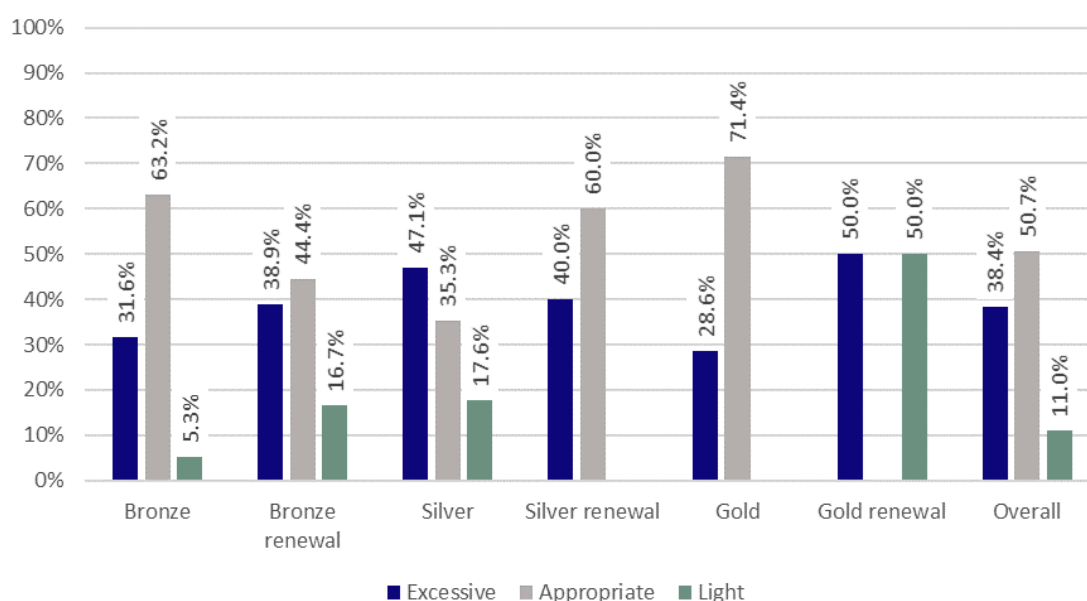
Some Athena SWAN Champions commented that they considered their workload to be appropriate because it was reflected in their workload allocation. Others, who considered their Athena SWAN workload to be excessive, noted that their workload allocation did not account for the amount of work required to prepare their latest application – either because insufficient time was allocated in their workload model, or because no time was allocated at all.

Athena SWAN Champions were less likely to consider the workload of their Self-Assessment Team or other staff involved in the process of applying for their latest award (whether successful or not) to be excessive. Overall, 38% considered their team's workload to be excessive, while 51% considered the workload to be appropriate. There was no clear pattern by level of application. Often, however, Champions responding to the survey suggested that while the overall team's workload was not excessive, the workload for a small number of core members of the team was onerous. Some Champions related this directly to key stages in the process, most commonly writing the application or collating data. Nevertheless, several Athena SWAN Champions noted that despite potentially excessive workloads involved, they and their teams were committed to the process.

Most commonly, Self-Assessment Teams had 15–20 members, though larger teams were also common, especially for university-level applications. No Athena SWAN Champion reported a Self-Assessment Team with fewer than ten members.

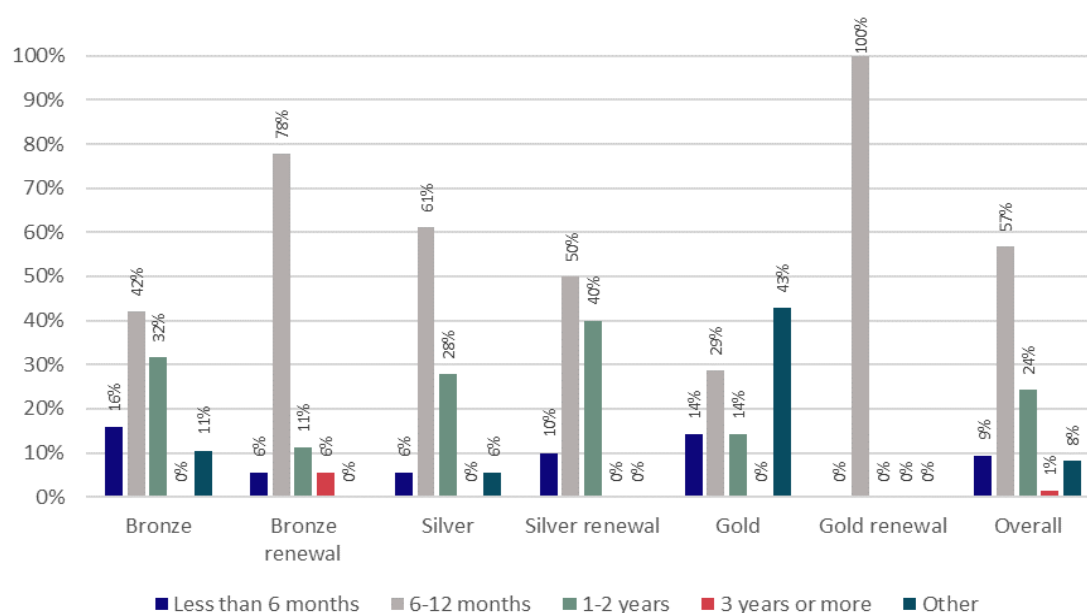
The number of Self-Assessment team meetings held while preparing an Athena SWAN application varied, though many Champions reported meeting monthly or bi-monthly meetings. Sub-committees often met more frequently, though again there was great variation in the number of sub-committees involved and the number of meetings they held. Athena SWAN Champions reported that Self-Assessment Team meetings typically lasted at least an hour. At departmental level, meetings tended to be longer the higher the level of application, with Gold applicants more likely to report that meetings were typically up to two hours long than applicants at lower levels. At university level, meetings were most commonly reported to be up to two hours long.

Figure 29: Workload of Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Teams and other staff involved by level of application



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Figure 30: Time taken to complete paperwork for most recent Athena SWAN application by level



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

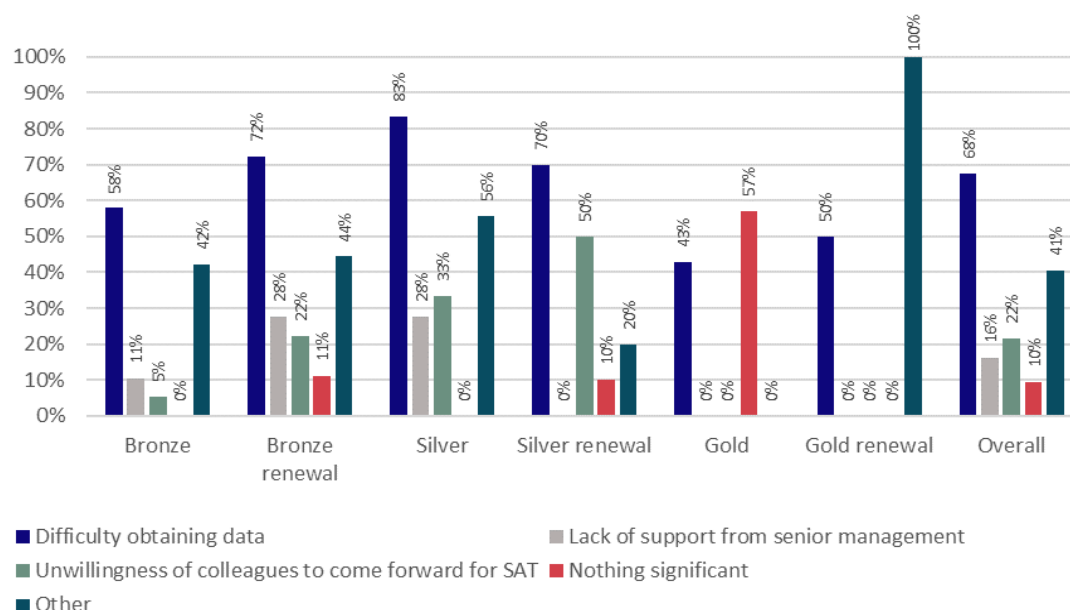
The number of hours involved in preparing an Athena SWAN application are also reported to vary, and it is difficult to provide a definitive estimate. University Champions reported spending anything from 0.5 hours per week to 20+ hours, on average, in preparing their institution's most recent application. Similarly, department Champions reported spending anything from 5 hours to 30+ hours per week on average, with some reporting more than 45 hours per week in the period immediately before submission. Similarly, the number of hours spent by members of the Self-Assessment Team and other staff varied. Often, this depended on the size of the team, with larger teams able to share the workload more easily. Nevertheless, several Athena SWAN Champions estimated the total time spent

writing their latest application to average more than full-time hours, especially for core members of the team in the last few weeks before applying.

4.3.2 Barriers

Athena SWAN Champions reported a number of barriers to completing the Athena SWAN process. Most commonly, these related to data. Overall, 68% of Champions reported difficulties obtaining data from the University planning office, HR team or similar. This was a problem at all Athena SWAN levels, though less so at Gold level than at lower levels.

Figure 3 I: Barriers faced in completing Athena SWAN process by level



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Other barriers cited often also related to data. Several Champions reported that although data was available, it was often in the wrong format and data presentation took a lot of work. Some reported that their teams found it difficult to engage with the data because the type of analysis required is unfamiliar. Some Champions, especially among those institutions more recently engaged with Athena SWAN, reported that data collection in their university did not meet the requirements of the application form, particularly in areas such as recruitment. Others suggested that the nature of their institutions – particularly those in institutions with devolved College structures – made collating data difficult.

Several Champions reported that although senior managers were supportive of Athena SWAN, it could be difficult to engage them in implementing action plans. Sometimes this was due to lack of capacity. Some Champions, however, suggested that their senior management did not engage with the issues identified in their Athena SWAN process, and that they did not recognise gender inequalities.

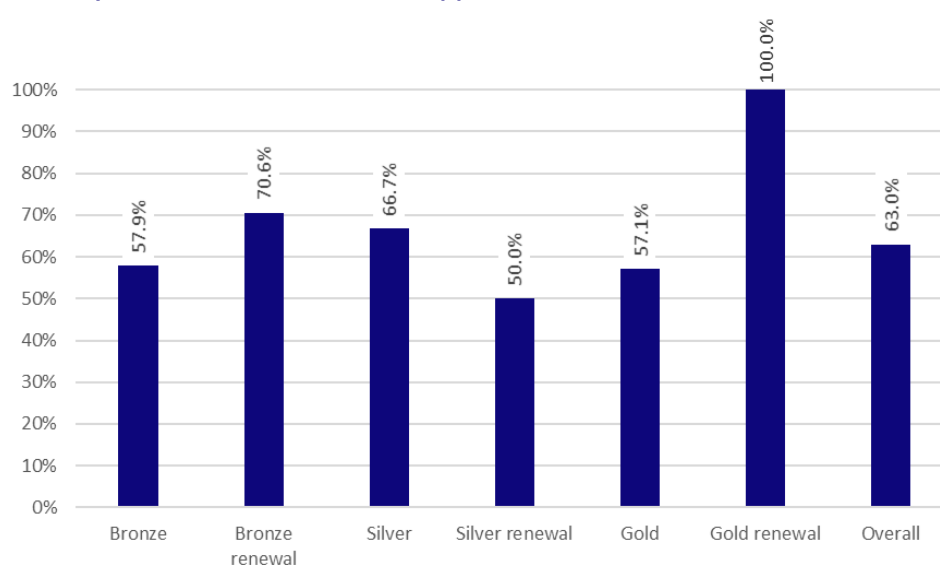
Lack of experience of Athena SWAN was cited as a barrier in some cases, particularly in relation to understanding what was meant by 'impact' and how to demonstrate it. A small number of Champions pointed to inconsistencies in the assessment process, and different expectations with regards to demonstrating impact or identifying issues. At university level, this was reported to lead to considerable internal scrutiny and multiple revisions as Champions respond to different colleagues' experiences of the process.

Some Champions suggested the constraints of the application form (particularly word limits) were a barrier to describing the complexities of their organisational structure; this was most common among Champions responsible for an application encompassing several departments. Lack of capacity for data analysis and for writing an application were also described as barriers.

4.3.3 Strengths and weaknesses of Athena SWAN compared to other schemes

Overall, 63% of Athena SWAN Champions reported that there were other schemes promoting equality and diversity and/or the career progression of women that they have found useful within their university, department or research institute. The other schemes most commonly mentioned include the Aurora programme, the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, the Race Equality Charter and the Disability Confident scheme. STEMM-specific schemes such as Juno were also mentioned.

Figure 32: Athena SWAN Champions reporting that other equality and diversity schemes have been useful by level of Athena SWAN application



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Athena SWAN Champions tended to report that they had found the Charter to be of similar value to other schemes. Champions were more likely to report that Athena SWAN was of more value than other schemes than they were to report that it was of less value.

4.4 Impact of Athena SWAN on culture and attitudes

Surveys of Athena SWAN Champions in universities, university departments and research institutes offer some insight into the impact of the Charter on culture (though the relatively small number of responses to these surveys means that analysis should be treated with some caution). Surveys of academic staff and administrative or support staff in university departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award also offer some insight into the impact of the Charter.

Key points from this section

Research question 3 - The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in changing the culture and attitudes across the participating institutions to address gender inequality and unequal representation

- The surveys provide some evidence of the positive impacts of the Athena SWAN Charter, particularly from those in the role of Athena SWAN Champion.
- Academic staff and administrative or support staff are also broadly positive about the Charter's impacts, though perhaps less so than their Champions.
- Women, however, tend to be less positive than their male peers. This may reflect a certain naivety among men as to the gender equality issues facing women. If so, it is notable that men are generally more positive than women in departments and institutes at all levels of award, which may indicate that Athena SWAN is not having as meaningful an impact as is intended.
- It is notable that often (as with questions of training, promotion and mentoring), responses from women in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level are often less positive than those from female staff in departments and institutes with an award at Bronze level, while women in departments and institutes with a Gold award tend to be most positive.
- It is not clear why this should be the case, though as noted earlier it may reflect an initial focus of activity and enthusiasm at Bronze level, followed at Silver level by increased awareness of the issues and challenges faced, before good practice in addressing these issues and challenges is fully embedded at Gold level.

4.4.1 Impacts of Athena SWAN according to Champions and other staff

Athena SWAN Champions were asked whether they agreed that the Charter had a positive impact on gender issues in their university, department or research institute. Overall, 93% of the institution or department Champions responding to the surveys agreed. 11% of Champions in departments and institutions which most recently applied for an award or renewal at Bronze level disagreed that the Charter had a positive impact on gender issues. No Champions at Silver or Gold level disagreed. However, the relatively small number of Champions responding to the surveys (especially at Silver and Gold levels) means that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions.

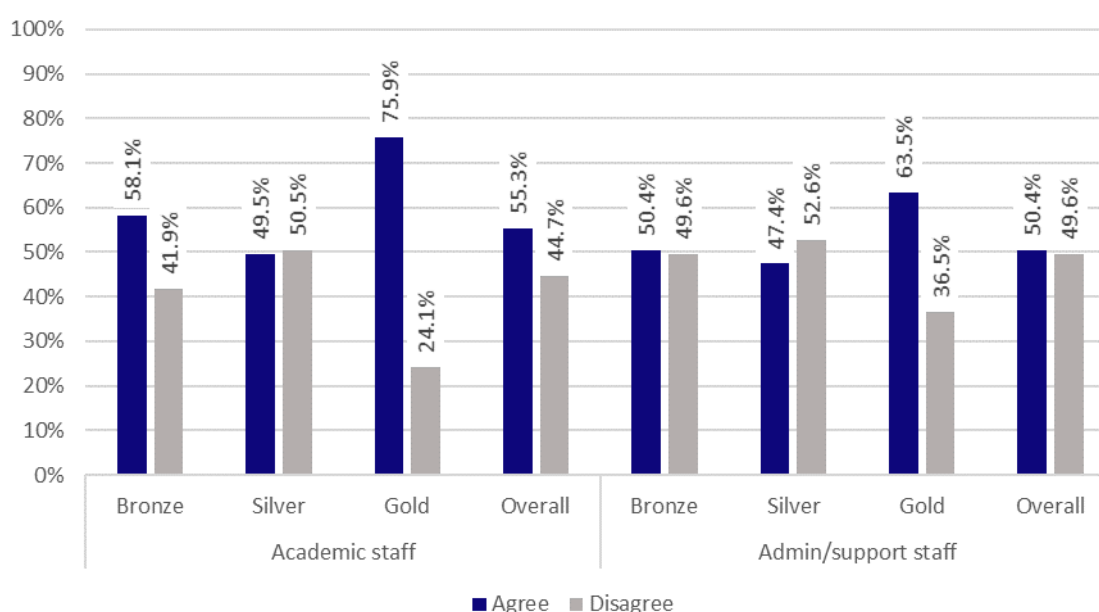
Similarly, Athena SWAN Champions were asked whether they agreed that the Charter had a positive impact on equality and diversity issues in their university, department or research institute. Overall, 78% of Champions agreed. 32% of Champions whose institution or department applied at Bronze level disagreed, while some Champions at Silver level also disagreed (though more agreed). No Champions at Gold level disagreed. Again, the small number of responses means it is difficult to draw firm conclusions, especially at Silver and Gold levels.

Asked whether they agreed that Athena SWAN had a positive impact on the career progression of women in their university, department or research institute, 78% of Champions agreed. 37% of Champions in institutions and departments applying at Bronze level disagreed while no Champions at Silver or Gold levels disagreed; again, analysis should be treated with caution because of the relatively small number of responses to the Champions surveys.

Academic staff and administrative or support staff in university departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award were asked if they agreed that the Charter had a positive impact on the work environment. Overall, 55% of academic staff and 50% of administration or support staff agreed.

Academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level were less likely to agree that the Charter had a positive impact on the work environment than those in departments and institutes with a Bronze award. Academic staff in departments and institutes with a Gold award were notably more likely to agree that the Charter had a positive impact on the work environment. A similar, though not so pronounced, pattern was also seen among administration or support staff.

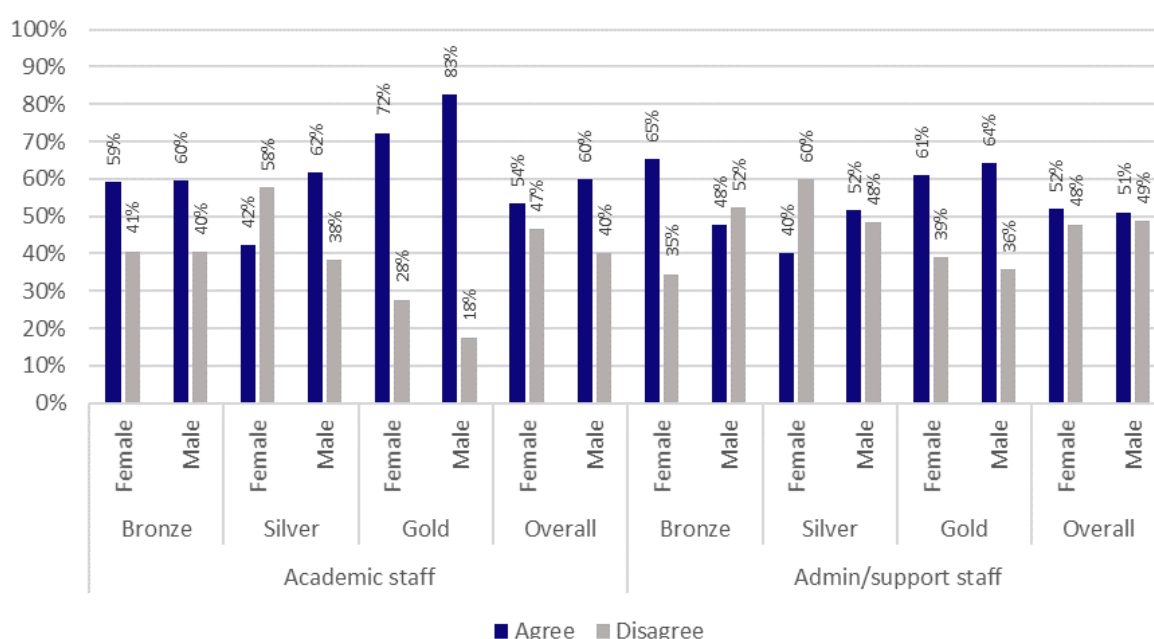
Figure 33: Positive impact of Athena SWAN on the work environment according to staff by level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female and male academic staff in university departments and research institutes with a Bronze award were equally likely to agree that the Charter had a positive impact on the work environment. In departments and institutes with a Silver or Gold award, female academic staff were less likely to agree than male academic staff. In comparison, female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with a Bronze award were notably more likely than male administration or support staff in their departments to agree that Athena SWAN had a positive impact on the work environment. In departments and research institutes with an award at Silver or Gold level, female administration or support staff were less likely to agree than male administration and support staff.

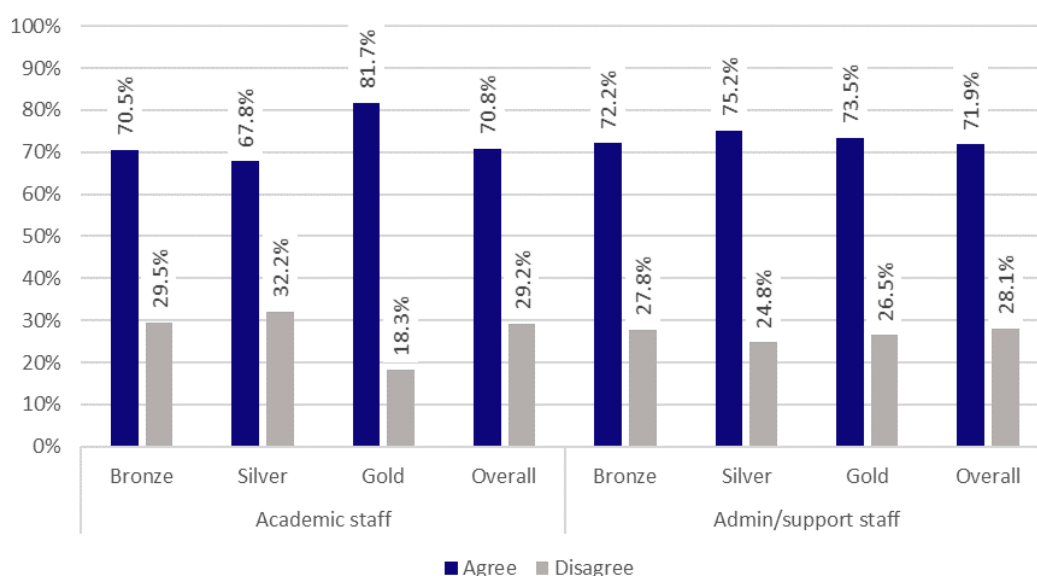
Figure 34: Positive impact of Athena SWAN on the work environment according to staff, by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Asked whether their university department or research institute had a positive work environment, independent of Athena SWAN, 71% of academic staff and 72% of administration or support staff agreed. Academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level were less likely to agree that the Charter had a positive impact on the work environment than those in departments and institutes with a Bronze award, while those in departments and institutes with a Gold award were most likely to agree. The proportion of administration or support staff who agreed was similar regardless of the level of award held.

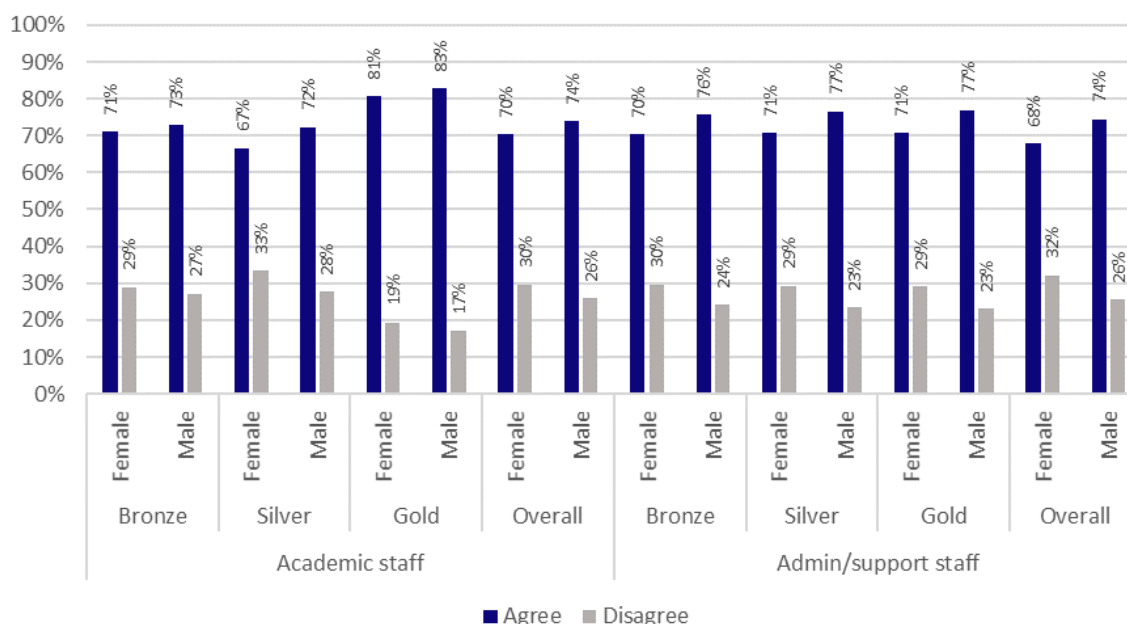
Figure 35: Staff's department or research institute has a positive work environment by level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff were less likely to agree that their department or research institute had a positive work environment than their male peers, with the greatest gender differential found in departments and institutes with a Silver award. Female administration or support staff were also less likely to agree than male administration or support staff.

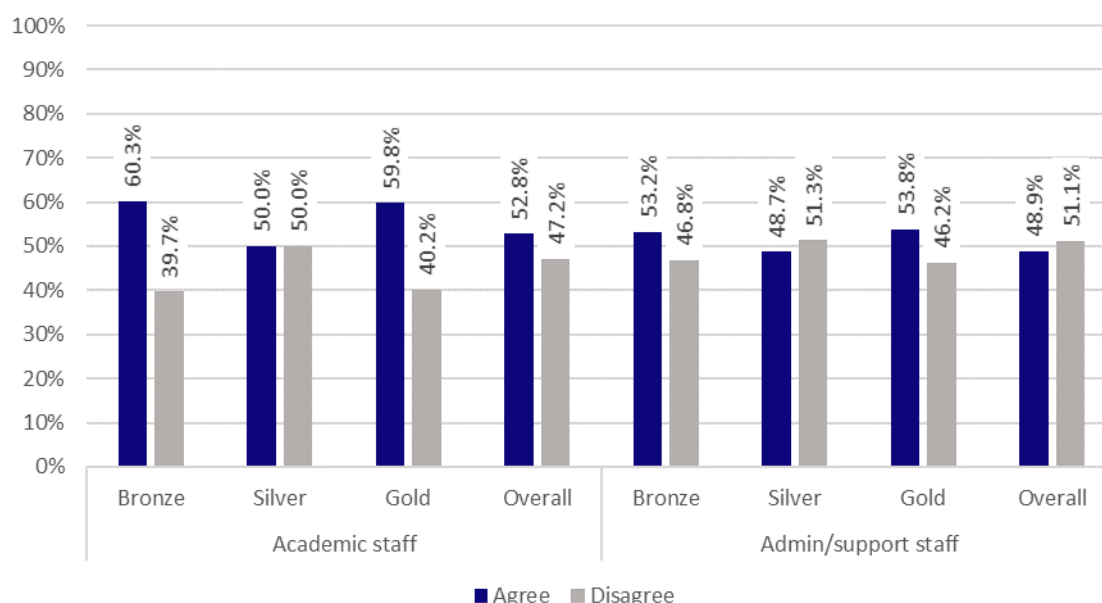
Figure 36: Staff's department or research institute has a positive work environment, by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Both academic staff and administrative or support staff were less likely to agree that university departments and research institutes had a *more* positive work environment than a few years ago, though the extent to which this reflects on Athena SWAN is not clear. Overall, 53% of academic staff and 49% of administration or support staff agreed that the work environment had improved. Academic staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Silver level were least likely to agree. Administration or support staff in departments and institutes with a Silver award were also less likely to agree than those in departments and institutes with a Bronze or Gold award.

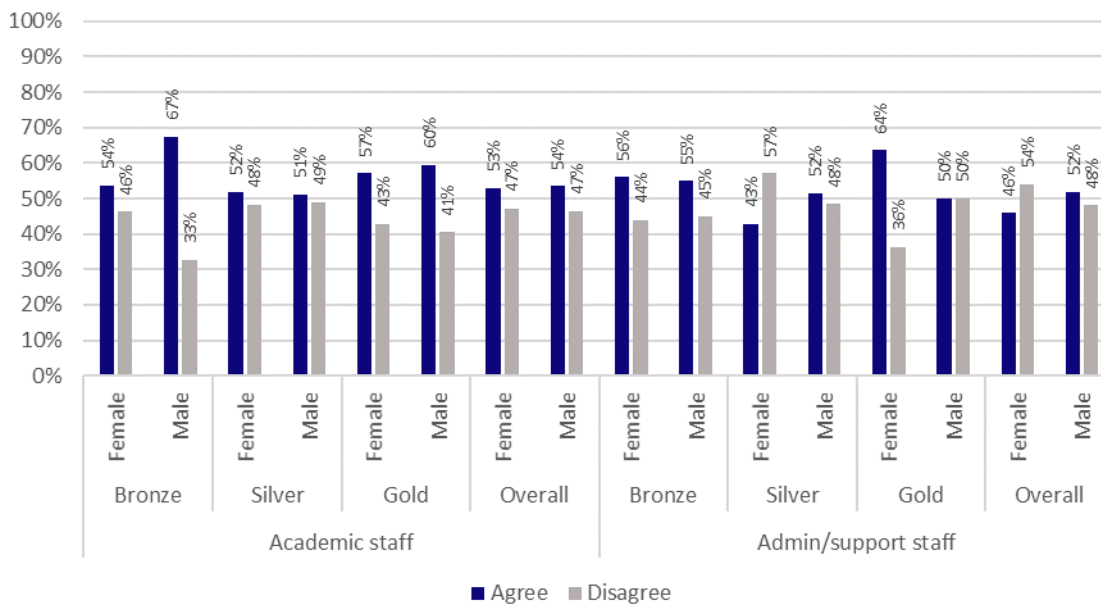
Figure 37: Staff's department or research institute has a *more* positive work environment than a few years ago, by level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Except at Silver level, where proportions were similar, female academic staff were less likely to agree that their department or research institute had a more positive work environment than male academic staff. In contrast, female administration or support staff in departments and institutes with a Gold award were notably more likely than their male peers to agree, while those in departments and institutes with a Silver award were notably less likely to agree than their male colleagues.

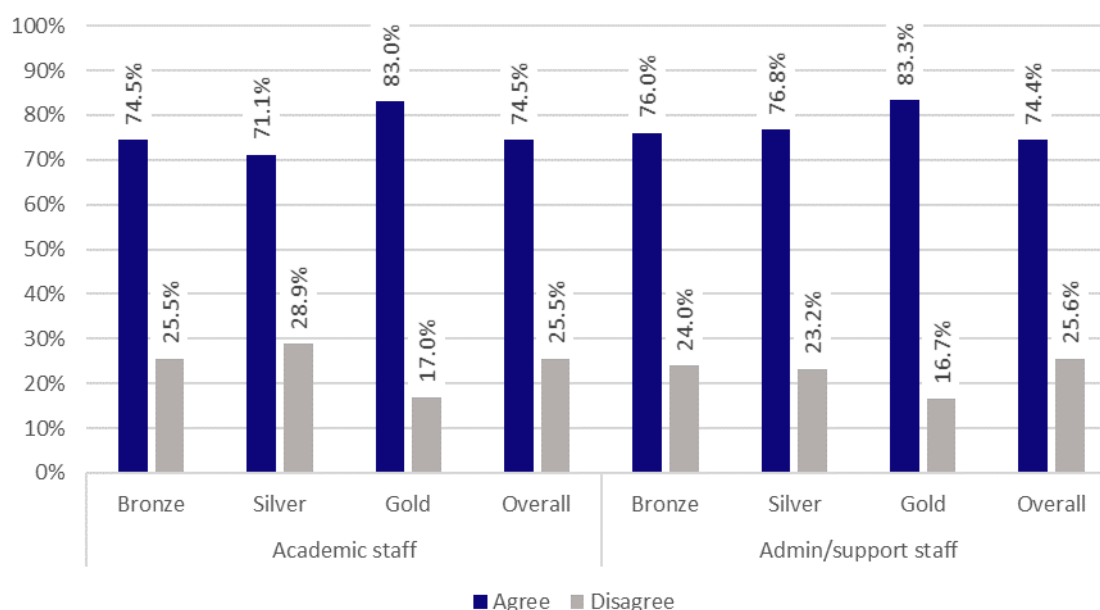
Figure 38: Staff's department or research institute has a *more* positive work environment than a few years ago, by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Overall, 75% of academic staff and 74% of administration or support staff agreed that their university department or research institute has a positive work environment for women. Again, academic staff in institutes and departments with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level were less likely to agree than those in departments and institutes with an award at Bronze level, while academic staff in departments and institutes with a Gold award were most likely to agree. Administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with a Gold award were also more likely to agree than administration or support staff in departments and institutes with a Bronze or Silver award.

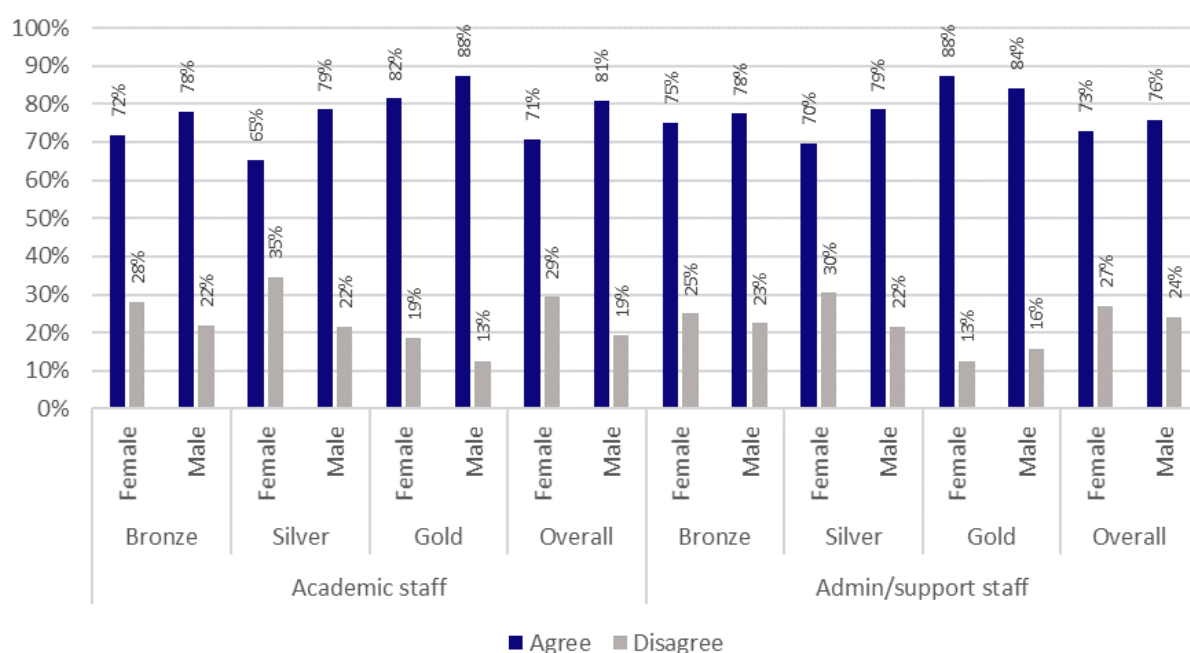
Figure 39: Staff's department or research institute has a positive work environment for women by level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff were less likely than male academic staff to agree that their university department or research institute has a positive work environment for women, with the greatest differential in departments and institutes with an award at Silver level. Female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with a Silver award were also notably less likely to agree than male administration or support staff in their departments and institutes, though only slightly less so in departments and institutes with a Bronze award. Female administration or support staff in departments and institutes with a Gold award were more likely to agree than their male peers.

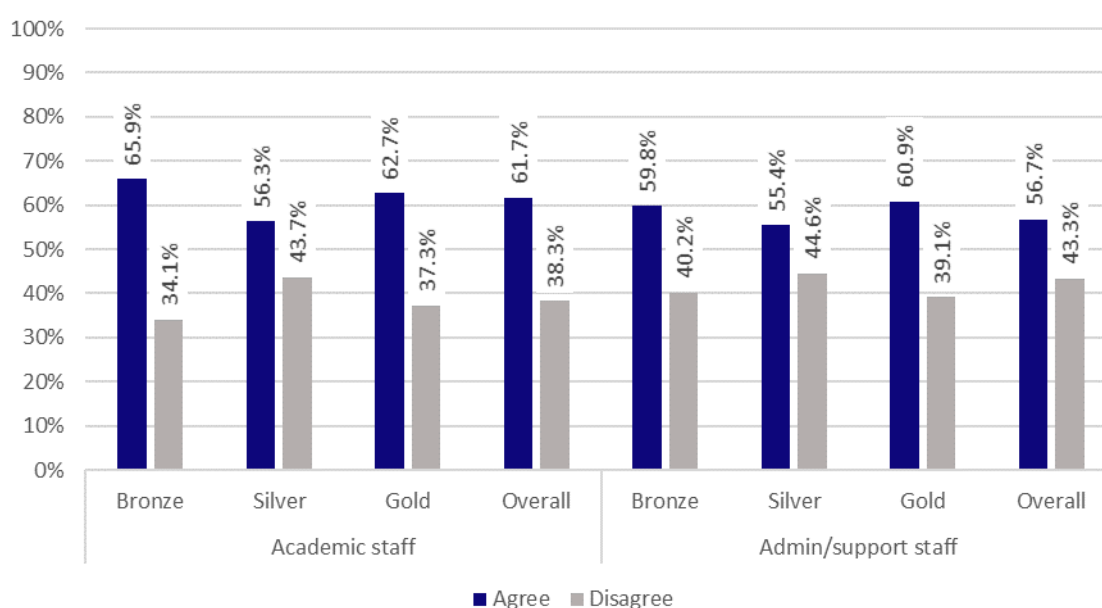
Figure 40: Staff's department or research institute has a positive work environment for women, by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Asked whether their university department or research institute has a *more* positive work environment for women than a few years ago, 62% of academic staff and 57% of administration or support staff agreed. Academic staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Silver level were least likely to agree, while those in departments and institutes with a Bronze award were slightly more likely to agree than their peers in institutes and departments with a Gold award. Administration or support staff in departments and institutes with a Silver award were less likely to agree than administration or support staff in departments and institutes with a Bronze or Gold award, in which the proportions agreeing were similar.

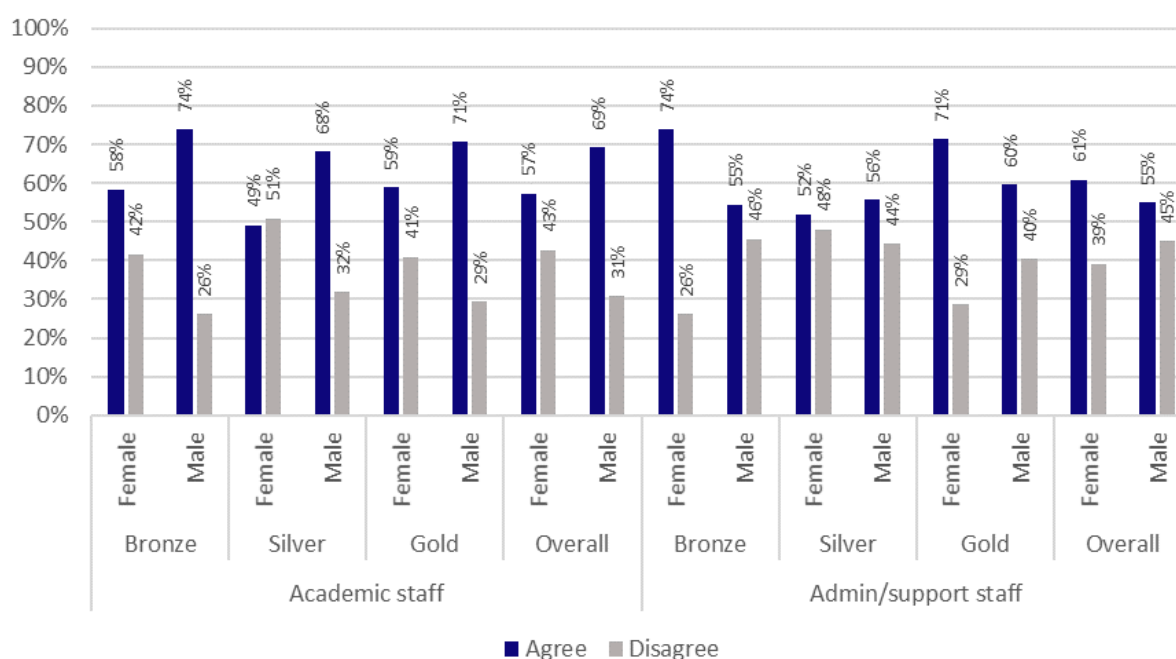
Figure 4I: Staff's department or research institute has a *more* positive work environment for women than a few years ago by level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff were notably less likely to agree that their university department or research institute had a more positive work environment for women than male academic staff, regardless of the level of Athena SWAN award their department or institute held. In contrast, female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Bronze or Gold level were notably more likely to agree than male administration or support staff, though this was reversed in departments and institutes with a Silver award.

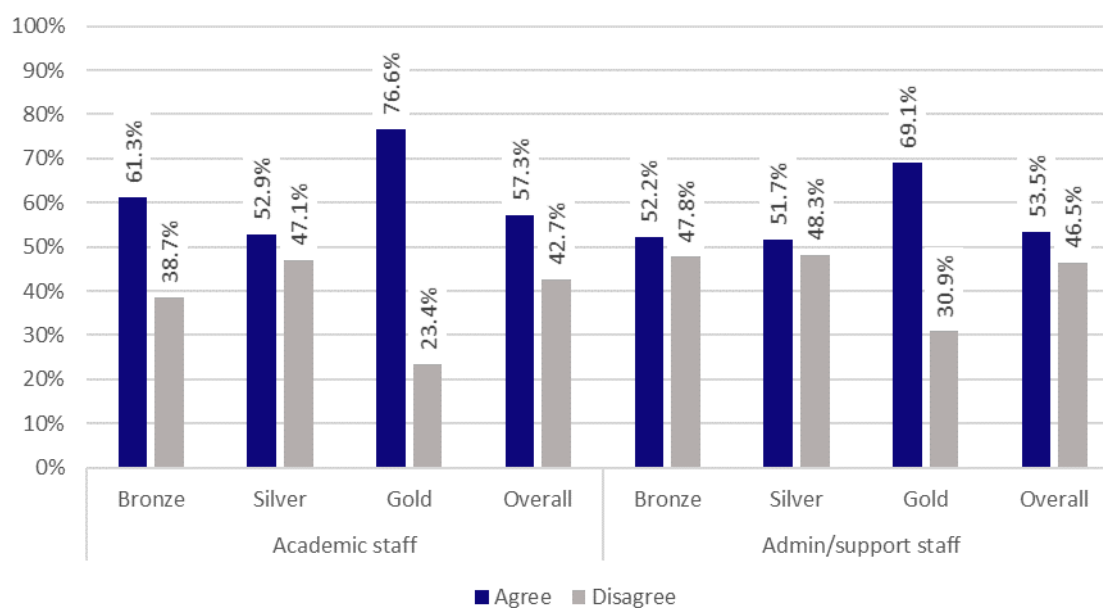
Figure 42: Staff's department or research institute has a *more* positive work environment for women than a few years ago, by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Overall, 57% of academic staff and 54% of administration or support staff agreed that Athena SWAN had a positive impact on work practices. Academic staff in departments and research institutes with an award at Silver level were notably less likely to agree than those in institutes and departments with a Bronze award, while those in departments and institutes with a Gold award were most likely to agree. The proportion of administration or support staff who agreed was similar in departments and institutes with Bronze and Silver awards, but notably higher in departments and institutes with a Gold award.

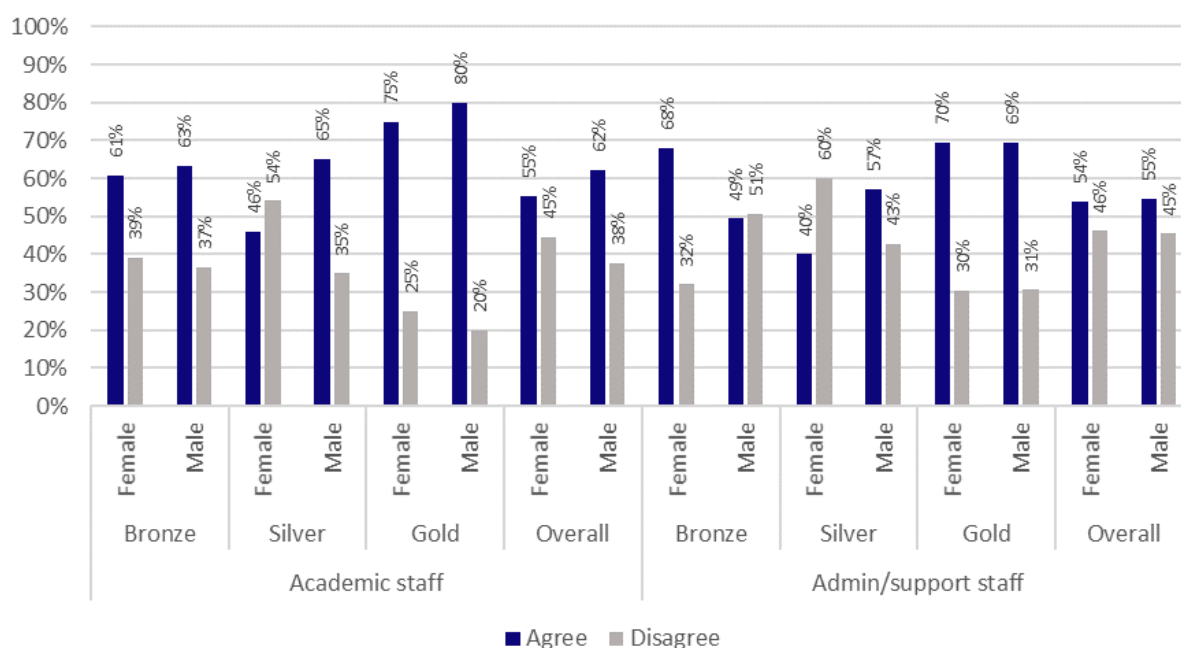
Figure 43: Positive impact of Athena SWAN on work practices according to staff by level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff were less likely than male academic staff to agree that Athena SWAN had a positive impact on work practices, especially in departments and research institutes with an award at Silver level. Female administration or support staff in departments and institutes with an award at Silver level were also notably less likely to agree that Athena SWAN had a positive impact on work practices than male administration or support staff. In department and institutes with a Bronze award, in contrast, female administration or support staff were notably more likely to agree. The proportions were similar in departments and institutes with a Gold award.

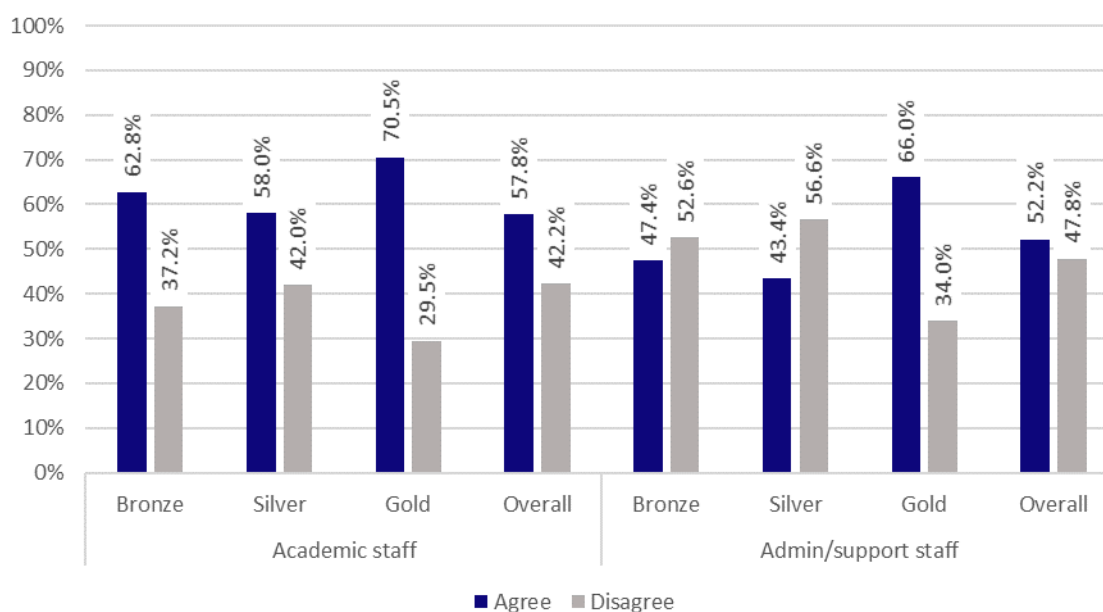
Figure 44: Positive impact of Athena SWAN on work practices according to staff, by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Academic staff and administrative or support staff in university departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award were also asked if they agreed that Athena SWAN helped them think more broadly about gender issues. Overall, 58% of academic staff and 52% of administration or support staff agreed. Again, academic staff in departments and institutes with a Silver award were less likely to agree than those in departments and institutes with a Bronze award, while those in departments and institutes with a Gold award were notably most likely to agree. A similar pattern was evident among administration or support staff.

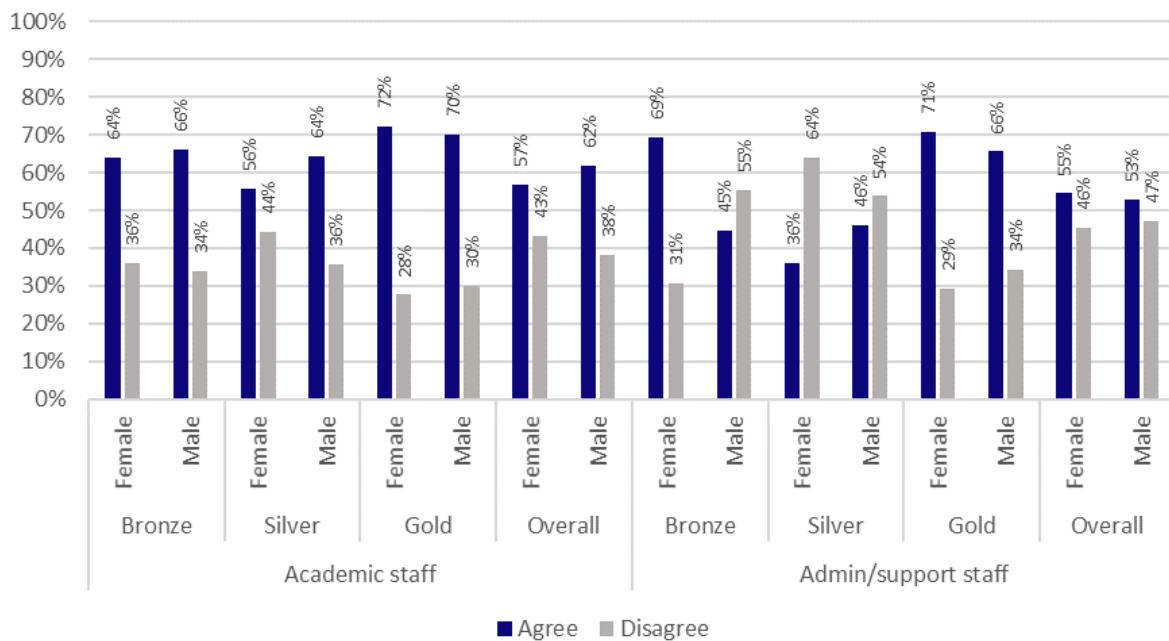
Figure 45: Athena SWAN helped staff think more broadly about gender issues by level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

Female academic staff in departments and institutes with a Bronze or Silver award were less likely than male academic staff to agree, with a notable difference between men and women in departments and institutes with a Silver award. In comparison, in departments and institutes with a Gold award female academic staff were slightly more likely to agree than male academic staff. Female administration or support staff in departments and research institutes with a Silver award were less likely to agree than male administration or support staff. In departments and institutes with a Bronze or Gold award, female administration or support staff were more likely to agree than male administration or support staff, with a particularly notable differential in departments and institutes with a Bronze award.

Figure 46: Athena SWAN helped staff think more broadly about gender issues, by gender and level of Athena SWAN award



Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University – Athena SWAN survey

5. Research Findings: Case studies

Section summary

Research question 1: Effectiveness of the Charter in improving the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women's careers:

- The Charter is regularly described as a positive agent for change in gender balance and in support women's career advancement.
- A wide range of impacts around gender balance have been reported. These include an increase in the number and proportion of women in academic and research posts, from the most junior to the most senior.
- Some of the individuals that play or have played key roles in driving Athena SWAN work report very positive personal impacts including awards which recognise their input, promotions and changes in their contractual positions which provide more security.
- Although most case study departments/institutions report positive impact on gender balance in academic/research staff, there is evidence that such impacts can take time to materialise.
- Respondents felt the greatest challenge remains in addressing gender balance in the most senior positions (e.g. professorial, senior management). Some case studies reported progress at this level, whilst others reported none.
- With the scope of the Charter being widened beyond STEM subjects to include AHSSBL, there are some departments which have a higher proportion of female staff than male staff. Even in these departments, however, the proportion of senior positions held by men is often disproportionately high when compared with the gender profile at lower grades. Addressing this challenge is seen as a major focus of Athens SWAN work.
 - [Link to Recommendation 18](#)
- There are also numerous changes within the higher education sector which are constraining impacts and are causing significant uncertainty, such as changes to A levels, reductions in funding available for certain courses and the wider fiscal environment for HE.
- Despite the positive findings, some challenging issues remain. An important example is the recognition that it will take a significant amount of time to influence gender balance at the very top of departments or institutions. There is also some concern within those at the Gold level that the challenges they are now targeting are the most intransigent and deep rooted, and this has raised questions about the timescale over which they can realistically be expected to address them.

Research question 2: Impact of the Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in processes such as recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training:

- Some interviewees (who played or play the role of Athena SWAN Champion) identified positive impacts arising from career development and mentoring approaches which have been introduced through the Charter. This includes being encouraged and supported to apply for promotions, engaging in mentoring at key points in their careers and positive experiences of recruitment processes which are based on revised practices and policies.
- In a small number of cases, involvement in the project to acquire and deliver Athena SWAN was said to have directly and negatively affected career development and promotion prospects. This situation arose when individuals were given the additional workload of leading Athena SWAN applications without any allowance being made for the impact of this on their existing responsibilities, most notably research outputs. The implication is that unless departments reduce other aspects of workload and adjust promotions criteria, then those leading Athena SWAN work (who are more likely to be women) may see a negative impact on career progression by undertaking that role.

Research question 3: Impact of the Charter in changing culture and attitudes and other indirect impacts:

- The Charter is commonly perceived as a key tool to help in the process of delivering real behavioural and cultural change. Where the Charter is most effective, it is implemented as a tool to ensure that practices and policies present no disadvantage to any member of staff or student. This 'holistic' approach targets cultural change through the modification of behaviours and attitudes of all involved.
- There is strong evidence that the Charter processes and methodologies have supported cultural and behavioural change – not just around gender equality, but equality and diversity in all its forms.
- The Charter is seen as a tool that unlocks open communication, honest discussion, real scrutiny of practices and commitment to a common purpose.
- Even those that do not consider their department or institute to be on the journey of cultural change see the value in the Charter in driving changes in attitudes and behaviours.

Research question 4: The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement (incorporation of learning and sustainability of changes):

- Case studies have provided numerous examples of how gender equality work driven through Athena SWAN has led to the widening out of such work to cover equality and diversity more generally. There is no evidence that any departments or institutions with an Award wish to limit its application to gender alone.
- However, alongside this broadening out comes the risk that focus on gender becomes watered down. Therefore, it is essential that the focus on gender is not allowed to diminish.
 - [Link to Recommendation 19](#)
- Case studies also provide examples of where the good practice has been shared beyond their department to other departments and indeed the institution itself.
- Athena SWAN has in many cases led to institution-wide coordinated activity including support, good practice sharing and the provision of central resource to assist departments in their Athena SWAN applications (and beyond, into action plan delivery).
 - [Link to Recommendations 1, 2 and 3](#)
- However, some departments report that they feel they are moving forward at a faster pace than their institution and that there are some tensions arising from this (including limitations on what departments can achieve imposed by the centre).

Research question 5: Experience and perceptions of implementing the Charter:

- There were many positive comments made **by case study interviewees** about the Charter itself, their fundamental belief in its aims and its effectiveness as a tool through which to drive change. Many also commented positively on the information and guidance provided by Advance HE where they had directly experienced that, though new applicants in particular would be assisted through an increase in the volume and applicability of such information.
- Whilst there is huge commitment and goodwill towards the Charter, there are some significant drawbacks which are limiting the take-up of the Charter and threaten its longevity.
 - [Link to Recommendations 16, 17 and 18](#)
- The amount of work (estimated to be equivalent to 3 FTEs for one year by one department) required to deliver a compelling application is seen as unnecessarily burdensome. The level of resources required to apply for Athena SWAN is seen as the biggest barrier to participation. For many, there are serious questions being asked about whether the investment of time and effort is warranted.
 - [Link to Recommendations 8, 9, 10 and 11](#)
- All case study interviewees that have been part of the process of applying talked about the significant problems faced in acquiring, analysing and reflecting on the required data. Whilst it is difficult to

estimate the proportion of the workload overall that is dedicated to this aspect, it is a very significant overhead.

- [*Link to Recommendation 12*](#)
- There are a number of issues – perceived and real – with the assessment process. The call from those involved in Athena SWAN is for Advance HE to reconsider the assessment process in order to reduce the amount of time input required for panels, to provide more consistency of assessment and to blend consideration of written material with visits to departments and institutes in order to facilitate a more rounded assessment.
 - [*Link to Recommendations 13, 14 and 15*](#)

5.1 Introduction

The study delivered 13 case studies, focused on a range of departments and research institutions with different subject and award-holding profiles. The case studies involved either telephone discussions ranging from 30 to 60 minutes with academic/research staff, professional and admin staff and postgraduates. In one case, the department was visited and interviews were conducted in person and in some cases in groups.

The purpose of the case studies is to investigate the full range of impacts that the Charter can have, how and in what circumstances it delivers positive impacts and the constraints that remain in delivering or widening impact. Discussions focused on the five key research questions of the study and an example of a discussion guide can be found in the Appendix (page 151). The discussion guide was designed to align to the key objectives of the study, as follows:

1. The effectiveness of the Charter in facilitating improvement in the gender profile of universities and research institutes, including:
2. The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in processes such as recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training.
3. The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in changing the culture and attitudes across the participating institutions to address gender inequality and unequal representation, and any other indirect impacts on particular groups.
4. The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement with the Athena SWAN Charter in participating institutions, including:
5. An exploration and testing of the experiences and perceptions of HEIs of implementing the Athena SWAN Charter and awards process.

In total, the case study programme has engaged with 85 individuals.

The case studies have involved engagement with female and male staff and students who were able to comment on both their personal experience and also their views and perceptions of the wider impact of the Athena SWAN Charter.

5.2 Effectiveness of the Charter in facilitating improvement in the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women's careers

5.2.1 Impacts on gender balance

The case studies have captured a range of evidence of positive impacts on gender balance and advancing women's careers (see also section 5.4 for further evidence on career advancement).

Athena SWAN has been described as a key stimulus for activity and also the vehicle through which to achieve equality and diversity goals.

"The Charter has been a strong stimulus for action." (Head of Department, Male)

"I find it really exciting to see career pipeline is improving and to witness people achieving things within their careers; things that 10 years ago they would have found much more difficult to achieve. I really hope that in this whole Charter review process we do not lose sight of the hugely important impacts that the Charter can have if implemented well." (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

"Athena SWAN can absolutely be a tool for departments to make change but it comes down to the level and extent to which it is implemented within the department as to whether or not the impacts are truly significant." (AS Champion, Female)

“The issue of gender equality and indeed equality and diversity more generally has been mainstreamed through the process of delivering Athena SWAN. There has been an enormous amount of progress in a very short space of time. Without it the department would very much be in a different place. It would probably continue to be managed in a more closed way by a small number of senior men.” (Head of Department, Female)

“I would describe Athena SWAN as a tool for achieving a bigger strategic objective. We have gathered evidence that shows that gender equality has been accelerated over the period that we have had our award. It has allowed us to identify gaps and challenges that we can then target with policies and initiatives. There are of course challenges that remain but we have found that through delivering Athena SWAN we have introduced a range of ‘bias interrupters’ all the way through the department.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Male)

In most cases interviewees were able to cite specific examples of positive impacts on gender balance and career advancement prospects arising from Athena SWAN.

Measurable impacts that interviewees linked back to the Athena SWAN Charter include:

- A higher number and proportion of women at the Senior Lecturer and Reader level compared to the past.
- Recruitment of a better gender balance into postgraduate research and postdoctoral positions.
- Positive change in representation across a number of the protected characteristics.

Other impacts which indirectly contribute to addressing gender balance and assisting career advancement include improvements in transparency regarding how departments and institutions operate and how decisions are made. This is seen as crucial in developing trust that the business of the department or institution is conducted fairly.

“Athena SWAN is an accelerant, a stimulus, a framework and a focus. However, leadership at the very start has been key to achieving any positive change in equality and diversity.” (AS Champion, Female)

Implementation of Athena SWAN has led to a wide range of practical changes across the departments and institutions involved. Examples include (inter alia) the redesign of job families and structures, updating policies and the creation of new ones, focusing on provision of better careers advice and appraisals, rethinking recruitment processes, adjusting the language used in job adverts and how they are placed, and unconscious bias training (and in some cases the addition of unconscious bias observation within shortlisting recruitment panels to provide feedback and advice to those on the panels).

Interviewees reported observing increases in the number of staff benefiting from flexible working policies, including but not limited to conversion from full-time to part-time contracts (or vice versa), compressed hours in term times, greater flexibility around homeworking, improved cover for absence is driven by caring responsibilities, and more flexibility generally to undertake caring responsibilities (e.g. childcare).

One example of a progressive policy provided by a case study department relates to posts that are funded by research grants. In the past, if the department received six year’s worth of funding then it would create a post and offer a contract for the first two years. In order to provide those taking up such posts with greater stability, which is known to be an issue that affects men and women differently, they now offer posts for the full term of the funding.

5.2.2 The persuasive power of positive results

Departments that achieve successful outcomes through Athena SWAN are able to use these outcomes as evidence of the effectiveness of the programme not just to apply for higher-level awards but also to continue to break down the barriers and the challenges and the cynicism that continues within their department or university. Interviewees recognise that “there is nothing more powerful than being able to show the naysayers that Athena SWAN works”. At the same time, cynics feel emboldened when they see equality and diversity initiatives failing to have the desired impact and this in turn makes implementing those equality and diversity initiatives even more challenging.

In some circumstances there is a virtuous circle but in others there is a vicious circle. It should be a priority of the Charter to ensure that all barriers to delivering cultural change are tackled one by one. It should also be a priority to ensure that the maximum amount of resource is available to any department to effect change, which means minimising the amount of time required to deliver process type activities such as those associated with applications.

“There is an ongoing risk that momentum slows – but this is not as big as the risk associated with doing nothing.” (Head of Department, Female)

5.2.3 Importance of leadership

Where leadership from senior managers appears to be lacking, this is not put down to a lack of engagement in most cases, it is put down to a potential lack of understanding as to why equality and diversity is so important and also a failure for equality and diversity to be prioritised amongst a range of competing issues.

One department suggested that the next application which will be their third at the Bronze level. In this department the extent to which the initiative is truly backed by leadership was questioned as the fact that the next application is likely to be Bronze was, it suggested, very telling of the extent to which this was bedded within the strategic objectives of the department.

“Having a focus on E&D gives you an opportunity to raise issues and bring people together around them.” (SAT Member, Professional Support Staff, Male)

“It is seen as a powerful tool in that it signals that we do not see that science is yet at the place it needs to be in terms of equality and diversity. It opens up the dialogue.” (Academic Staff Member, Female)

“The Charter is a tangible demonstration that those with the award are seeking to open up opportunities; that they are open to critiquing levels of participation, reassess processes and procedures, in order to find better ways of doing things. That they are seeking to move forward rather than stand still.” (Head of Department, Female)

“One example of how Athena SWAN has helped us identify and respond to challenges is in the way we have tackled PhD and PostDoc recruitment. Athena SWAN has identified the leaky pipeline. We may have got there but it has accelerated the recognition of the problem and has allowed us to review the relevant procedures and processes. It has meant a significant investment of time but that time has been targeted on a distinct, evidenced problem that has been examined and understood – and now addressed. We may have got there but we got there quicker.” (AS Champion, Female)

“From the department’s point of view there are many benefits – low staff turnover, for example, which reduces cost and creates a more stable working team and environment.” (SAT Member, Professional Support Staff, Male)

“Once the dust has settled, most would agree that the Athena SWAN process is a very valuable one and that it has an impact on career development, support and engagement of people around the issues associated with equality and diversity.” (AS Champion, Female)

“The Athena SWAN Charter has forced our institution to professionalise our services; both to support departments in achieving Athena SWAN but also in delivering the HR and other practices that are central to it.” (Head of Department, Female)

The wider economic and political landscape clearly has a significant influence on the institutions and departments that Athena SWAN is targeted at. Whilst it is important to consider evidence of changes in the gender equality landscape in the HE and research sector, it is difficult to attribute positive or negative changes to individual initiatives or policies. Evidence of change can therefore only be used as an indication of whether policies and initiatives are acting together to create the desired change. Other factors, such as government policy around secondary education, will also have an influence but it is not possible to tease these out.

5.2.4 Contrasting perspectives of impact

Another case study presents evidence of a significant gap between the perspectives of those leading Athena SWAN implementation and those working within the department and who are, in principle, the target recipients of its benefits.

One department, which had recently been holders of a Silver award but have had this downgraded to Bronze, explained that the work associated with applying for the Charter now has grown significantly since their first application in 2012. The interviewee reflected on the feedback received, which focused on there being a lack of data and also challenges and problems within those data. Data remains a clear challenge across the institution. For example, whilst the centre does provide data in support of the application, the Head of Department also maintains their own dataset which they use to assess the veracity of the central data and to improve accuracy. However, neither dataset is perfect nor are they comprehensive. What is perhaps most interesting in this case study, however, is the contrast in perspectives between those leading Athena SWAN and female academic staff. The Head of Department's view can be summarised as follows:

- Impacts have been delivered
- Statistics showing that they have better gender balance across the school
- The Charter is a positive agent for change and focuses attention
- Decision making procedures are more transparent and open to scrutiny
- Whilst some cohorts of staff have yet to become fully engaged in the Charter and its goals, many staff now actively engage and awareness has grown significantly
- Whilst gender is still very much at the heart of the equality and diversity work, it has been broadened out to cover other characteristics (such as ethnicity and disability)
- The original motivation to address gender imbalances in a department where there are in fact many important female role models – so this paradox drove a motivation to address these imbalances
- Whilst progress has definitely been made, it is frustratingly slow and the institutional role in slowing progress is significant.

However, the view of female academic staff contrasts quite considerably with this perspective. They complained that many of the ongoing challenges that affect career advancement in STEMM subjects are still very much in evidence. For example:

- Workloads are still very unequal between male and female colleagues

- No real flexibility in working practices – flexible hours are not truly available and meeting times decided long in the past and which do not suit those seeking to work flexibly remain unchanged
- No facilities to support returning mothers and attitudes towards returning mothers being very negative
- Unreasonable expectations placed on those returning from maternity and other leave (e.g. being asked to teach on first day of return)
- Very few female Principle Investigators (PIs)
- Being told that having returned from maternity leave that expectations as to what they might achieve in their career had been lowered
- An unmanageable workload as a junior female academic where the expectation is that more responsibilities will be taken on because this is necessary to advance your career
- A lack of any effective mentoring support to help develop careers
- A perceived focus for the Athena SWAN award on the balance of male and female professors and very little else
- A significant feeling of vulnerability across the female staff within the department
- Continual pressure to produce research output and to provide an excellent student experience

5.2.5 The challenge of continual improvement

Success sometimes presents its own challenges, however. There is a degree of concern within departments that have held an Athena SWAN award for some years and are operating at the highest level that, having addressed some of the key gender equality issues that their department faced in the past (and whilst recognising that they have not completed the job) they feel that they are now attempting to deal with the most intractable challenges.

“There has been change in the gender balance in the most senior ranks but this has been and remains slow. Turnover amongst our Professorial ranks is very low.” (AS Champion, Female)

“Continual improvement is a challenge, especially when the progress that has been made means that the outstanding challenges are the most embedded and intransigent.” (AS Champion, Female)

For example, there is a recognition that gender balance within the most senior roles in academic and research institutes is one such challenge and that the period over which that can be properly addressed is likely to be significant (10 years rather than 3 or even 5 years). Firstly, there is a need to develop and encourage a sufficient number of female candidates to compete for such jobs and second, there is a need for a sufficient number of such roles to become available for women to apply for.

There is also something of a natural limit to the extent to which improvement, certainly that improvement evidenced by data, can be achieved. In addition, departments are often unclear about the expectations that Advance HE have regarding ongoing improvements and how they might be evidenced through data. This means that applicants operating at the highest level within the Charter are very nervous about submissions, especially when the Charter has in relatively recent times undergone such significant changes. So further clarity around expectations regarding impact would be very helpful.

Another challenge that departments with higher awards find is that they feel there is a continual need to innovate new solutions, partly driven by the perception that this is necessary as a demonstration of their continual effort to address gender equality challenges. However, if there is a perceived pressure to innovate and refresh actions and initiatives, there is also a risk that effective actions are ceased before they have had time to generate the impacts sought. Alongside this, whilst there is clearly much benefit to be had from sharing good practice, there is another risk that departments adopt initiatives

that they see other places adopting before those initiatives have proven their worth. This could lead to the replication of ineffective actions in pursuit of adoption of 'good practice' from elsewhere.

5.2.6 Impact of the Charter on students

It was noted in the prior section that the case studies have provided evidence of positive impact on gender balance in postgraduate research roles and postdoc roles in some departments. Despite this evident progress in addressing gender imbalances in postgraduate research, post-doc and some academic roles, some departments continue to identify issues around attracting more female undergraduate students (or more undergraduate students from an ethnic minority background).

Interviews with postgraduate research students suggest a number of challenges remain. Whilst there is some recognition and understanding of the award, particularly amongst female students with families and caring commitments, other postgraduate research students report that there is very little understanding around the purpose and objectives of Athena SWAN.

5.2.7 Impact of the Charter on professional and support staff

The inclusion of professional and support staff in the Charter is very much welcomed by those involved in these case study interviews. Some report healthy workplace environments with supportive bosses and a team-based culture. In many cases there are strong relationships between the professional support staff and the academic and research staff. However, this is not universally the case, and in some departments professional and administrative staff still feel like 'second-class citizens'.

One of the case study departments was within a university which is facing significant financial pressures and which is planning to reduce its numbers of staff. This will most significantly affect professional support staff and is leading to an unsettled and anxious workplace.

Opportunities for advancement for professional and administrative staff are often very limited within the department in which they work. In order to seek promotion and advancement, it is highly likely that they would need to move from their current department into a new one. This is driven by the hierarchical nature of the job structure coupled with promotions being focused on taking up a job at the next level, rather than gradually moving upgrades as experience and knowledge is developed.

However, there is evidence to suggest that Athena SWAN is starting to influence and improve the support that professional and administrative staff receive with several interviewees commenting that career development support is more readily available now than it was in the past.

5.2.8 Institutional encouragement to apply

Some of the negative consequences of the internal pressure to apply for the award have also been evidenced by the case studies. For example, one case study was a department which had applied unsuccessfully for a Bronze award in the last three years (a department within the AHSSBL group). The lack of success was attributed to significant timetable pressure experienced due to the approach that their Faculty took to encouraging the department to apply. The timeline was evidently too short to generate a compelling application.

However, despite not achieving the award representatives from this school recognise that positive advances in the area of gender equality have already started to materialise. This is a department where the Charter is being used as a tool to achieve an organisational objective. In a short period of time, it appears that some significant changes to policy have been designed, implemented and are bearing fruit. The Head of School described Athena SWAN as "a very important step but only a step in a process of cultural change that it absolutely necessary".

5.2.9 Impacts arising from failure or award level downgrade

The case studies have therefore provided evidence that there can be positive impact arising simply from engaging with the process. It is too early to say with the specific example covered in the case studies whether or not to progress will be sustained, but it is interesting to note that in this example an Athena SWAN award has not been necessary to begin the process of cultural change.

On a very practical level, those departments which had either been unsuccessful or had had their award downgraded have reported that these results have galvanised efforts to achieve the desired award level. The feedback received on unsuccessful applications has helped these departments identify what needs to change in order to achieve their goals.

“The Athena SWAN Charter has helped us critically analyse and reflect on every aspect of the school and what is wrong. It has helped us identify every instance of inequality and to design actions that address these issues.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Male)

5.3 Early indications of the effectiveness of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving gender equality in AHSSBL

The evidence gathered from case studies conducted within AHSSBL departments indicates that it is too early to make definitive comments on the effectiveness of the Charter in improving gender equality. However, there are a number of important points which emanate from the evidence gathered which are highly pertinent to this study, in that they highlight ongoing challenges and barriers to such improvements.

Three departments within the arts and humanities subject areas have been included in the case study research. Interviews with E&D leads in two departments (both AHSSBL) without Athena SWAN awards were also conducted. Both are planning an application in the near future.

The experience of one of these departments also demonstrates the need for applications to present evidence which is beyond simply stating what the “big wins” have been. For example, in one department there has clearly been some progress at the top end such as the first female associate Professor and a new female Associate Dean being appointed. However, there is also evidence that very significant challenges remain around career progression and advancement for women generally in the department. The applications process and the assessment of applications needs to maintain sufficient rigour to ensure that progress is monitored across the piece and that it is not possible to claim progress on the basis of one or two major changes (although of course these are to be welcomed).

This department has also seen an improvement in the number of men working in the professional support services team.

In response to the frustrations and challenges associated with pushing on with the gender equality agenda, one department has started a woman’s group to support the sharing of experience across female staff members. This was born of frustration and whilst it is recognised that there is a risk that such a move underlines any perceptions that Athena SWAN is simply about promoting women, rather than about achieving cultural change around equality and diversity, it is seen as an important step to try and create a self-support group.

5.3.1 The Charter as a source of early-stage momentum

As far as the impacts go the Charter has very much driven momentum around gender equality and equality and diversity more generally. The process provides a structure which allows people to come round the table and focusing on the things that matter. It was acknowledged that achieving the

outcomes that they have would have been much harder if this had been a unilateral initiative run just by the school and without the Charter to support it and to give it legitimacy. They certainly would have struggled to have achieved the level of support from the central teams if this had been a unilateral process. There would not be the motivation, the capacity, the support and the energy behind this initiative without the Charter to help guide and drive it forward. It has also allowed them to articulate impacts and the progress that they have made.

There have been some very direct impacts arising from the engagement with Athena SWAN for the team involved. For example, one case study identified that the previous Champion within the department had gone on to be promoted twice since gaining the Bronze award. In addition, the current Champion has made an application for promotion to a more senior position which is pending.

“I would describe Athena SWAN as a vehicle for having conversations about equality, for developing plans about equality and to drive forward on the strategic intent to be a progressive, supportive and fair employer for all.” (Head of Department, Male)

5.3.2 Comments from no award departments

The motivation for seeking an award are a combination of institution encouragement (Universities are keen to see departments achieve the award) and attempts within the department to resolve gender equality challenges.

However, they recognise the risks associated with sustaining the effort through and beyond the application stage:

“Even when there is sufficient ‘will’ to apply for the award, there is no guarantee that action will flow. The Charter provides the impetus and the framework for action.” (AS Champion, Male)

In one department the interviews identified a number of important facts that have flowed simply from progressing with the Athena SWAN work leading up to the action. They are delivering initiatives to support trans students, starting to adjust recruitment, selection and support policies across the department. There are also examining the use of language within communications, adverts and so on.

In another department planning an application, the lead is concerned about the level of leadership and commitment coming from the top, though there is some acknowledgement that this is improving as the project progresses. The lead is a relatively new appointee at the lecturer level and is still within his probationary period. Whilst he is committed to equality and diversity and this is indeed his key motivator, he questions why the responsibility should fall to somebody in his comparatively precarious career position. He also perceives a significant challenge in persuading senior colleagues to engage with the process.

“These barriers are very draining because you are in effect asking junior colleagues to continue to argue the case which is something which senior colleagues simply don’t recognise as being of value.” (AS Champion, Male)

5.4 The impact of the Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in processes such as recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training

5.4.1 Impacts on promotion for individuals involved in AS

This section focuses on evidence of how the Charter improves the engagement of women in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training.

Many of the Athena SWAN Champions interviewed as part of this study expressed the view that whilst there were many negative aspects of the process (e.g. workload), the experience gained and achievements delivered whilst leading on Athena SWAN had had a positive impact on their career advancement.

“I have personally benefited from changes in policies and practices which can be linked back to our Athena SWAN work. For example, better professional development and career support which has led to me advancing my career.” (Previous AS Champion, Female)

“Overall, despite the process having initially placed a perceived constraint on career development, in the fullness of time I believe that the benefits have at least balanced out the negative impacts that I initially felt in terms of career advancement.” (Previous AS Champion, Female)

“Whilst at the time [of the application development and submission] I thought my career was being interrupted by my focus on Athena SWAN, it transpires that it has been very beneficial to my career. I now sit on a senior management team, I have been given a personal award for excellence in my work and I have been promoted.” (Previous AS Champion, Female)

“Being involved in Athena SWAN has had a good impact on me personally it has developed my confidence to apply for promotion and I have made a range of very good contacts that will be helpful to my career going forward.” (Current SAT member, Female)

There was also evidence provided regarding the wider impacts that Athena SWAN and associated actions have had on recruitment, promotion, appraisal, training and induction. In fact, many interviewees noted that many of the ‘easier wins’ available to those designing and implementing Athena SWAN action plans were to be found in these themes.

“Even within the challenging environment that our department faces Athena SWAN has been implemented and is delivering impacts. For example, we have improved induction processes for new staff, there is better career support overall for new and existing staff, greater encouragement to go for promotions, efforts around social events and so on. However, this school feels very much constrained by the physical environment in which it finds itself-an old building with corridors and offices behind often closed doors.” (Current AS Champion, Female)

“We are still learning in respect of recruitment. Every time we go through the process, we examine it again to try and understand how the process ran and whether there are changes we could make. Every time there are notes made and learning taken away.” (SAT member, Academic Staff, Male)

5.4.2 Mechanisms for improving career advancement

Evidence was provided of the mechanisms that have facilitated career advancement for these individuals, which include the redesign of recruitment and promotion criteria in order to better acknowledge the value of work around Athena SWAN and equality and diversity.

This example is instructive because it highlights a potential negative unintended consequence arising from the Charter. The case studies identified negative impacts associated with the workload required to deliver Athena SWAN. For example, female academic staff being asked or expected to undertake the associated workload with no adjustment to the workload associated with their core role. This has two effects: firstly, it increases the aggregate workload for such individuals and increases work-related stress and second it means that important research work is not advanced at the desired rate which can inhibit career advancement. So not only are such individuals under significant strain, they then come

out of the process realising that as far a career advancement goes, they are behind where they hoped they might be.

There are potentially ways in which the Charter itself can be used as a tool to ensure the risk of such outcomes materialising is reduced. For example, guidance could be developed which outlines a range of potential unintended consequences arising from engagement with Athena SWAN and suggesting policy changes that could be implemented from the very start of that engagement process (i.e. even before application submission). For example, the guidance could include the suggestion that recruitment and promotion criteria are adjusted immediately to ensure that valuable contributions to the 'life of the University' (such as to achieve an Athena SWAN Charter award) receive a suitable level of recognition alongside research, teaching and other work.

5.4.3 The focus of promotions criteria

There were numerous comments which pointed to the fact that even within departments with awards, promotions procedures often focus too much on research and do not pay sufficient attention to pastoral, organisational or "public good" responsibilities.

One specific impact arising from Athena SWAN and that was cited by many case studies was that the process has generated greater clarity in the promotion process and criteria and that this was seen to be making a significant difference in attracting and encouraging the best talent. Interviewees also identified that the Charter had stimulated work to create better structures for career development and support.

5.4.4 'Public good' roles

There was much discussion about the challenge arising from the fact that women are potentially much more likely to put themselves forward for "public good" roles whilst at the same time much less likely to put themselves forward for promotion. It is very important, therefore that departments recognise this challenge and address it before the negative consequences of felt. Consideration of how the Charter might address this and related issues is therefore highly important.

"Athena SWAN has helped us identify a large number of issues, some of which are very significant - for example, career progression within our politics department. We have identified that there are many women on teaching only contracts and that there are challenges in them converting across into academic and research roles. There is an expectation, almost, that women would do the administrative and organisational development roles such as Athena SWAN etc and that they will take on a significant amount of the pastoral care that goes on within a department. These can be significant constraint on a career if they are not recognised within the promotion and development procedures. Currently there is little recognition of these roles in the promotion criteria." (AS Champion, Female)

"Athena SWAN has had a very significant personal positive impact on me in my career. Gaining the award certainly felt like a significant achievement and it is symbolically important to have an award which means we have been recognised for our work in equality and diversity." (AS Champion, Female)

"In our department being involved in Athena SWAN does not place a brake on the careers of those involved; in fact, quite the opposite. The leader of our Bronze bid was promoted to Professor shortly after we achieved our award; she had been turned down a number of times prior to that. The person currently leading our Athena SWAN activities has recently promoted to senior leadership and her involvement in Athena SWAN made a significant contribution to the case that she made." (Head of Department, Male)

Most if not all departments and institutes have focused on rolling out unconscious bias training. One department had gone one step further, however, by introducing unconscious bias observation of

shortlisting and interview panels. The observer provides feedback after the event about how the processes and individuals roles within it could be improved. This approach is highly valued.

“The introduction of unconscious bias observing in interviews has been a stroke of genius. The observer doesn’t judge the interviewers but feeds back, gently and objectively, on how shortlisting and interviewing have followed UB guidelines.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Male)

There is an ongoing struggle to field female members of staff on recruitment panels simply because of the number of women in suitable roles.

“It is important that recruitment panels have access to subject matter expertise and if the subject is one where there is a high proportion of men then often panels can still be 100% male.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

5.5 The impact of the Charter in changing culture and attitudes

5.5.1 Targeting culture change

Where the Charter is most effective, it is implemented as a tool to ensure that practices and policies present no disadvantage to any member of staff or student. In other words, the workplace policies are gender blind (and in the most advanced departments, they are designed to be blind to other protected characteristics).

The Charter works best – and impact is maximised – when it is delivered in a holistic way, targeting cultural change and adjusting attitudes and behaviours throughout. This helps avoid the initiative being perceived as simply about creating initiatives for women, with the project instead being about supporting everybody to make the most of their talents.

“We are using the Charter as part of our work to ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to reach their potential and to make everything transparent and fair. This means creating a better workplace for all involved.” (Head of Department, Male)

“It is very important to our process of cultural change – that can be said with some certainty.” (Head of Department, Male)

“Whilst within this there are often projects or initiatives that are naturally focused on women, these are often part of a wide range of things that are put in place to support staff and students more generally.” (AS Champion, Female)

“Athena SWAN was the chosen vehicle that helped progress along the journey. However, the destination had already been decided and the journey started. Athena SWAN became a very useful and powerful tool by which to advance along that journey.” (Head of Department, Male)

“We don’t see this as a paper exercise; we see it as a process through which we can deliver real cultural and behavioural change: ensuring the attitudes and behaviours that support equality and diversity are embedded within our school and everything we do is an essential part of achieving this cultural change.” (Head of Department, Male)

“Right from the start we wanted to develop a new underlying culture of fairness and equality, to create a supportive environment where everyone could fulfil their ambition within the University. Having the Athena SWAN framework available to us has very much helped us advance towards that goal. The methodology framework provided has many practical advantages and allowed us to focus in on the key issues. We were able to hone our understanding of our department and to target our efforts appropriately.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

Numerous interviewees stated that they felt that the work around equality and diversity was not simply about the individual actions and policies that support it but installing a more supportive, caring and fair environment for talent to thrive.

“All the work has been about policies that help everybody rather than policies which are about supporting women. Some are clearly focused on women such as maternity leave, but over time behaviours have changed and the change has been supported and accepted.” (AS Champion, Female)

“We are seeing men across the hierarchy beginning to reduce hours to take on childcare responsibilities. Men wouldn’t be doing it unless they saw female colleagues doing it and still progressing.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Female)

“People understand that the department is committed to supporting their staff, caring for their staff and creating a work-life balance.” (SAT Member, Professional Support Services, Male)

“The Charter has helped us increase recognition of the importance of a healthy, fair and equal workplace and an awareness of related issues”. (Head of Department, Male)

“Athena SWAN has done a lot to educate the senior management group about how pervasive issues related to gender equality (and equality more generally) are. It is part of the process of moving from talking about addressing these issues to actually doing it”. (Head of Department, Female)

“The Charter itself drives people in an appropriate direction and it provides the framework by which progress can be planned and monitored.” (SAT member, Professional Services, Female)

“It challenges those involved to think about the issues within their department or institution and how to address them”. (Academic staff member, Male)

“It has helped generate a commitment from the department to the principles of equality and diversity.” (SAT member, Academic Staff, Male)

However, there are ongoing questions about the return on investment and concerns that if this continues to be the same amount of work then some may decide not to pursue the Charter as a vehicle for progress in equality and diversity.

“We must acknowledge that there are lots of models of ‘normal life’ and Athena SWAN has allowed us to develop a culture that accepts all of these.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Female)

“We have worked really hard on Athena SWAN and on delivering cultural change over the last five years. At the start there were regular complaints that there was a lack of transparency about the way the school was operating, decisions were made and so on. Communication was poor but we have addressed this and many other related problems through Athena SWAN.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

“It is quite clear that the cultural change we have experienced in our department has been very largely driven by Athena SWAN.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

“There is no doubt that we would not be the position we are now without Athena SWAN. It has brought home how important are some of the things which are deceptively simple (e.g. good induction processes, constructive appraisals, targeted mentoring and so on). It has brought about a big change in culture within the University. Nonetheless as the lead on equality and diversity at this university I am still regularly fielding questions about whether this is all really necessary and these are in large part driven by the practical requirements of applying for and acquiring an Athena SWAN award. Sadly of course there are still challenges around persuading all colleagues that achieving equality and diversity goals in changing our culture to be one the support of open fair and equal working environment is a worthwhile thing to do.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

“The bottom line is that the Charter on its own cannot turn bad managers into good managers and good managers will be already delivering many of the principles that the Charter is founded on.” (AS Champion, Female)

“Over the years I have noticed a change in our culture as previous senior colleagues have retired. We have moved on from what used to be perceived as an old boys club and there are more females holding high-level posts than in the past. However, there is still a lot of work to do”. (SAT member, Research staff, Female)

Interviewees report that “gender equality is very much on the agenda”. This is evidenced by reports of equality and diversity committees that contain a range of people from different ethnic backgrounds different ages and different genders. Some departments report what is effectively a snowballing of effort over time, with the movement being small in the early stages but growing year-on-year resulting in more and more people pushing for equality and diversity in the workplace.

Other evidence indicates that organisational changes can influence how culture evolves in a department.

“Assessing the culture of this department and how it has changed overtime is difficult. Our faculty has undergone a number of structural changes leading to the merger of a number of departments. This has had the effect of bringing together different subject areas and different cultures into a single entity. We are still getting to terms with the amalgamation of those cultures to be honest. Whilst we have tried to come together as a single school there remain some departmental divisions.” (Head of Department, Male)

Describing and evidencing changes in culture is an ongoing challenge within the process of applying for the award and progressing through the levels.

“[As a panellist], when we read through applications and we look at the data which presents tangible facts about the current position and progress. When we look at culture this is much looser and we often find that applicants drift away from the core questions. This is not done deliberately and we feel it is indicative of the fact that this aspect of the form is often the most challenging. So, could further guidance and support be provided around this? It is difficult to clarify on a piece of paper what the questions around culture actually mean and this makes it difficult for applicants to respond accordingly.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

One of the negatives is that some colleagues continue to feel that this is a process that is being ‘done to them’, much like the REF and TEF processes; that Athena SWAN is another stick by which to beat colleagues. There is not consistent and complete engagement yet. There is an acknowledgement that in the past the work around Athena SWAN has tended to fall on junior female staff, but this is actively being changed.

However, where negative attitudes towards the Athena SWAN process and the work associated with it did exist, there is evidence of a change in these attitudes in some cases.

“There was a time when work around Athena SWAN was not seen as “proper work” but this perception is changing now, thankfully.” (SAT member, Academic Staff, Female)

The case studies conducted with AHSSBL departments indicated that the impact on culture that might arise from Athena SWAN is in some cases recognised but so is the fact that it will take time for these changes to occur.

“It is too early to say that I sense any real cultural change, though it does feel like we have started a journey that could lead to this outcome.” (SAT member, Academic Staff, Female)

When all the necessary ingredients come together it is clear that the case studies provide evidence of changes in the attitudes and behaviours of staff and the wider workplace culture within departments. One respondent described the outcome as being “a change in the DNA of the department”.

Even in departments without an award, case study interviewees provided evidence of cultural change being effected. This further supports the idea that the Charter is an important tool to advancing equality but that it is not necessary to hold an award for change to happen. Further, this evidence reinforces the view that the Charter is a means to an end rather than the end itself.

That is not to say, of course, that all departments without an award feel that they are experiencing a cultural change. However, it is evidence that progress is being made in departments where the award is not currently held but such departments are still attracted to the Charter as a tool to help them achieve their goals and a recognition of their commitment to them.

It is clear that despite the evident progress, the engagement of all staff in equality and diversity initiatives continues to be a major challenge. Case studies have indicated, however, that where there might be initial resistance to engagement, being able to demonstrate that equality and diversity initiatives are having a positive impact (and not just in a numerical sense but in terms of the working environment and the experience that staff have of working there) is crucial in breaking down the remaining barriers. That is not to say that it is possible to engage everybody, but over time success breeds success.

5.6 The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement with the Athena SWAN Charter in participating institutions

5.6.1 Dissemination of knowledge and best practice

The case studies have provided evidence of Athena SWAN practices and learning being incorporated into mainstream strategies and processes.

The first of these is through the dissemination of knowledge and sharing of good practice.

“It is certainly the case that the policies and practices have been developed and adopted, following advice from us, in other departments in this university. We also feel that we are feeding ideas and approaches back into the centre for wider adoption across the University.” (AS Champion, Female)

There are examples where universities are creating internal networks of Athena SWAN leads and experts in order to provide advice and guidance across the University. Further discussion of this issue can be found in section 5.7.8, page 79.

In the view of one of the interviewees, it is hard to argue that actions that emanate from the institutional award have flowed down to all departments. For example, there is still significant changes required at the department level around policies and practices which are standard across the University. The interviewee queried why it was necessary for departments to effectively duplicate the work that has happened in other departments and also to do the job of the people in the centre. The comment made was that the process currently operates in the wrong direction. The institutional award should mean the centre shoulders responsibility for all common policies and practices and for disseminating them out to departments, monitoring implementation and assessing impact. This would leave the departments to focus on specific subject-related issues which are much better known and understood.

Furthermore, the centre can often act as a brake on progress at the departmental level under the current system, with departments being told that they are not able to diverge from institutional policy even though that policy is creating disadvantage.

5.6.2 Broadening the agenda

A second example is through the use of Athena SWAN as a tool to support the broadening out of the equality and diversity agenda to extend beyond gender.

“We are starting to include other protected characteristics within our equality and diversity work beyond gender.” (AS Champion, Female)

One department described how the original motivation and drive for taking part in Athena SWAN was to address some long-standing career development issues faced by women in particular subject areas. For example, in these subject areas there were large numbers of women who had not been promoted from many years. The focus of Athena SWAN is now much broader and they are starting to adopt similar principles across a wider equality diversity and inclusion agenda for example by looking at ethnicity, sexuality and widening participation factors.

It is clear that in some departments work to improve gender equality has been subsumed within a wider programme of work to address inequality more generally. Departments identify that they are also making progress in the areas of disability, LGBT, ethnicity and widening participation. However, there are a number of challenges in these areas that are seen as beyond the control of the department or even institution. For example, the attractiveness of a departments to someone from an ethnic minority background will be influenced by a range of factors including (but not limited) to the extent to which they feel comfortable within that department. Beyond the department, the representation of ethnic minorities across the wider University will also be an influence, as will the ethnic diversity of the town or city within which that institution is located. Departments based in London, for example, talk in very positive terms about their ability to attract a diverse staff and student base from an ethnicity and socio-economic background point of view. Those in northern cities, Wales or Scotland talk of the challenges associated with attracting an ethnically diverse student body or staff group.

One inherent risk when the agenda is broadened out from gender to cover other protected characteristics is that those involved may feel that this demonstrates that the issue of gender equality has been resolved.

“This isn’t just about gender anymore. We are now always talking about disability, LBGT, race, widening participation. This has all been rolled into one bigger thing which is more all-encompassing in terms of equality and diversity. All of these things together help with the feel of the department. But there is not yet scope in the Charter to capture this wider focus. Departments are doing it, though, and the Charter needs to keep up.” (AS Champion, Female)

“As long as we are not looking at any single aspect of E&D in complete isolation, then we avoid the risk of siloing the issues.” (SAT member, Academic Staff, Male)

“There is a risk that if Athena SWAN widens its focus, then some departments that have not made as much progress on gender might see it as an excuse for not bothering, and shifting attention elsewhere.” (Academic staff member, Female)

“Having started our work focusing on gender, this has led us to think more broadly about equality and diversity. It has forced us to reconsider our organisational structure and to identify routes through which initiatives can flow through the department. This is as much about removing silos and ensuring that collaboration occurs in order to allow the more strategic coordination of activities.” (SAT member, Research staff, Female)

“We are also finding that the principles are becoming much more an integral part of our approach to teaching and learning and in creating a high quality student experience. This demonstrates that there is a much wider and deeper thinking about equality and diversity and the impacts of the unequal

environment has across the school. However, it has taken a while for the agenda to broaden out beyond gender. However, now that we have done so, the fear is that for the next application we will have to narrow our focus down again on to gender alone and it will be a struggle to achieve this whilst also continuing with our broader work.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Female)

“The initiative started with a focus on gender but it has begun to broaden out. We are starting to put into place the structures and approaches that are needed to address not just equality issues around gender but equality issues across the piece. The tactical and operational things that we have put into place have seen some resistance but as these approaches become more embedded the resistance has begun to fall away.” (Head of Department, Male)

“The Race Equality Charter Mark is also being looked at and considered as an award to be applied for in the future. However, the internal work on equality and diversity is already designed to cover not only gender but also ethnicity in particular.” (Head of Department, Male)

One department which recognises that its work on equality and diversity is being broadened out beyond gender flagged a note of caution. There are potentially some significant issues around broadening the equality and diversity agenda. Whilst this is happening and could be taken as evidence of the Charter driving a broadening of scope, it may also result in a ‘watering down’ of efforts to address gender challenges. For example, in this particular school views were expressed by more than one interviewee that the evolving focus on ethnicity is having the effect of reducing the amount of focus and attention that the issues associated with gender are receiving. Ultimately, this seems to come down to resource. The school is having to spread the resources that it has to tackle equality and diversity more thinly as it widens out the agenda. Finding mechanisms to encourage departments to allocate more resources to equality and diversity should be a focus of the Charter moving forward.

5.6.3 Incorporation of policies and practices

The third example is in the incorporation of policies and practices in other departments and within the institution more broadly.

“It is noticeable that there are more and more equality and diversity initiatives and policies being embedded across the University. But the central equality and diversity team is small consisting of only three people and there are very many demands on the time of these three people. This is very much an inadequate resource given the amount of work that there is to do in this area.” (AS Coordinator, Female)

This department also identified challenges associated with driving this forward within an institution which is not working at the same pace (and perhaps not setting the same level of ambition). They are tired of waiting for the University to implement change which they need in order to achieve their ambitions. There is a recognition that despite its Athena SWAN award, the University lacks an appropriate framework that departments can work within. This is despite the University signalling very clearly that they wish to widen out the Charter across departments. This is clearly a major challenge and one which Advance HE should look at carefully.

Some respondents have questioned the logic behind the Charter being an award relevant to both institutions and departments within them, given that central control over systems and policies is so significant (and increasingly so). If control of policies and practices is being centralised, some question whether this should mean that the Charter should also be centralised.

However, there is evidence to suggest that there is often mis-alignment between the policies and practices that departments are implementing or seek to implement and those which are implemented across the institution (i.e. central policies). It seems perverse that an institution with an Athena SWAN award might be placing a break or a constraint on progress within departments, given that by definition

both the departments and institutions will be working towards the same goals (evidenced by the fact that the institution must have an award for a department to hold one).

Implementing the action plan can mean addressing some quite significant challenges. For example, departmental respondents talked about needing to see their University adopt and introduce certain policies so that they can be introduced at the departmental level. Whilst some reported progress in convincing those in the centre that such changes are necessary, they also acknowledged that it then takes time for policies to be redesigned and approved.

5.6.4 Embedding practice

The fourth example is where policies and practices are becoming embedded into standard practice and common behaviours.

“More recently, we have spent time embedding all the Athena SWAN work into all aspects of the departments work. For example, ensuring that postgrads hear about it, undergrads hear about it, that it is a standing item on all committee agendas and so on.” (AS Champion, Female)

“Over time, there will always be changes in the Head of Department role, so having embedded policies and approaches can help ride through those changes.” (Head of Department, Male)

“There is a huge awareness of gender issues now. For example, in a very recent meeting a member of the senior management suggested that when engaging headhunters to find applicants for very senior position within the school, they ought to invite the potential headhunters to explain how they would ensure they delivered a balance of male and female talent across the pool of applicants.” (AS Champion, Female)

“Because of the Charter, it is now commonplace to have conversations about equality and diversity and to consider these issues in all aspects of our work. The principles are becoming very well embedded.” (SAT Member, Professional Support Staff, Male)

One interviewee commented that Athena SWAN was very much embedding itself within their academic frameworks, for example the link to research funding and that – in their experience and when part a wider drive the change workplace culture – they can be important tools to influencing league table position. Further work to embed the principles into other measures of excellence is being considered and the interviewee wondered if Advance HE had contemplated developing such mechanisms.

“We are strong on equality and diversity issues and if they are embedded into all practices and demonstrated throughout academic and research excellence then this will be attractive to talented students in the future. We can develop a reputation as a place where people can continue to change society.” (Head of Department, Female)

Evidence that policies associated with equality and diversity are becoming embedded within the standard practices of the department includes that equality and diversity is commonly a standing item on the agenda of a range of meetings. It has therefore become a regular part of the discourse about how each department and institution operates and manages its business.

5.7 The experiences and perceptions of HEIs of implementing the Athena SWAN Charter and awards process

5.7.1 A framework that drives reflection and scrutiny

The Athena SWAN Charter is widely seen as a tool that helps to apply focus, drive a process and provides a valuable structure for work to address gender inequalities.

The most important impacts which flow from adopting the Charter include:

- Athena SWAN has brought equality and diversity ‘to the table’.
- It provides a structure to guide work and also within which to present the results of that work.
- It helps drive a formal work plan – both in terms of creating a compelling application but also in delivering actions that flow from it.
- It supports the development of methodologies and approaches which can (and are) being rolled out across the wider equality and diversity agenda (as described in section 5.6 above).
- It allows departments and institutions to demonstrate their commitment to people and to creating a happy, healthy workplace in which they can thrive.

Holders of the Charter acknowledge that one of the advantages that the Athena SWAN process delivers is that it encourages applicants to examine their practice comprehensively. Some interviewees indicated that the Athena SWAN framework leads to a more extensive examination practice than would otherwise likely be the case.

“The Charter makes a lot of sense in terms of how it requires you to review data, to identify issues and to examine those issues to understand what causes them.” (SAT member, Professional Support Staff, Female)

“The focus can’t simply be on identifying a problem. There needs to be a two-stage process – first, what is the problem and second, what are the root causes. Only then can one think about what can be done about the identified problem. There is a clear need to do the homework.” (AS Champion, Female)

“Success in our department is based on spending a lot of time digging in to problems and really understanding them. If there was only credit for putting things in place, then this may encourage superficial solutions that are not really going to tackle the underlying issues and what causes them. It is important to recognise and reward this ‘measuring and analysing’ phase.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

5.7.2 Significant resource implications

However, a continual theme across the case studies is that the work involved in delivering a strong application and then maintaining any award is very significant and arduous.

“My experience of applying for Athena SWAN was that despite thinking that it was a very valuable, I remember feeling significantly disheartened by the amount of work. This was exacerbated by the fact that there is no formal allocation of this work within the workload model. The load is very high and people struggle to achieve all that is needed in the time available. Such ‘additional’ work is always at the expense of other things and it is invariably research that takes a backseat when demands are very high.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

“The whole application process is onerous and frankly it is exhausting.” (AS Champion, Female)

Departments that have been involved for a significant period are at risk of feeling long-term fatigue brought about by the sustained effort and continual cycle of reapplication. This is the case even though the application process has moved to a four-year cycle.

Resource constraints have a number of impacts. They limit the applicant's ability to complete the task of writing a compelling application (and all that involves), to gather and assimilate valuable evidence to identify challenges and guide action, and then to generate the required evidence to demonstrate impact (quantitative and qualitative).

The lack of ongoing committed resource also increases the likelihood that the Athena SWAN 'baton' is likely to be passed around on a regular basis. It is, after all, unreasonable to expect an individual to continue to lead an initiative where that initiative creates additional work and may be held back by a lack of other key ingredients necessary for success (e.g. other resource and support, leadership from the top, alignment with strategic objectives and so on). If the leadership of the Athena SWAN initiative changes hands regularly there is an increased risk that sustainability will be undermined and that past learning and experience will not be built upon. Each of these as well as potential other consequences will lessen the potential impact of the Charter. Limited resource will also in many cases lead to lower quality submissions. It is therefore in the Charter's interest to find ways to unlock dedicated resource at the departmental and institutional level to deliver the Charter and achieve the cultural change desired.

Another impact of resource constraint is that there is often no capacity for people to spend time undertaking the informal interaction that is so important in creating open communicative culture. If people are very busy and overworked then they will not be able to find the time to attend meetings whose purpose is to provide updates and to stimulate discussion, so important communication channels become ineffective. These constraints may also mean the important discussions happening at different levels in the organisation or department are less likely to be communicated across that organisation or department, meaning that different groups of staff feel isolated from decision-making and the rationale behind decisions.

It is quite clear that resource limitations constrain the impact that initiatives such as Athena SWAN can have. Any factor which has the result of focus being taken away from equality and diversity initiatives represents a threat to the sustainability of those initiatives.

"As for the impact I absolutely wholeheartedly believe in the Athena SWAN process as I know it is doing good. Although the process does contain some significant flaws it remains very valuable. The problem is that the Charter's value is potentially slipping because of the amount of work involved in achieving and maintaining awards. We are about to enter the process of delivering our fifth application and we do not feel that unless there is significant change in the Charter that we could go through this again." (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

"Even when the core values associated with equality and diversity are in place and there is a will to translate these into practice, we are often held back by a lack of resource. There is the need for structural changes within and across the University, more people dedicated to this effort and greater coordination to ensure that we make the maximum amount of progress that we can." (AS Champion, Female)

5.7.3 Bureaucracy

There is also a feeling that the process is overly bureaucratic and involves a number of unwelcomed constraints.

"I cannot tell you the hours and days that we spent simply reworking and editing content to get within the word limit" (SAT member, Professional Support Services, Female)

"I feel that cultural change is happening but that in the 'moment' of creating an application it feels very bureaucratic and formulaic and we found that frustratingly constricting." (AS Champion, Female)

“We spent many hours cutting down on the word count to conform with the requirements of the application form.” (AS Coordinator, Female)

“It is rare even in our world to find a document that is so controlled and constrained.” (Head of Department, Male)

“The work [associated with Athena SWAN] can be enjoyable but there is an opportunity cost – normally research time”. (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Male)

One risk with such an administratively significant exercise is that focus is applied to the application and therefore the bureaucracy associated with the Charter rather than the principles of the Charter and the achievement of cultural and behavioural change.

When asked about comparable processes that they are involved in, one respondent identified the work they need to do with professional bodies around the accreditation of the courses and programmes that they run. Whilst these are themselves quite bureaucratic, they are considered to be more flexible and less burdensome than the Athena SWAN Charter process.

There are two key aspects to the issues around the workload associated with Athena SWAN:

- That the process, driven by the application form and associated guidance, requires a very significant amount (and range) of resource input in terms of the time and expertise of the people working on and supporting the application. The resource requirement is considered excessive.
- The resources available within departments and institutions are very constrained (and in many cases increasingly so) and therefore for many of those involved, the workload simply gets loaded on top of their core role.

The evidence from the case studies suggests that to improve the reach of the Charter and to enable it to have the maximum impact, Advance HE needs to consider how to address both of these issues; i.e. how to alleviate the amount of work and how to encourage the creation of dedicated resources to drive forward on gender equality. Interviewees were quite clear in their feedback to Advance HE, that both issues need to be addressed in order to allow this important work to broaden and flourish.

This is especially important if the barriers to participation in the Charter felt by small departments and institutions are to be addressed.

Somewhat ironically, the case studies heard the view that the Athena SWAN may work best in smaller departments where there are ‘tighter’ constituencies of staff and subjects. There is a greater likelihood of identifying commonality in the issues faced in such departments. Some schools or departments are now “like mini empires with numerous buildings, numerous different subject areas and a wide range of issues that affect them”. However, small departments are even less likely to have the resource required to acquire an award and to deliver the actions that flow from it under the current application system.

If the process were simplified then not only would smaller departments better engage in it but also Athena SWAN could be delegated down into smaller parts of large schools or faculties where the issues are more consistent and easier to grasp.

Non award-holding departments were also asked about the process of applying for Athena SWAN. Two individuals that took part in the case studies are currently engaged in the process of application development, and they made the following comments;

- It would be so much easier if the forms were pre-populated by the institution regarding key data from the HR or planning teams. This should, in principle, be possible and would save a significant amount of time and energy.
- The learning curve associated with completing an application form is very steep.

- The word count can be very constraining but at the same time, are words dedicated to sections which are really not that relevant to them (e.g. the continual absence or extremely low rates of maternity and paternity leave in small department).
- Sometimes it is not clear how much content to include regarding professional services staff.
- They are beginning to realise that implementing some of the more common actions could have significant unintended consequences. For example, fielding at least one female staff member on each interview panel could become a huge burden for the very small number of female staff that are currently in post.

5.7.4 Departmental scale

This links to a question which one interviewee raised about Advance HE's view of the optimum 'point' within an organisational hierarchy that an application should be made. For example, this particular interviewee commented on a medical school which is made up of 15 departments but which puts in one single application for the whole school. This contrasts with the school within which she works, where applications are made at the department level. This significantly increases the amount of work across the school that is driven by the applications process.

Consideration should therefore be given as to whether the Charter should be directed at larger or smaller 'units' within institutions and the relative merits of each approach.

Another comment regularly made about the workload associated with Athena SWAN is that women often do the majority of the work to deliver it.

"At the beginning of the process of applying for Athena SWAN it was very much the case that the work was disproportionately falling to female members of staff. And at the time of writing the initial application neither the workload model nor the promotions criteria recognised work with Athena SWAN or in addressing equality and diversity challenges, though each of these issues have since been addressed."
(SAT Member, Academic Staff, Female)

Case study interviewees report a range of experiences in terms of the gender balance of the team leading on Athena SWAN (the SAT or an E&D committee of some sort, commonly). In some cases, the team has a good gender balance and workload is also well spread. In others, the job of work associated with applying for Athena SWAN falls to a small group of (often junior) female staff.

5.7.5 Workload impact

In some cases, the responsibility for delivering Athena SWAN becomes a task simply added on to their normal workload. However, in more progressive departments and perhaps those which have greater resource, there are also examples of Athena SWAN leads being relieved of other duties and responsibilities in order to free up time for Athena SWAN.

Interestingly, all Athena SWAN coordinators and dedicated administrative support staff interviewed as part of this study were female. However, that is not to say that there are not examples where men make important contributions to the administrative process around Athena SWAN.

In some cases, interviewees reported that taking on key responsibilities around Athena SWAN had had a direct negative impact on their career:

"Should Athena SWAN really be something that requires women to throw their career under a bus for a couple of years?" (AS Champion, Female)

"Despite there not being many women in our department, I've often attended meetings where all attendees have been women, even though there are men on those committees." (AS Champion, Female)

“After a while we realised that it was always junior women that turned up to our meetings and that will get on with the job of progressing Athena SWAN”. (SAT member, Academic Staff, Female)

“It is simply not possible to manage my teaching and research workload as well as the Athena SWAN workload at the same time. I’m therefore not making anything near like the required progress on my research work.” (AS Champion, Female)

This outcome is driven by the fact that Athena SWAN leads are sometimes expected to continue to deliver their ‘core’ job alongside the Athena SWAN work. In some cases, it is also clear that promotions criteria remain skewed towards research output and do not recognise sufficiently activities associated with the ‘life of the University’ or that are driven by ‘public good’.

“Thanks to changes in the way we now deal with promotions, I have definitely benefited directly from being involved in Athena SWAN. But at the time of leading the team and application I was sure I would be putting my career back by at least 6 to 12 months. I hear that others share this perception.” (AS Champion, Female)

One respondent said that she felt that it was increasingly important for the Charter to consider its impact on the workload of the individuals involved and in particular how this workload impacts the amount of time that staff have for research. Her observation was that women are much more likely to prioritise pastoral activities, supporting students and other staff and are more likely to step forward for roles in initiatives such as Athena SWAN. However, there is no protection for the research time of people taking up these pastoral and organisational development roles.

“In my school almost every programme director is female and whilst in other institutions these roles are rotating (e.g. every three years) they are not in this institution. Clearly there is a significant workload associated with this role and whilst it is very positive that there are many females undertaking the role, the flipside is that women are expected to do these roles leaving men to focus on other aspects of academic life such as research.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Female)

“I think in our line of work it is generally accepted that women will do the right thing even in the knowledge that they might be sacrificing other things that they value for example career development.” (SAT Member, Academic Staff, Female)

In addition, there is an increasing paradox within higher education which is that on the one hand student satisfaction is very important but on the other hand academics are increasingly encouraged to do things quickly, even if this reduces quality.

5.7.6 Importance of context

It is also important to recognise that the context within which department, institution or institute operates is highly pertinent to work in addressing equality and diversity challenges. For example, if an institution is going through a period of financial uncertainty or even a period of financial austerity (as some are), this will place further constraints and pressures on processes associated with Athena SWAN and others that seek to address equality and diversity issues.

Another example of how context is important relates to departments with a significant clinical focus (e.g. nursing or other medical sciences). For these departments, it is not always clear to applicants how to categorise their students and staff within the Athena SWAN framework.

If a structural change has created a large faculty containing many schools or departments across a range of disciplines or subject areas, it is not always clear at which level within that hierarchy the Athena SWAN award should be applied for. Because the gender balance issues change from one subject to

another, there is a possibility that gender imbalances may be masked when aggregated data at the faculty level is presented.

It is sometimes felt that the context within which individual applicants are operating is not well understood by assessors and this is in part because there is no scope within the application process to explain this and the impacts that arise. This means that there is often a gap around the understanding of the sector or the subject area. For example, what is the labour pool really like in a particular subject area and how possible is it truly to affect short-term or long-term change?

Interviewees stated that they felt that there is insufficient flexibility within the application form for important contextual matters to be laid out even though they may be crucial to the assessment of gender and other equality issues.

On the issue of acquiring additional resource to support equality and diversity work, many interviewees commented on the prospect of research councils requiring an award to be in place before research grants could be accessed.

A broader move to compel departments to hold Athena SWAN or some other tangible demonstration of their commitment to equality and diversity would be welcomed. The key reasons this is felt necessary are to drive the allocation of additional resource to the process and to overcome some of the remaining resistance to work associated with equality and diversity.

5.7.7 Recent Charter changes

Those involved with the Charter state that the number and scale of changes that the Charter has undergone in recent years has had an unsettling effect. There is a degree of uncertainty amongst the Athena SWAN populace regarding current expectations of Advance HE, even those that are highly experienced in working to the Charter. They have been unsettled by some 'surprising' outcomes recently and therefore are questioning their own understanding of the latest requirements.

There is also the perception that there is a lack of clarity around the expectations that Advance HE have of the scale of change that Athena SWAN should deliver and the timescale over which those changes should occur.

Interviewees also expressed concerns that the timescales associated with review of progress around Athena SWAN are not long enough to show impact arising from some of the actions. This is particularly relevant to the gender balance in the most senior jobs.

5.7.8 Support and guidance

Access to support and guidance was another perpetual theme in the case studies. Those individuals who had experience of delivering an application and driving forward resulting action plans were very keen to express how valuable the support they had received but also to state that it was often insufficient or sporadic.

Institutions tend to have a central team to support equality and diversity and/or Athena SWAN activities within their departments. In all cases the complaint was made that the resource available within these teams was insufficient given the amount of work that occurs in this area and the critical importance of this work.

The support that such teams provide is seen as invaluable and clearly has an impact on the success of the institution and departments in acquiring Charters and awards.

“As the institutional lead on equality and diversity my role is to support initiatives around the institution and this of course includes the processes of applying for and implementing the Athena SWAN. Whilst we

have had one or two 'fails' I have no doubt that the number of 'fails' would have been far higher if the University wasn't providing support through my team." (E&D institutional lead, Female)

"Providing the resources required is a struggle for many departments. The value of achieving Athena SWAN is well understood by most but many struggle to dedicate the resources required even with the support that can be provided by our central team." (AS Coordinator, Female)

The application process itself creates significant pressures on central support teams.

"One of the challenges we face as a central team supporting Athena SWAN applicants is that because there are only two submission dates, demands on our time are very concentrated in the period leading up to those submission dates. If there was a rolling approach to submissions then our resources could be spread more evenly and therefore applied more effectively." (AS Coordinator, Female)

One important function that central teams often provide is as a mechanism for the identification and dissemination of good practice, knowledge and experience.

Some are doing their own work around identifying and sharing good practice across their University. For example, one reported that she had been constructing a database of good practice based on the significant review of evidence and that the results of this process of being shared at the department level.

The case studies provide evidence that people involved in delivering Athena SWAN feel they would benefit from additional informal and formal support.

"Our Faculty holds meetings attended by Athena SWAN Champions and leads across the departments. These have been very helpful in communicating a realistic perspective on expectations of the workload associated with Athena SWAN. It is also a forum for sharing of solutions, actions discussing approaches that work, why and so on." (AS Champion, Female)

"I found support from other departments and key individuals in particular very helpful in persuading individuals within this department to become involved in the project." (AS Champion, Male)

"I also think that Advance HE could do more to help demonstrate how Athena SWAN principles can be embedded within departments." (AS Champion, Female)

There is clear support for any initiative that would enhance and improve the sharing of knowledge, expertise and know-how across higher education with respect to equality and diversity initiatives. This might include new approaches to the dissemination of advice and guidance from Advance HE, the development of self-help networks to share experience and knowledge and potentially new resources toolkits to assist applicants (first time, renewal and higher award).

5.7.9 Developing compelling reasons to engage

There was considerable discussion within the case studies of the issue of encouraging and sustaining engagement with equality and diversity initiatives. This issue is highly related to resource availability, discussed above. Whilst there are some reservations about linking grant funding to Charters, on balance it was felt that a bigger move to formalising those links would be positive.

The formalisation of the relationship between Athena SWAN and research funding via research councils should be welcomed because it underlines how important it is to tackle equality and diversity issues.

"Linking Athena SWAN to academic excellence in that way, whilst having some drawbacks, will be a good thing. It's an example of where one has to recognise that if society won't naturally take a particular step that the system needs to step in to incentivise the taking of that step." (Head of Department, Female)

“There are arguments for and against linking Charters to research grant funding. However, on balance I think that it would be a good thing because it would start to break down the remaining barriers to progress and would heighten engagement, perhaps even amongst the most unengaged of our colleagues.” (AS Champion, Female)

“It is remarkable how easy it is to persuade senior management to make resource available to a process on which millions of pounds in research funding – and very many jobs – is riding.” (AS Champion, Female)

When asked whether Athena SWAN has been the key driver or the requirement for applicants of research grants to have it, one interviewee commented that in medical sciences it is almost certainly the funding that is the key driver. However even given this, it is of course the existence of Athena SWAN Charter that allows the research councils to make this demand in the first place.

“Without the Charter they wouldn’t have made such a demand. It has put equality and gender equality in particular on the table.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

“I believe that funders could do more to encourage work around equality and diversity. For example, what if application forms for research grants required Principle Investigators to be very clear about what they had personally done to advance equality within their school or department? This could have a very significant impact as it would force those who resist engagement to become engaged for fear of losing out on research grant funding. Therefore, perhaps they could be a better link between Advance HE and research funders to build a more co-ordinated approach as this could be very impactful on the sector.” (AS Champion, Female)

5.7.10 Sustaining effort

One of the key challenges associated with the Charter is sustaining focus and effort over time. This is a challenge generally but particularly in departments and institutions which are facing or have undergone significant change. Changes in leadership roles such as Head of Department or Head of School can also raise challenges around sustainability.

One department reported that despite it holding a gold award for some years it has not been plain sailing. Interviewees reflected on the fact that focus slipped somewhat around 3-4 years ago and some of the more central tasks such as keeping up to date with and analysing the data were not being done as regularly as necessary. Progress monitoring was also not receiving the necessary attention. The outcome was that they put in an application that wasn’t successful and were given a year’s grace to address the identified issues. As a result, the department significantly ‘upped their game’, developed a much stronger bid based on a thorough analysis of the data and spent a full year doing it, resulting in them being re-awarded with Gold. This provides valuable evidence that approach to issuing grace periods can be effective in allowing departments to address issues identified in the application process and to ‘up their game’. It can even have an important re-energising effect and can help overcome fatigue or complacency.

There are also risks that the entire exercise gets distracted by the process and the wider goals and desired outcomes are lost.

“We had to apply significant effort to ensure that our meetings did not simply focus on delivering the process (i.e. an Athena SWAN award) but instead they focused on delivering the outcomes benefits that would accrue from cultural and behavioural change driven by Athena SWAN.” (SAT member, Academic Staff, Female)

Those directly involved in Athena SWAN within one AHSSBL department covered by the case studies felt that the initial impetus had not been followed through and that currently it was a case of trying to

push on with the action plan in an environment where leaders do not support it as was initially thought and resources dedicated to the project have diminished. After the award was acquired, the perception stated to grow that those originally pushing for it were not especially committed to equality and diversity; this was simply about gaining another award.

This had the effect of draining resource and energy away from the project and diminishing the motivation of all involved, much to the frustration of the female academic staff that were continuing to try and deliver the Athena SWAN agenda. However, a recent change of Dean is beginning to have an impact in that the new appointee is especially keen to push the equality and diversity agenda and therefore there is a possibility that new energy and resource will be dedicated to it. This demonstrates once again the importance of leadership and commitment from senior members of staff, and consistency of purpose over time regardless of changes in personnel.

5.7.11 The Assessment process

The assessment process is currently solely focused on a review of the application form by a panel of volunteers (normally five, with a quorum of three) who receive training from Advance HE. The panels are moderated. A number of the case study interviewees had direct experience of panel work, leading to the following comments;

- Finding ways to make the whole process more efficient would be beneficial for all involved.
- Some applications have sufficient flaws that they should never make it as far as the panel. There should be some form of triage process which identifies such applications and prevents them from moving forward to panel until these flaws are addressed. They can be flaws associated with following the rules (e.g. excessive word counts), with the relevance of responses and the extent to which these answer the questions, and issues with the availability and presentation of data.
- The training of panellists is perceived as variable and this is a concern when trying to achieve a certain standard of assessment for each and every application.
- Panel participation can command between 3 and 5 days of input from each panel member. This is a very significant amount of time and Advance HE should consider whether this could be minimised or put to more effective use.
- The current process encourages and indeed rewards applicants that write words that assessors want to hear. There is a risk that there is a gap between what is written in application forms and what is happening on the ground, therefore. A new approach to assessment which allows for the verification of claims would be beneficial. This could be through a combination of form assessment and on-site visits, which would support a more rounded assessment.

“I have some concerns about the consistency of assessment from one panel to another. For example, last year I was on a panel which should have been four people but was only three as one couldn’t make it on the day. Two of the panellists had never been on a panel before and whilst the moderator did good job, I still felt that the outcome was not consistent with those that I have observed on the panels.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

“I think that the panel is a good concept and I nearly always come away thinking that they are an effective way of digging in to an application to really understand the place as it describes. But often the moderator needs a stronger voice and I believe there should always be a minimum of four people on the panel. Better training is definitely required and observation of panellists would also be very beneficial.” (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

One interviewee who has been very involved in developing numerous applications in her role as Athena SWAN coordinator across a University expressed interest in the idea of incorporating visits into the assessment process. She suggested that any move in this direction would need to consider a range of factors (e.g. 'logistics' associated with visiting a department, which may be located across numerous sites, ensuring that a true representation of the department is achieved) but could represent a very positive change. A combination of shorter forms and site visits could help reduce the barriers to engagement with Athena SWAN and could contribute to sustainability.

Other interviewees expressed the desire that Advance HE should investigate the extent to which technology can help run a more consistent process, supported by better guidance to ensure that all questions are answered appropriately and fully.

"We have experienced people with the skills to interrogate and assess data that support our application processes but this is not universally the case even within our University. I've seen evidence in my work as a panellist of where data is well analysed and presented and where it is really not. If it is not possible for departments to field a consistent set of skills in preparing their award then this is something that the Charter needs to take account of – the availability of such skills within each department shouldn't become a quasi award criterion." (Ex-AS Champion, Female)

It is also widely felt that the panel approach does not facilitate the notion that progress can be 'audited' as panellists this can only check what they can see on the sheet in front of them and the linking back to prior commitments is left to the applicant to describe (or not).

"There is even a distinct sense that the promises made in our Bronze application were there purely to impress the assessors. In fact, those promises have not been followed through and one wonders whether or not it was ever the intention to do so." (AS Champion, Female)

This experience provides evidence that the application process as it currently stands is not able to scrutinise the veracity of specific promises and claims made in applications. Of course, one of the consequences arising is that for the specific department involved, faith in the Charter as a tool to deliver change has been undermined. It very much feels that lip service was being paid to the Charter from the beginning. Whilst there has since been a new Dean appointed, which is seen as a positive step to re-energising and focusing the Athena SWAN work, there is now further ground to make up because of the erosion of trust. One respondent said that she felt that the "wool had been pulled over the assessors' eyes".

This evidence suggests a need for greater scrutiny of prior commitments and promises as set out in applications. That said, any scrutiny of past actions needs to allow for the evolution of those actions based on changing circumstances, responses to external factors, and a change of tack based on evidence that focus needs to be applied elsewhere.

5.7.12 Data

The challenges associated with meeting the need for data within the application were discussed across all case studies and with all interviewees with direct experience of the application process. One institution appears to have a more coordinated and successful approach to the supply of data to departments, where relevant parts of the application form are effectively pre-populated based on a common data specification.

"Our University is actually very good at providing the vast majority of the data required for each applying department and not just as a data dump but as pre-analysed and presented outputs. We effectively pre-populate many of the data in the sections of the application form." (AS Champion, Female)

“The volume of data in submissions is quite phenomenal. I would estimate that there are around 200 tables and graphs in one of our Silver applications making this a significant piece of work itself.” (AS Champion, Female)

“We have both the University level HR platform and the department level HR platform. When we run the data we get different results.” (Head of Department, Male)

However, this was the exception rather than the norm. Commonly, the data requirements of the application process are a cause of great consternation and require considerable effort.

A number of data issues are commonly cited, such as:

- Differences between departmental data and centralised data which take a considerable amount of time and effort to resolve
- Support from the centre (e.g. HR, Planning) can be limited to providing a ‘data dump’ which each department then needs to manipulate, review, analyse and present. This means a significant amount of duplication of effort and the process can often be a struggle if data skills are lacking in the departmental team.
- The increasing moves to centralise systems and data (to achieve cost efficiencies) means that more control is exercised by the centre which can erode trust. This is a concern given the importance of the relationship between the centre and departments from an Athena SWAN Charter point of view.
- Central systems often do not tend cover every indicator required, so there is commonly a requirement for departments to call upon their own data and introduce these to the application.
- Managing the scale of the task is a considerable drain on resources.

There are also limitations to the insight that departments can derive from the data that they do have at their disposal. For example, whilst national benchmarking is possible for staff and student data (through HESA), there is a dearth of such data on a range of other indicators such as recruitment and promotion, training, leave take up and return and so on.

“One of the major drawbacks of Athena SWAN is the time involved in developing the application. This particularly relates to the effort required to ensure that we pull all the information together, collate data and validate those data to ensure that they accurately reflect what goes on within this department. There are also some challenges around the process of applying. For example, we have now run a number of surveys over the years and we found that response rates have diminished over time. This is probably down to the fact that there are many exercises such as this that call on the time of colleagues, but it is hard to find the right time to undertake surveys and that there is a degree of survey fatigue. We don’t think that the diminishing response rate is necessarily an indication of the extent to which people are bought into the process of delivering equality and diversity.” (Head of Department, Male)

“The requirements around data certainly need tweaking as in my experience it is universally a significant issue. There is no way of ensuring that institutions produce accurate valid and complete data to support their departments. It may be that Athena SWAN application forms could vary more between the institutional requirement and the department requirement, placing a greater emphasis on the production of large volumes of data on the institution and requiring departments to monitor and reflect on it.” (Head of Department, Female)

“Ideally we would like robust accurate data to come to us out of the centre for us then to apply our local understanding and knowledge in interpreting that data. If there were more onus on institutions to provide good data to departments this would make a huge difference to the overall amount of effort that is

required to take part in the Athena SWAN initiative. So I would ask - how can the Charter encourage or even force such changes to be made?" (AS Champion, Female)

In the case of one institution covered by the case studies, there was evidence of the University making attempts to design and invest in better systems and processes to generate data relevant to Athena SWAN processes. However, this initiative had 'run into the sand'.

"One of the major challenges here is that there is no compulsion on the institution to carry on this work." (AS Coordinator, Female)

"Each university is compelled to provide HESA with standardised data to an agreed specification and there is a lot of scrutiny of this process. How might Advance HE develop both the procedures but also the motivation to achieve something similar around gender inequality data?" (AS Champion, Female)

It should also be recognised, however, that one of the impacts of the Charter is that the process has raised awareness of the importance of regular collection and analysis of data.

6. Research Findings: Quantitative data from Applications

Section summary

Research question 1 - Effectiveness of the Charter in improving the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women's careers:

- Examining a sample of application data related to recruitment, promotion and maternity/parental leave shows modest trends towards improvement over a three year period in the following areas:
 - Gender balance in successful promotions to Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Reader level at both Department and HEI level;
 - Increase at Department level in percentages of women on job shortlists, and in percentages of appointments to women;
 - Possible trend towards either greater uptake of paternity leave or more consistent reporting of leave taken at both Department and HEI level.

Research question 5 - The experience and perceptions of HEIs in implementing the Charter and the awards process:

- This research question is considered through an examination of the data presented in applications, reflecting the approaches taken by departments and institutes in presenting data that describes some of the challenges around gender equality.
- Applications at both departmental and HEI level provide data on recruitment, promotion and maternity/other leave in a variety of formats.
- The best data available for analysis were for recruitment, with 82% of Departmental and 77% of HEI applications presenting this data in a format that permitted comparison.
- Next best were the data for leave, with between 60-66% of Departmental applications and 64-69% of HEI applications having data in a useable format (with the highest proportions for maternity leave, and lower proportions for other types of leave). The least valuable and insightful were the data on promotions, in which only 62% of Departments and 64% of HEIs had data in a usable format.
- The main sources of variation in data presentation included:
 - Combining data across years;
 - Combining different types of data (e.g. different levels of promotion, academic leave with leave by other staff);
 - Providing data as percentages rather than raw numbers;
 - Failing to provide full data (e.g. data was commonly missing for parental leave, number of offers made during recruitment processes, numbers of applications for promotion).
- The degree of variability of responses and data provision suggest that there are issues with one or more of the following: data collection, data provision, data analysis or the level of understanding of the requirement.
 - [Link to Recommendation 4](#)

6.1 Introduction

The primary object of this analysis is the study goal:

3. *To identify the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in processes such as recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training.*

Applications from 108 departments and 39 HEIs were made available to the research team. An examination of these led to the conclusion that appraisal and training data was not collected with sufficient uniformity to permit any analysis. Thus, the decision was made together with Advance HE to look for evidence relating to recruitment, promotion and maternity/paternity/parental/adoption leave take-up.

Key points from this section

Research question 1 - Effectiveness of the Charter in improving the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women's careers:

- As with any observational study, it is not possible to draw conclusions about causality from this data. Thus, rather than impact, we examined trends in the data to identify if departments and HEIs engaged with the Athena SWAN process tended to have changes in outcomes regarding these areas over the three years of data provided in applications.
- Note that this information is not available for departments that did not submit Athena SWAN applications, so it is not known if these or better changes were seen over given three-year periods in departments that were not engaged. There was insufficient data to compare departments and HEIs at different award levels.
- The analysis evidences modest trends towards improvement over a three year period were found in the available data in the following areas:
 - Gender balance at department level in successful promotions to Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Reader level;
 - Increase at department level in percentages of women on job shortlists;
 - Increase at department level in percentages of appointments to women;
 - Possible trend towards either greater uptake of paternity leave or more consistent reporting of leave taken at department level for those departments reporting this data;
 - Gender balance at HEI level in successful promotions to Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Reader level;
 - Possible trend towards either greater uptake of paternity leave or more consistent reporting of leave taken at HEI level for those HEIs reporting this data.
- However, there were no clear trends towards improvement in data over the three years were found in the following areas:
 - Gender balance at department level in promotions at Professorial level;
 - Percentages of women applying for jobs at department level;
 - Take up of maternity leave at department level;
 - Maternity leave return rates at department level;
 - Paternity leave return rates at department level;
 - Gender balance at HEI level in promotions at Professorial level;
 - Gender balance at any application stage for HEIs;
 - Maternity leave uptake for HEIs;
 - Maternity return rates for HEIs.
- There were no areas in which the statistics indicated that the gender balance deteriorated over the three years reported in applications.

- Overall, it is not possible given the data available to evaluate the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in these areas, but there is some evidence from the data provided of trends towards improvement in these areas nationally.

Research question 5 - The experience and perceptions of HEIs in implementing the Charter and the awards process:

- Applications at both departmental and HEI level provide data on these topics in a variety of formats. The best data available was for recruitment, with 82% of departmental and 77% of HEI applications presenting this data in a format that permitted comparison. Next best was the data for leave, with between 60-66% of departmental applications and 64-69% of HEI applications having data in a useable format (with highest proportions for maternity leave, and lower proportions for other types of leave). The worst was data on promotions, in which only 62% of departments and 64% of HEIs had data in a usable format.
- Main sources of variation in data presentation included:
 - Combining data across years;
 - Combining different types of data (e.g. different levels of promotion, academic leave with leave by other staff);
 - Giving data as percentages rather than raw numbers;
 - Failing to give various parts of the data (e.g. parental leave, offers made, applications for promotion).
- The degree of variability of responses and data provision suggest that there are issues with one or more of the following; data collection, data provision, data analysis or the level of understanding of the requirement.
- It is suggested that Advance HE adapt the application format to have clear expectations for type and format of data provided. This would be best accomplished with an online form. This would permit benchmarking nationally for these important diversity indicators, as well as examining correlations with engagement at different award levels and with engagement with particular actions.

6.2 Departmental Data

Applications from 108 departments were made available for analysis. Of these, 89 were STEMM departments and 15 were AHSSBL with an additional 4 departments which were mixed. Due to the small number of AHSSBL applications, the data were analysed together. The sample covered 69 Bronze applications, 37 Silver applications and 2 gold applications.

6.2.1 Departmental Promotion Data

6.2.1.1 Data quality:

Although the majority of applications presented some data on promotions, this data was presented in various ways:

- Some applications give numbers from HR data, some from department level data and some from survey data. Survey data is the most problematic, but HR versus department data can also have differences, particularly in the way that applications are counted, as opposed to successful promotions.
- Data is grouped in different ways in different applications; sometimes it is combined across all promotion levels; when it isn't all combined, different levels are combined in different applications; sometimes it is combined over all 3 years.

- Some application forms contain no information about job applications, only about successful promotions. Again, what counts as an application depends on what level the data is collected and how many levels applications go through before a final decision (e.g. department, school, university).

Out of 108 departmental applications reviewed, variations in data presentation meant that data from only 67 (62%) of these could be analysed. Of these 67, the data on promotions is more reliable than the data on applications due to the considerations above, so we have only analysed promotions and not applications. Due to differences in groupings and a very low number of promotions to lecturer level, we have analysed only promotions to Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Reader grouped together and Professor separately. Note this corresponds to HESA classifications.

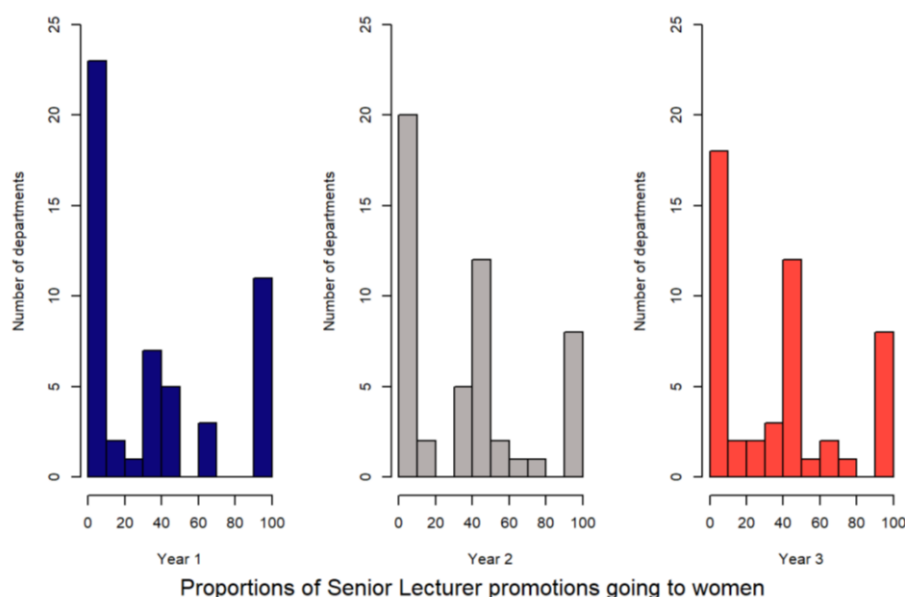
The data here is presented in terms of the years of data given in the application. Thus, they represent the change in numbers over the preparation for submission rather than over calendar years. This decision was taken because we aimed to understand the influence of the departmental Athena SWAN process on these numbers rather than the changes over time nationally. Due to insufficient numbers of applications at each level, particularly no award, data was not analysed by award level.

6.2.1.2 Promotions to SL/Reader/Assoc Professor

If we consider a department in a given year to have balanced promotions if 40-60% of promotions to this level are of women, then 15% of departments had balanced promotions in Year 1, 29% had balanced promotions in Year 2 and 31% had balanced promotions in Year 3. Additionally, the percent of departments with very unbalanced promotions (>10% women) decreased over that period, from 44% in Year 1 to 39% in Year 2 to 37% in Year 3. Thus, there is a slight trend of improvement in promotion balance over the three-year period at this promotion level.

Reading the charts: The frequency chart below counts the number of departments (on the vertical axis) by the proportion of promotions that are women (horizontal axis). We define 'balanced' as being where 40%-60% of promotions are women and therefore the number of departments with balanced promotions is the number represented by the bars between 40 and 60 on the horizontal axis. The charts compare results across year 1 (blue) year 2 (grey) and year 3 (red). What we hope to see is an increase in the number of bars within the 40-60 horizontal range across as we go from year 1, through year 2 to year 3. Note that the charts do not contain information regarding the proportion of women promoted – only the proportion of promotions going to women – as this information was not available. The analysis therefore does not place the results in the context of the wider 'record' of promoting women for each department (i.e. to examine whether the proportion of promotions going to women was effecting a positive change in the overall proportion of women at each grade). This could be an area for further research in the future, provided the data could be compiled.

Figure 47: Frequency chart – number of departments by the proportion of individuals promoted to SL/Reader/Associate Professor that were women⁹

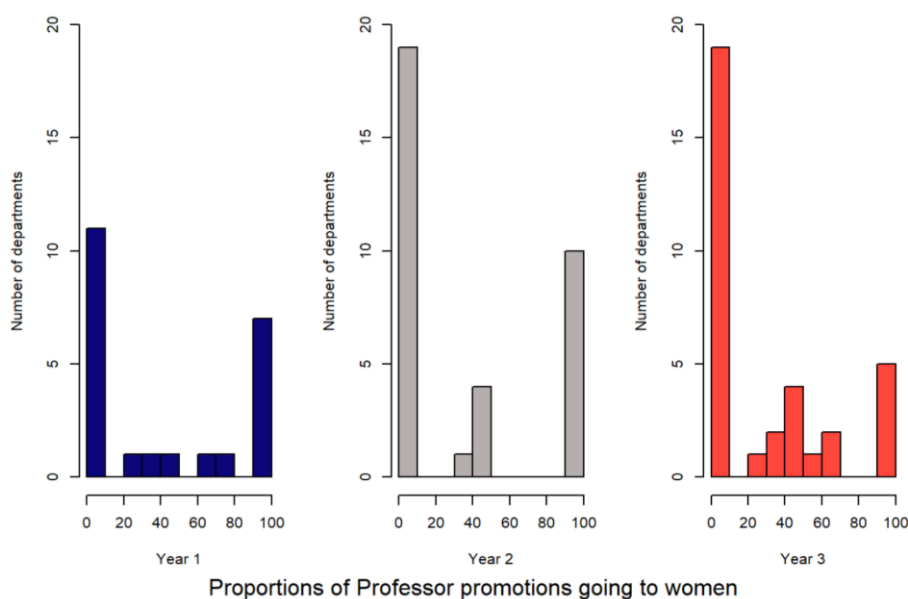


Source: Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.2.1.3 Promotions to Professor

We do not see a clear trend in promotions to Professor. The number of departments with balanced promotions is 9% in each of Year 1 and Year 2 and 18% in Year 3, however, also the number of departments with very gender unbalanced promotions (0-10% women) also increases over that time, from 48% in Year 1 to 56% in Years 2 and 3.

Figure 48: Frequency chart – number of departments by the proportion of individuals promoted to Professor that were women



Source: Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

⁹ Note that all charts in this section relate to the three years prior to the Athena SWAN application, for each individual department or institution

6.2.2 Departmental Recruitment Data

6.2.2.1 Data Quality

The data for recruitment is more complete than the data on promotions. There are still some variations in how data is presented that mean some data cannot be used for analysis.

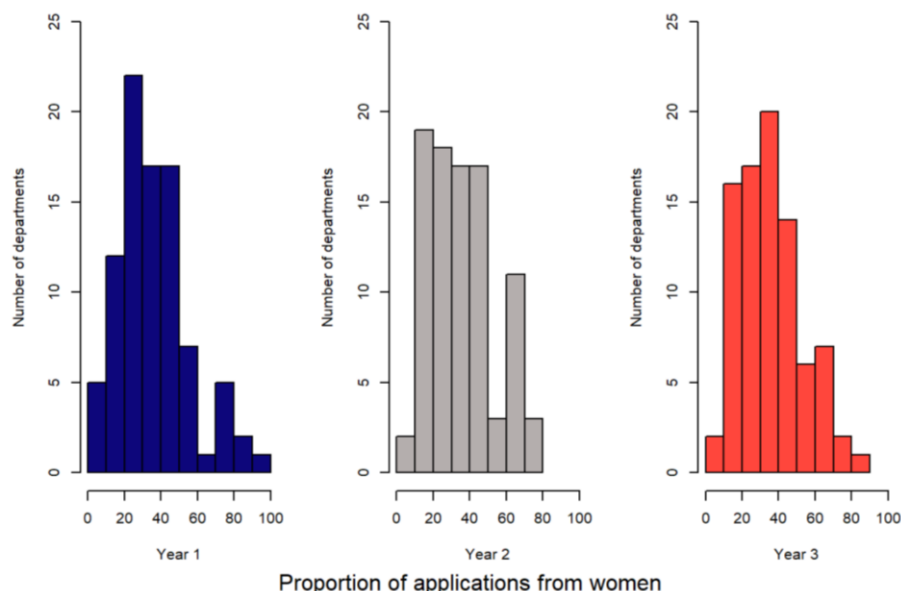
- Some data is aggregated over the three-year period.
- Some data is given only as percentages and not as numbers.
- Some data is given only as graphs.
- Sometimes data on one part of the pipeline is missing (e.g. shortlisting, offer, etc).

Data was usable for 89 out of the 108 applications (82%). Again, data was analysed together rather than broken down by award level.

6.2.2.2 Application rates

There is no indication of a change in the proportion of applications from women over the three years.

Figure 49: Frequency chart – number of departments by the proportion of applicants that are women

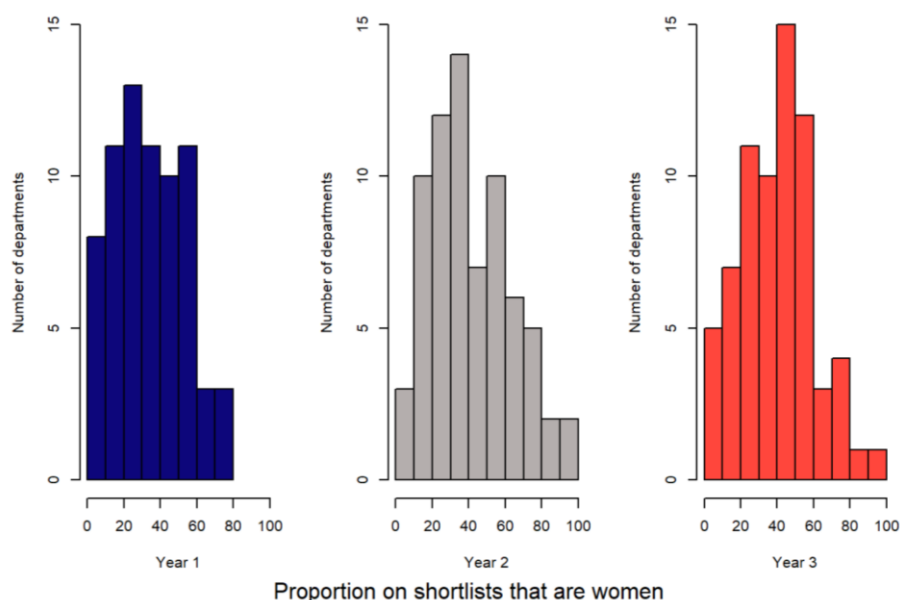


Source: Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.2.2.3 Shortlisting rates

There is some indication of an increase in the number of departments with gender balanced shortlists, going from 27% in Year 1 to 30% in Year 2 to 39% in year 3.

Figure 50: Frequency chart – number of departments by the proportion of shortlisted candidates that are women

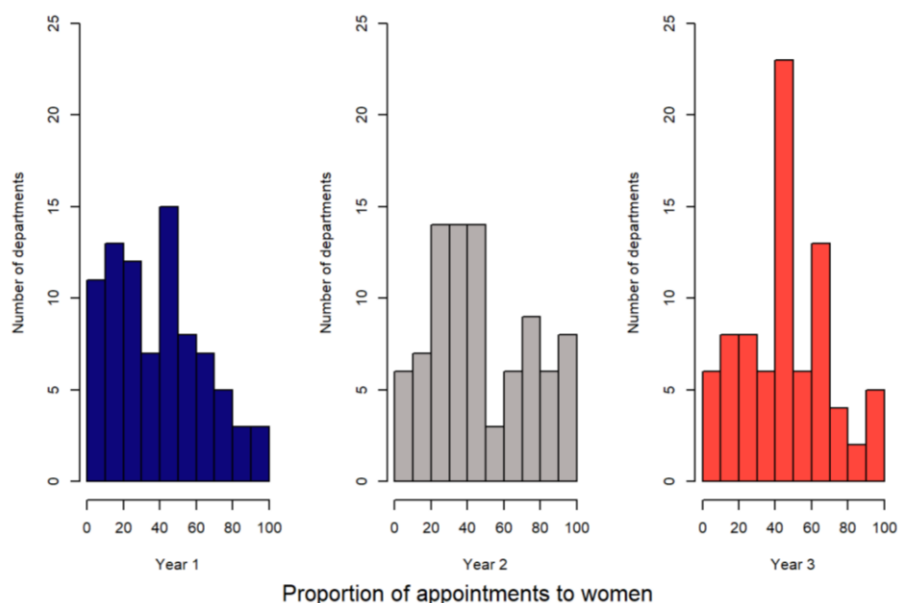


Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.2.2.4 Appointments

There is a slight indication of improvement over the 3 years in the percentage of appointments to women, with the number of departments where <20% of appointments were of women dropping from 26 in Year 1 to 13 in Year 2 and 14 in Year 3.

Figure 51: Frequency chart – number of departments by the proportion of appointees that are women



Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.2.3 Departmental Family Leave Data

6.2.3.1 Data Quality

Variations in the way maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave are presented include:

- Sometimes data is aggregated over the three-year period;
- Sometimes only percentages returning are reported;
- Sometimes data is split by academic/PSS and sometimes these figures are combined;
- Data for leavers in year 3 is incomplete as some have not yet returned.

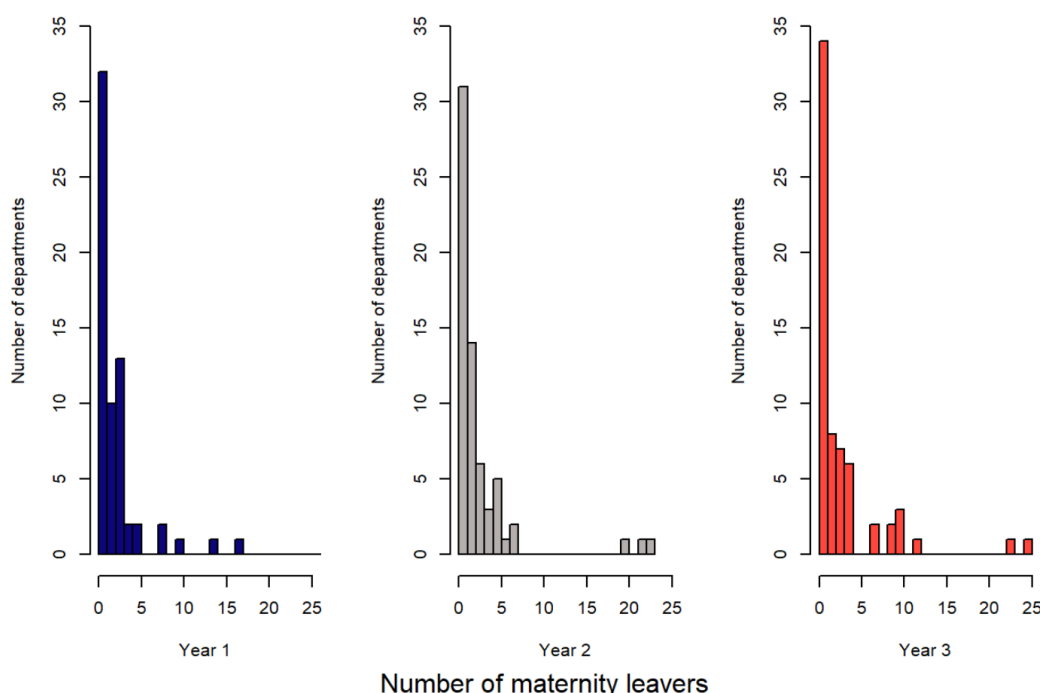
At least some data was useable for 71 of the 108 applications (66%). Reasonably complete data was useable for 65 (60%). Uptake of other leave was very rare altogether, and for this reason is not analysed.

Ideally, we would look at maternity, and/or paternity in the context of department size and gender split, but gender split is not available, so we just look at overall trends among the applications for which data is useable. Thus considerable caution is required in interpreting these trends.

6.2.3.2 Maternity uptake

There is no clear trend in maternity uptake over the three years reported in Athena SWAN applications.

Figure 52: Frequency chart – number of departments by the number of staff taking maternity leave

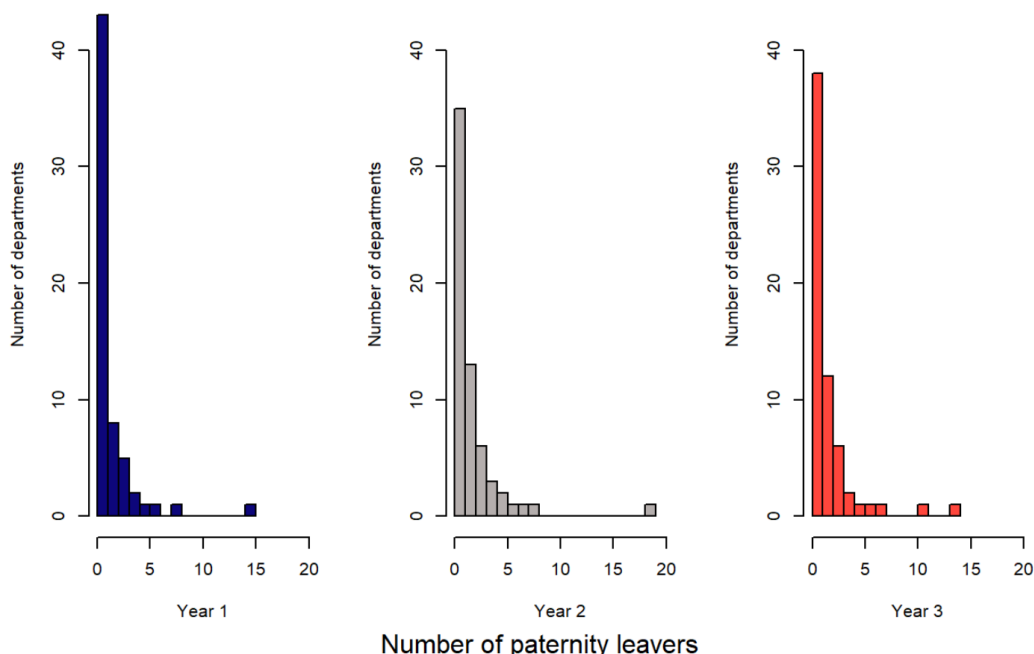


Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.2.4 Paternity uptake

There is a very slight trend of an increase in paternity leave, but this may relate only to an increase in formal reporting of paternity leave, so great caution is required in interpreting this data.

Figure 53: Frequency chart – number of departments by the number of staff taking paternity leave



Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.2.5 Return (Year 1, 2 only)

All individuals taking paternity leave returned in both years. Overall, about 89.7% of maternity leavers in Year 1 returned, and 89.2% in Year 2. This is not a significant change.

6.3 Institutional Applications

6.3.1 Institutional Data

Applications from 39 HEIs were made available. Of these, 30 were at Bronze level, 7 at Silver and 2 have no award. Due to small numbers for silver and no award as well as other data gaps, the data was all analysed together for trends over the three years reported in applications.

6.3.2 Institutional Promotion Data

6.3.2.1 Data Quality

Data from 29 out of 39 HEIs was at least partly usable, though not for all levels in all years. Data that was not usable had the following characteristics:

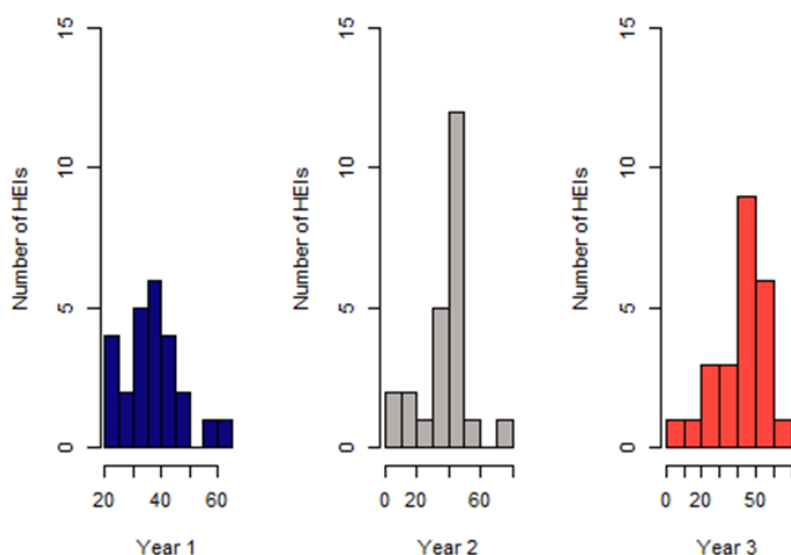
1. Aggregated over three-year period;
2. Aggregated over all promotion levels;
3. Data given as percentages rather than numbers;
4. Did not give application data, only promotions.

There was insufficient data about promotion to lecturer level to merit an analysis. Thus analysis was done only at two levels: associate professor/senior lecturer/reader and professor/chair.

6.3.2.2 Promotion to SL/Reader/Assoc. Professor

There is some trend towards more balanced promotions for men and women at this level. If we consider an HEI in a given year to have balanced promotions if 40-60% of promotions to this level are among women, then 29% of HEIs had balanced promotions in Year 1, 54% had balanced promotions in Year 2 and 62% had balanced promotions in Year 3.

Figure 54: Frequency chart – number of institutions by the proportion of women promoted to SL/Reader/Associate Professor

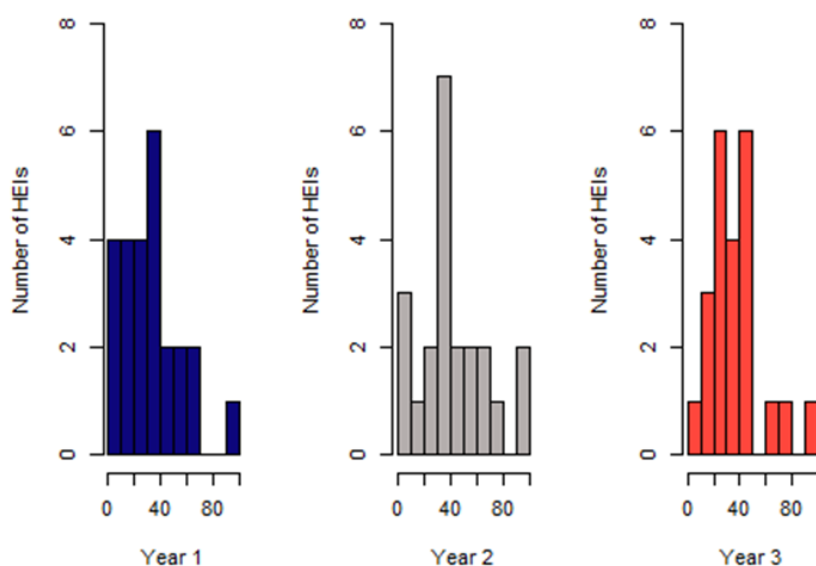


Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.2.3 Promotion to Professor

There is no clear trend of improvement in this data, in part due to small numbers of HEIs for which data is available.

Figure 55: Frequency chart – number of institutions by the proportion of women promoted to Professor



Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.3 Institutional Recruitment Data

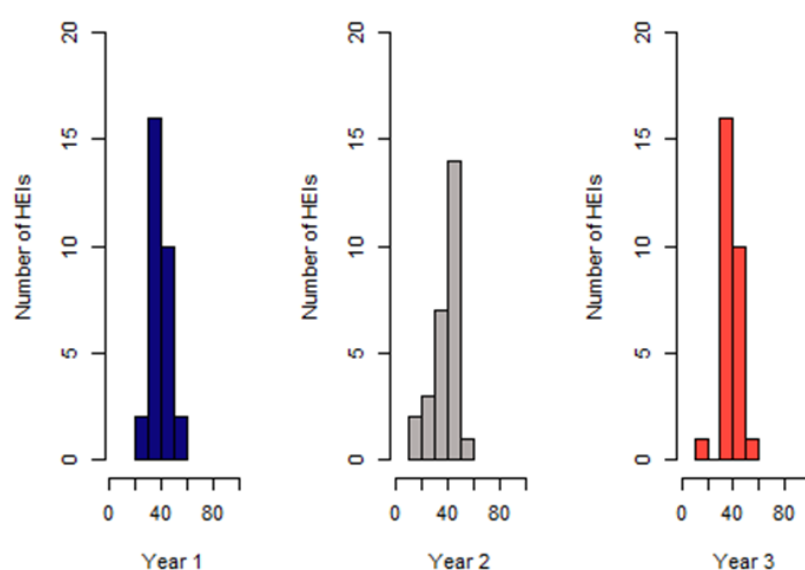
6.3.3.1 Data Quality

Useable data was only available for 31 out of 39 applications (79%). Not all data was given for all HEIs. In particular, some only gave applications and appointments with no data on shortlisting, and some only gave appointments without either previous stage. Other data inconsistencies are similar to those at departmental level.

6.3.3.2 Applications

There is not a clear trend in improvement in gender balance in applications. It is clearly more balanced at HEI level than for the set of mostly STEMM departments studied above.

Figure 56: Frequency chart – number of institutions by the proportion of applicants that are women

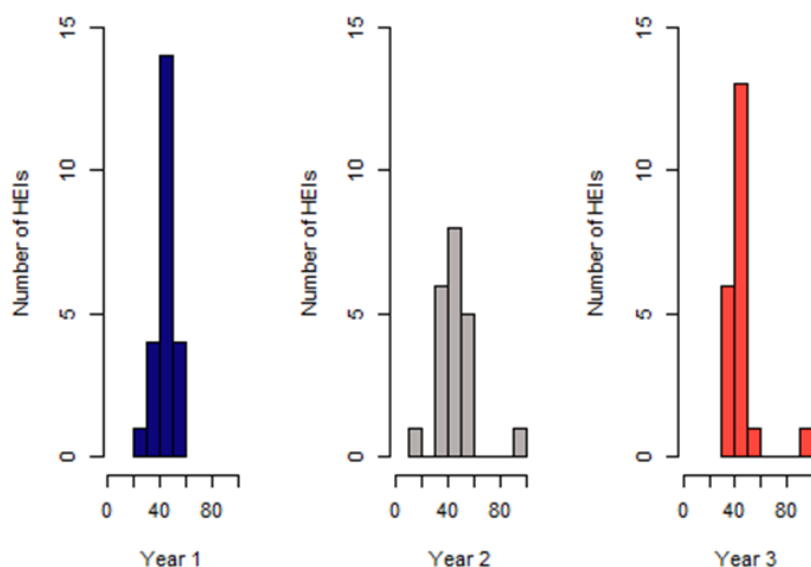


Source: Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.3.3 Shortlisting

Again, there is no clear trend in improvement in gender balance of shortlists, but it is also more balanced in general than for the departments considered above.

Figure 57: Frequency chart – number of departments by the proportion of shortlisted candidates that are women

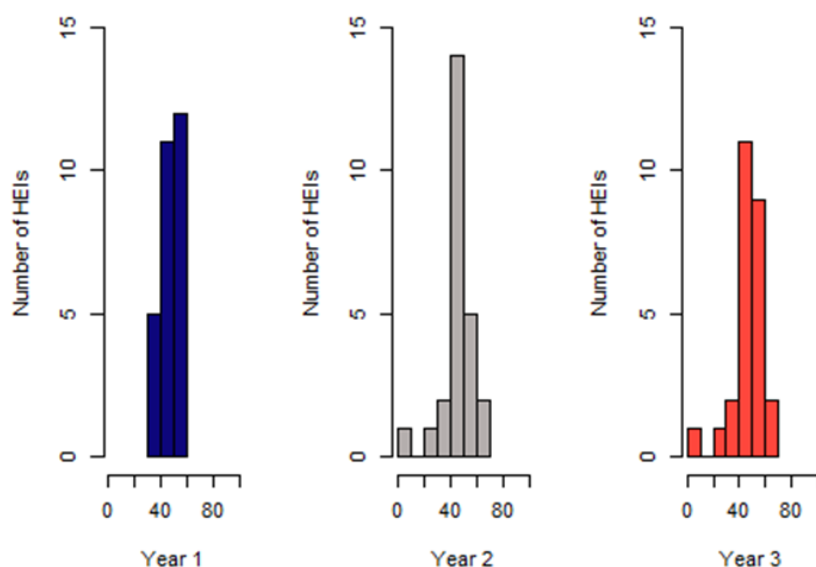


Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.3.4 Appointments

There is no meaningful trend in gender balance of appointments. Again, it is more balanced than for departments in the list above.

Figure 58: Frequency chart – number of institutions by the proportion of appointees that are women



Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.4 Institutional Family Leave Data

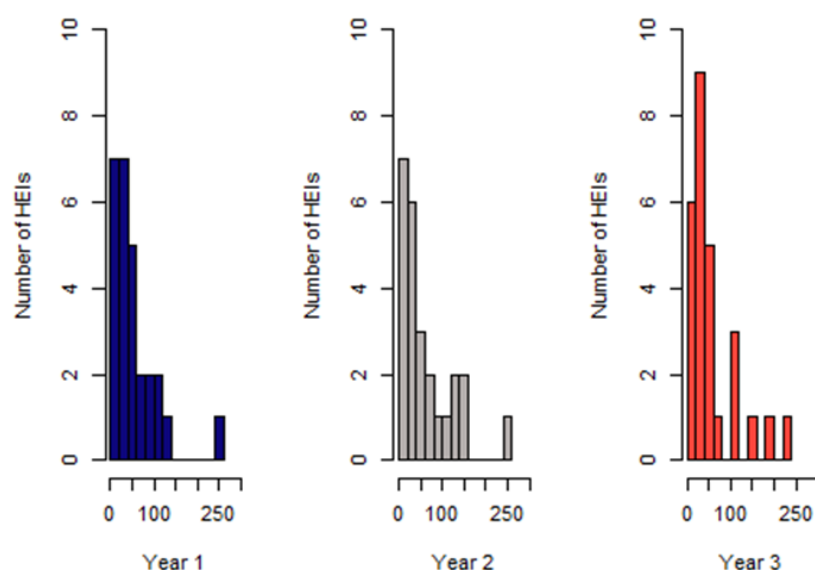
6.3.4.1 Data Quality

Some usable leave data is available for 27 of the 44 HEIs. This is for maternity uptake. Maternity return data is available only for 23 HEIs. Paternity uptake is available for 18 HEIs. Other uptake is given for 15 HEIs. Paternity and other return data is available only for 3 HEIs each. Data inconsistencies are similar to those in departmental data.

6.3.4.2 Maternity Uptake

There is no clear trend in maternity uptake over three years.

Figure 59: Frequency chart – number of departments by the number of staff taking maternity leave

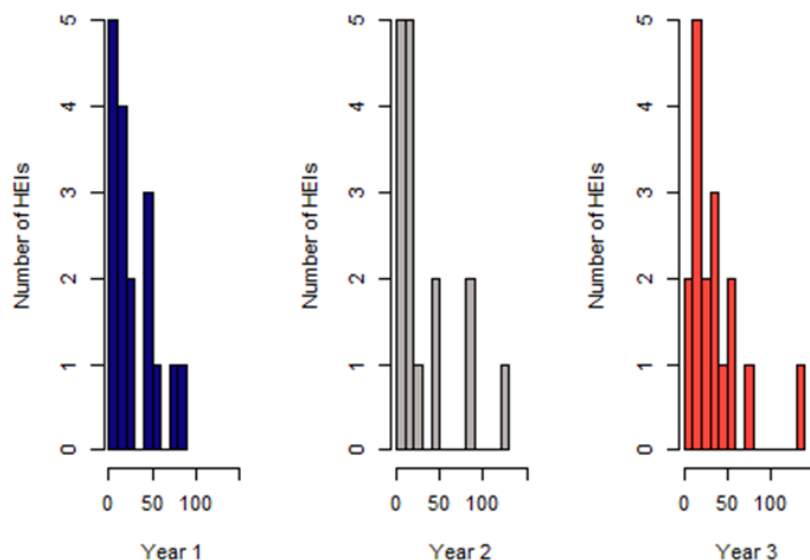


Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.4.3 Paternity Uptake

There is a possible slight trend towards an uptake in paternity leave, though it may also relate to better record keeping about uptake at the institutions that presented this data.

Figure 60: Frequency chart – number of institutions by the number of staff taking paternity leave

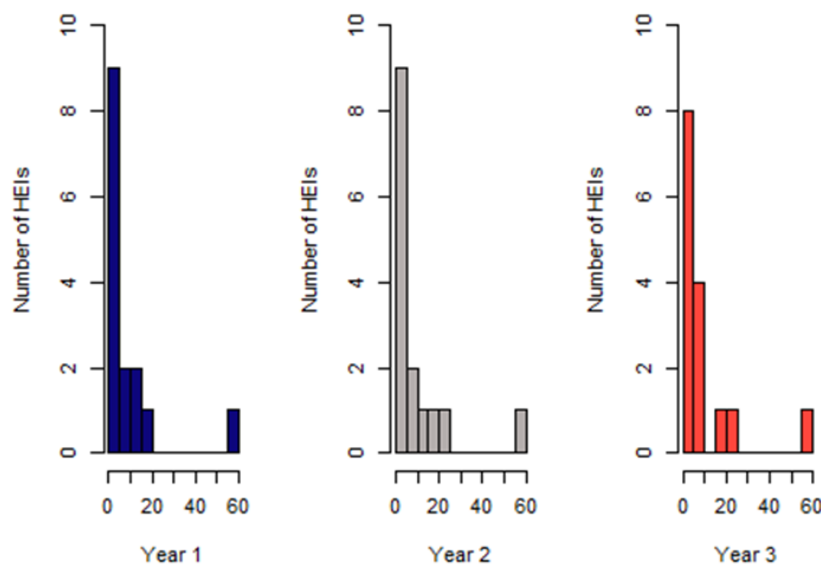


Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.4.4 Other Leave

There is no evident trend in uptake of other forms of leave.

Figure 61: Frequency chart – number of institutions by the number of staff taking 'other' leave

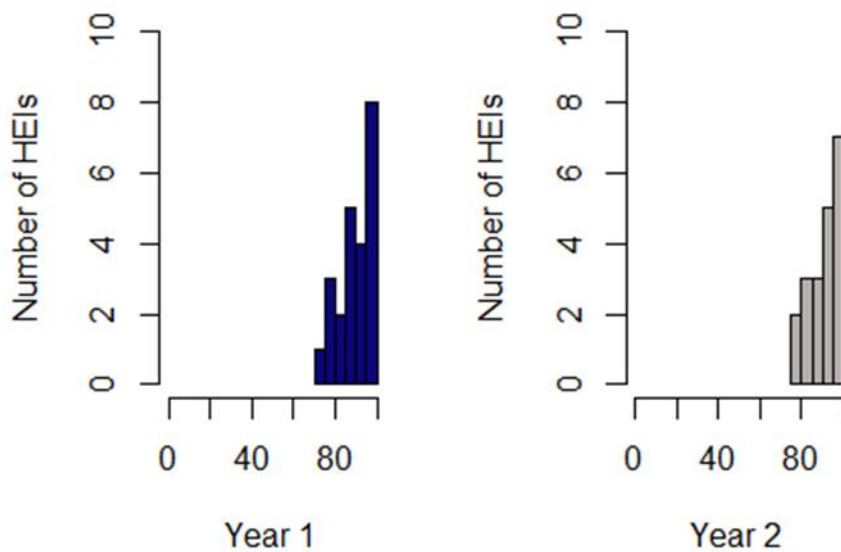


Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

6.3.4.5 Maternity Return Rates

There is no evident trend in terms of maternity return rates.

Figure 62: Frequency chart – number of departments by the number of staff returning from maternity leave



Source; Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University – analysis of Athena SWAN applications

7. Research Findings: Qualitative assessment of applications

Section summary

Research Question 1 - Effectiveness of the Charter in improving the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women's careers:

- A review of a sample of applications indicates that there have been many actions designed and implemented as a result of the Charter.
- However, often the evidence base for the impact of these actions on the stated goals of the Athena SWAN Charter is weak. The impacts stated often relate to the introduction of new policies and practices, rather than evolution in culture (which is seen as particularly hard to describe and measure). There is little evidence of impacts on the quality of the experience that staff and students are exposed to within departments.
 - [Link to Recommendation 14](#)
- The numerical data that are used to demonstrate impact often shows 'noisy' or disjointed patterns and this suggests that other factors beyond the Charter are also influencing these data.
 - [Link to Recommendation 6](#)

7.1 Introduction

This element of the study focuses on a qualitative assessment of the approaches to evidencing progress and impact demonstrated within applications. As such, whilst the findings below do not directly address any of the core study goals, they are instead relevant to a discussion of how applicants currently evidence impact and how they might be required to do so in the future.

The findings are based on the detailed examination of 10 applications that were successful at the Gold and Silver level. In summary, the applications selected were as follows:

- 2 Gold departmental awards
- 4 Silver departmental awards
- 4 Silver institutional awards

The findings below are presented in a tabular format, providing examples of instances of evidence-based identification of impact found within these applications. The approach considers the following aspects for each instance: the action undertaken, the issue that the action is targeted at and the evidence provided of the impact achieved.

7.1.1 Evidence presentation

The evidence presented below is in the form of a short review of evidence of impact arising from Athena SWAN actions. The commentary is supported by additional material located in the Appendix (page 153).

The review focuses on the scope of actions identified in applications, the linkages made between actions and the challenges they are designed to address and the evidence presented to demonstrate the impact arising from the implemented actions.

7.1.2 Actions

It is clear from these applications that a large number and wide range of actions have been undertaken and new ones proposed as part of the Athena Swan process. The number ranges between around 30 to almost 80 actions in any individual application.

These actions can be categorised into five different areas in which they aim to create change: Embedding structures and practices, Collecting and analysing data, Changing culture, Improving diversity and Improving outcomes. Proposed actions relate to these five categories and cover the following specific areas, by category:

1. Embedding structures and practices
 - a. SAT
 - b. Roles to support EDI work
 - c. Policies/practices at departmental/university level
 - d. Provision of resource
 - e. Work for policy changes at national level
2. Collecting and analysing data
 - a. Staff numbers
 - b. Recruitment, promotion, leave
 - c. Student numbers
 - d. Recruitment, continuation, outcomes
 - e. Staff survey data

- f. Student survey data
- g. Focus group data
- h. Bullying and harassment cases
- i. Data on staff leavers (reasons and destinations)
- j. Feedback data on effectiveness of structures and practices
- 3. Changing culture
 - a. Improve awareness of EDI activities and issues
 - b. Unconscious bias and other diversity training
 - c. Improve visibility of role models
 - d. Communicate clear behavioural expectations
 - e. Constitutions of informal support groups
 - f. Social events
- 4. Improving diversity
 - a. Improve promotion mechanisms
 - b. Improve job advertising
 - c. Involve Champions in staff recruitment
 - d. Understand why students drop out (e.g. of PGT)
 - e. Recruitment and selection training
 - f. Ensure UG students have information on PG opportunities
 - g. Outreach to schools
 - h. Improve admissions mechanisms
- 5. Improve outcomes
 - a. Mentoring for PhD students
 - b. Mentoring for UG students
 - c. Mentoring staff returning to work after career break
 - d. Redeployment/job search support for fixed term staff
 - e. Career development for non-academic staff
 - f. Skills training
 - g. Improve communication about funding, career opportunities
 - h. Improve PDR as development tool
 - i. Help to develop broader networks for researchers
 - j. Support for grant applications
 - k. Support for maternity returners
 - l. Feedback on unsuccessful promotions
 - m. Mentoring for staff (e.g. on promotion, etc)

When Silver and Gold applications are reviewed, it is very clear that a wide range of actions have been designed and implemented. Many actions are 'common' across applications (e.g. addressing scheduling of meetings into core hours, improved support for maternity returners, unconscious bias training) whilst others are designed to address specific issues within departments, often driven by the subject area (e.g. if a department has a significant clinical element, for example in healthcare, medicine or related subjects).

7.1.3 Evidencing Impact

The Athena SWAN Charter (according to the Athena SWAN website) relates to gender in relation to:

1. Representation.
2. Progression of students into academia.
3. Journey through career milestones.
4. Working environment for all staff.

The Silver Departmental Athena SWAN award advice in the 2015 handbook states,

“Silver department awards recognise that the department has taken action in response to previously identified challenges and can demonstrate the impact of these actions.”

We might anticipate that such evidence would follow a format of:

- The problem that was identified.
- The action that was undertaken.
- The evidence that the action has ameliorated the problem.

Furthermore, we might anticipate that the presentation of evidence of impact might reflect the relationship between these three elements, in order to demonstrate the relationship between action and positive outcomes.

In addition, given the four objectives the Charter aims to address, listed above, we would anticipate evidence to consist of:

- Quantitative evidence of improved representation, progression and success in career milestones.
- Qualitative evidence from surveys, focus groups and/or interviews of improvements for the working environment of staff.

When examining the way in which impact is discussed in these applications, we see that this is not consistently presented either in terms of the format or of the data we might anticipate. For example:

- Often actions are not clearly linked to previously identified problems, which makes it difficult to assess both the relevance of the action and its importance to the overall goals of the Athena SWAN programme.
- Evidence is often described in terms of outputs (things that happened) rather than outcomes (changes that occurred as a result of these outputs).
- Sometimes evidence is in terms of “feedback” without further information about the nature of this feedback, the degree of evidence it provides or what the feedback evidences in terms of impact.
- When numerical data about improvements are presented and referred to, the data are often not particularly compelling, and the link between action and the data is weak.
- Data can be ‘noisy’, meaning that trends and patterns are difficult to identify and therefore the task of isolating impact is made all the more challenging.

The issues associated with noisy or non-compelling data are given further significance when one takes into account the amount of effort required to acquire, organise and analyse the data (as reported earlier in this report – see sections 21 4 and 0, for example). It is also important to recognise that some of the most important, higher level indicators (e.g. numbers and proportion of female students and staff) will be influenced by other factors which are well beyond the control and influence of Athena SWAN

actions by a department or institute/institution. For example, wider education policy, funding, social and economic trends and so on all exert an influence. This makes the comparison, within any data analysis, to national trends so important in order to identify the difference in 'performance' that is experienced at the department or institutional level which is such a crucial part of demonstrating impact. This emphasises the need to increase the opportunities available for department and institutions to benchmark themselves against national trends and relevant peer groups.

Another important observation arising from this element of the study is that similar to any programme of activity which seeks to have an impact, the high level outcomes are supported by a larger number of related outputs. Monitoring of these outputs helps describe the 'intermediary' progress made towards outcomes, therefore.

In assessing how impact is evidenced, it is important to recognise that outcomes are delivered through a package of related actions which combine to deliver the progress sought. It is necessary for any assessment of impact to monitor progress towards both outputs and then (considering the outputs together) the wider outcomes. The relationship between outputs and outcomes needs to be acknowledged even if at times the direct causal relationships can be difficult to discern and evidence. The applications reviewed demonstrate that in some cases, evidence related to outputs is as far as the description of impacts go. In other cases, where data on outcomes is presented as evidence of impact, applicants find it understandably difficult to trace back the impacts to the specific actions within their plans and outputs that these actions have delivered.

Also of note is that the presentation of impact varies considerably across applications. In some cases, applicants provide a summary of key impacts at the start of each section and follow this with further detail about the impacts and how they relate to challenge and action in the section narrative. In other cases, lists of 'impacts' are provided which are not linked back to either action or challenge and include descriptions of activities (i.e. inputs) as well as outputs.

7.1.4 Relationships between impact and actions

Many of the applications presented their action plans in a structured, tabular form, which is very helpful and should very much be encouraged. None, however, then use that form to identify the impact (output or outcome) of the actions set out in their action plan. Perhaps this is because the action plans in each application are expressing what will be done rather than what has been done, which suggests an additional challenge. The current approaches adopted mean that there is no formal audit trail back to the prior action plan, other than where applicants choose to comment on prior actions by way of evidencing impact. It is of course crucial to recognise that situations change and that no applicant should be dogmatically tied to the delivery of an historic action plan, as this would ignore the need to flex and change approach according to current circumstances. However, encouraging the use of the action plan format to demonstrate impact may assist applicants in not only gathering and presenting evidence, but also in monitoring their activities in a more structured way. In so doing, assessment processes would need to carefully consider how to take account of evolving challenges and priorities.

The case study findings identified a need for additional support around demonstrating impact. This is clearly a challenging area for applications due to the complexity of the subject matter and the challenge associated with adopting yet another new, unfamiliar 'technique' as part of their Athena SWAN work.

Therefore, further development of the existing guidance and support around the demonstration of impact should be considered. Building on the comments above, one idea would be to encourage applicants to think about impact in a more formalised way, not to increase complexity (as it is clear from other evidence that workload pressure is already very significant) but to encourage a simple yet consistent approach. In essence, Athena SWAN teams should be monitoring their actions and the

impacts arising systematically in the course of their work. Providing tools to support this which also provide the framework for evidencing impact could lead to more efficient delivery – both of ongoing work and also future applications for Silver and Gold awards.

7.1.5 Moving forward

The analysis presented above does not mean that the many actions presented in the reviewed application have not had impacts; there are many excellent actions being undertaken. It just means that the evidence base for the impact of these actions on the stated goals of the Athena SWAN Charter is weak.

This has two implications for Advance HE about the Athena SWAN Charter.

1. In order to build evidence of impact of the Athena SWAN Charter on its stated goals, it is necessary to improve data collection both about outcomes not monitored by HESA (e.g. proportion of female applicants for various positions, promotion success rates, etc), and about which submitting units have undertaken which types of action. Although even this is unlikely to lead to scientifically rigorous proofs for effectiveness of Athena SWAN or any actions associated to it, it will at least give a much better indication of what actions seem to lead to data improvements nationally and which do not.
2. Advance HE should consider if evidencing impact is a reasonable requirement of Athena SWAN applications at any level. Perhaps it makes more sense to ask submitting units to evidence actions taken (which is in fact what most of the current evidence is about), where possible including evidence from analysis of either survey or formal feedback data of how these actions have been received.

There is a risk associated with requiring numerical evidence of impact, which is that many effective actions may take a period of time to have an observable impact. It would be counterproductive to have these abandoned as useless if they do not have a clear impact on numbers after 5 years.

Additionally, the evidence here is often being compiled and presented by scientists, so they are presumably aware of the weakness of the evidence and lack of clear connection to numerical outcomes. Thus, there is a risk of staff becoming cynical and losing confidence in the scheme when they are asked to create evidence that it is not possible for them to collect.

Where it is not being presented by scientists, a different challenge exists. This relates to the requirement of non-scientists to engage with often complex data and techniques which are not commonly required in their area of expertise. Simplifying the requirement will also help level the playing field for all applicants, regardless of their subject matter expertise.

In terms of encouraging consistency and simplicity, the evidence suggests that new approach to demonstrating impact would be valued by the Athena SWAN community. One specific area where further support and guidance could be provided is around the approach to be taken to demonstrating impact, through the creation of new tools. Currently, action plans tend to cover the following:

- Area to influence/theme (e.g. Managing career breaks)
- Planned actions
- Milestones
- Responsibility
- Timeframe
- Success criteria (i.e. targets)

The addition of columns to capture evidence related to the achievement of the success criteria (targets) would support ongoing monitoring of the progress and impact of each action. This presentation of evidence could then be used to describe impact in the form of outputs and wider outcomes related directly back to actions and challenges.

8. Conclusions

The study has examined the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter from a number of perspectives. It has sought comment and feedback from staff and students through surveys and in-depth interviews, delivering both quantitative and qualitative evidence presented in this report. It has also examined evidence located in application forms, drawing out a sample of quantitative data (on recruitment, promotion and leave) in order to identify impacts and comment on the nature of data presented and also, through a qualitative assessment, reviewed approaches taken to evidencing the impact of the Charter with applications themselves.

The study has identified evidence of a wide range of important impacts arising from the Charter and the actions that flow from its implementation. The most important of these are summarised below, before we examine some barriers which have been identified which limit or delay impact.

8.1 Impact on improving gender profiles

Our analysis of matched HESA data has identified significant differences between departments with an award and those without. For example, departments with an award have on average 7% more female staff compared to no award departments as well as on average 4% more female MSc students than no award departments. Whilst this demonstrates a relationship between the award and improved representation of women across staff and students, it does not identify causality (nor its direction). The analysis did not find a relationship at the national level between longevity of engagement with the award and an increase in the proportion of female staff or students.

Encouragingly, the analysis did identify small but positive improvements in the proportion of female staff in all STEMM subject areas. AHSSBL subjects were not covered as their engagement with Athena SWAN has been insufficiently long.

The surveys found that 93% of Athena SWAN Champions believed that the Charter has had a positive impact on gender issues in their university, department or research institute, whilst 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on equality and diversity issues and 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on the career progression of women.

The case study programme found evidence that the Charter is having an impact on gender profile. For example, numerous departments reported an increase in the number and proportion of women in academic and research posts, from the most junior to the most senior, though there is an acknowledgement that such impacts take time to materialise. Positive changes in the gender balance of postgraduate taught and research posts were also identified, as they were for some Postdoctoral posts. What is also acknowledged is that achieving desired outcomes around the number and proportion of female undergraduate students is proving more difficult. Other challenges that interviewees identified as requiring a long term focus include professorial and senior management positions, partly because of the low number of posts that become available at these levels.

With the scope of the Charter being widened beyond STEMM subjects to include AHSSBL, there are some departments which have a higher proportion of female staff than male staff. Even in these departments, however, the proportion of senior positions held by men is higher than that for women. Addressing this challenge is seen as a major focus of Athena SWAN work.

The study recognises that there are a range of external factors which are constraining impacts and also causing significant uncertainty, such as changes to A levels, reductions in funding available for certain courses or the wider fiscal environment for HE. Acknowledging such challenges serves to reinforce the

benefits that can be derived from benchmarking when assessing impact and performance against Athena SWAN (or equality and diversity) goals.

8.2 Impact on improving engagement and success of women in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training

The survey analysis was limited to comparing departments and institutes with different levels of award, since there was very little feedback received from departments without an award. Broadly speaking, the survey analysis has demonstrated that women working in departments with Gold awards respond more positively to the survey questions than those in departments with lower awards. This suggests that departments with Gold awards are creating more positive, supportive working environments for their staff.

For example, when compared to Silver and Bronze departments/institutes, women in Gold departments/institutes are more satisfied with performance/development reviews, more familiar with criteria and processes for promotion, more likely to have been encouraged to apply for promotion, to believe that there are more flexible working practices, to be more optimistic about career prospects and to have a mentoring scheme available to them. In fact, in some cases (such as satisfaction with performance or development review and familiarity with criteria and processes for promotion) the responses from women in Gold departments and institutes are more positive than those from men.

The results indicate that departments with higher awards are more successful at ensuring both male and female staff engage with development/performance reviews, are highly familiar with criteria and processes for promotion, engage with promotion application processes and have a belief that promotion policies are flexible and optimism about career prospects.

The case study interviews also revealed important evidence regarding recruitment, promotion and career support. We found that a number of interviewees (who played or play the role of Athena SWAN Champion) identified positive impacts arising from career development and mentoring approaches which have been introduced through the Charter. This includes being encouraged and supported to apply for promotions, engaging in mentoring at key points in their careers and positive experiences of recruitment processes which been based on revised practices and policies.

In addition, a number of individuals interviewed and that play or have played key roles in driving Athena SWAN work report very positive personal impacts including awards which recognise their input, promotions and changes in their contractual positions which provide more security.

When quantitative data from a sample of applications was collated and analysed, it revealed some modest trends towards improvement over a three year period in the gender balance in successful promotions to Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Reader level at both Department and HEI level as well as in the proportion of women on job shortlists and the proportion of women appointed. This demonstrates both the importance of data on these aspects of workplace policy and practice, and that positive impacts are being achieved.

8.3 Impact on culture and attitudes

The surveys found that the majority of academic staff (55%) and half of professional support staff surveyed (50%) believed that the Charter has had a positive impact on the work environment. In addition, 57% of academic staff and 54% of administration or support staff believed that the Charter had a positive impact on work practices. This evidence of impact is important though less compelling than that provided by Champions (above) but in interpreting this evidence it is important to recognise

that those that are distant from specific Athena SWAN activities may not be exposed to the changes resulting from those activities on a regular basis. It also takes time for changes to filter through and again for positive results to be identified and communicated.

The case study programme revealed that the Charter is commonly perceived as a key tool to support the process of delivering real behavioural and cultural change. Where the Charter is most effective, it is implemented as an integral part of a wider ambition to provide a fair, supportive and equal workplace where the talent of all can thrive. In practical terms, the Charter is considered to be an important mechanism by which practices and policies can be developed and implemented which address and eradicate disadvantage. This 'holistic' approach targets cultural change through the modification of behaviours and attitudes of all involved.

The case studies have provided strong evidence that the Charter processes and methodologies have supported cultural and behavioural change – not just around gender equality, but equality and diversity in all its forms.

8.4 The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement with the Charter

The analysis of HESA data matched to the Advance HE master record data on Athena SWAN awards and applications shows that permeation of the Charter into the higher education sector is very good; the Charter has been very successful in engaging institutions and departments.

Other evidence created as part of this study indicates that the Charter has been crucial in raising the profile and importance of gender equality across the HE and research institute sectors since its creation. The study demonstrates that there have been a huge number of actions and benefits identified by participants but there are some considerable challenges which threaten both ongoing permeation but also future efforts to demonstrate impact, such as department size, resource requirements and leadership support. These issues are discussed further below, where *key ingredients for success* are identified.

However, the evidence gathered by this study does suggest that some departments and institutes struggle to maintain engagement with the Charter for a number of reasons. These range from a lack of resources, a lack of success in acquiring and implementing the Charter leading to unsatisfactory impact, or a lack of support from departmental or institutional leadership which drains motivation.

The study has also identified numerous examples of how equality work driven through Athena SWAN has led to activity widening out beyond a focus on gender alone to address equality and diversity issues more generally. In fact, it is fair to say that participants share the ambition to go in this direction. There is no evidence that any departments or institutions with an Award wish to limit its application to gender alone.

The Charter has also led to the creation of mechanisms and indeed resourced teams to support the engagement of departments with the Charter and to encourage good practice sharing and peer-to-peer support. In some cases, this support extends to delivery and analysis of data to be included in applications and whilst all departments receive some support in this respect (essential given the centralisation of many systems holding crucial data) there are examples of institutions which effectively pre-populate departmental applications. This has a number of benefits, including overcoming any data-related skills gaps within departments, reducing the amount of resource required by departments to complete their application and freeing up resources to consider results and design appropriate solutions.

8.5 Experiences and perceptions of implementing the Charter

There were many positive comments made by those that contributed to the study regarding the Charter itself. Stakeholders are very largely committed to the fundamental belief that its aims and objectives are very important ones and that the Charter is an effective tool through which to drive change. Many also commented positively on the information and guidance provided by Advance HE where they had directly experienced that, though new applicants in particular would be assisted through an increase in the volume and applicability of such information.

However, as well as outlining a number of important impacts which are attributable to the Athena SWAN Charter, this study has also identified some important challenges which are currently limiting or delaying Charter impacts.

The first major challenge relates to workload. Not only is the workload involved in preparing an Athena SWAN application substantial, this impacts on a small number of (typically) female staff and can often be simply piled on top of existing workloads. The time involved in delivering an application and then implementing actions is not always recognised in workload allocation models (where these are adopted), and unless promotion criteria place sufficient weight on 'life of the university' activities, then there is a risk that those involved will find that their career progression is constrained.

The second area relates to obtaining, analysing and presenting the required data, which was found in the surveys to be the most commonly cited barrier to the Athena SWAN process. There are numerous aspects of this challenge, including challenges relating to the accuracy of data provided from centralised systems, the volume of data required for each application, and whether Athena SWAN teams have the capacity and skill to analyse data and assimilate its meaning. On a related point, there appears also to be inconsistency in the ways in which impact is evidenced, which relies heavily on quantitative data. Increased support on the demonstration of impact is being called for.

The third area is engagement of senior management in driving forward cultural change and, at the level of the Charter itself, providing the leadership and resources to implement action plans. At present, whilst departments applying for certain NIHR grants are required to have Silver award and the REF and TEF processes are now requiring evidence of activities to address equality and diversity issues, it is generally perceived that greater incentives to acquire and implement the Charter would be beneficial.

The fourth area relates to assessment. Again, the amount of resource required to support the assessment process as it currently stands is quite significant (for Advance HE and panel members) and it is thought that a paper-only exercise has numerous limitations which could be overcome through an approach which combines application forms with site visits. Interviewees believed that the current panel system, whilst having a number of strengths, was liable to produce inconsistent outcomes.

8.6 Summary conclusions

This study has produced evidence of a range of positive impacts that arise from the Athena SWAN Charter and that are experienced by many of those working in departments and institutions that adopt it.

The analysis of HESA and Athena SWAN data identified significant differences in the proportion of female staff between departments with an award and those without, and the analysis also identified small but positive improvements in the proportion of female staff in all STEMM subject areas.

The surveys found that 93% of Athena SWAN Champions believed that the Charter has had a positive impact on gender issues in their university, department or research institute, whilst 78% believed the

Charter had a positive impact on equality and diversity issues and 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on the career progression of women. The proportions of other staff that believed the Charter has had a positive impact on gender issues were lower than for Champions, however. Whilst this suggests that some benefits can be slow to permeate down through the institution or department, it may also indicate that it takes time for awareness of Athena SWAN initiatives and their impacts to be realised, recognised and communicated.

Broadly speaking, the survey analysis has demonstrated that women working in departments with Gold awards respond more positively to the survey questions than those in departments with lower awards. This suggests that departments with Gold awards are successfully creating more positive, supportive working environments for their staff.

The case study programme found evidence that the Charter is having an impact on gender profile; numerous departments reported an increase in the number and proportion of women in academic and research posts. However, achieving desired outcomes around the number and proportion of female undergraduate students is proving more difficult, as is affecting change at the professorial and senior management level.

However, the study also identified a number of challenges and areas for Charter development. The Charter is poised for significant expansion which will place a strain on all available resources – at Advance HE and across the HE and research institute sector. Coupled with the resource constraints that departments and institutions are currently facing, alongside the amount of work involved in acquiring and maintaining the Charter, Advance HE should seek to do all it can to minimise the resource inputs required at every stage and level, whilst maintaining rigour around the standard that the Charter represents.

The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that there is demand for additional support from and across the sector, and in a number of forms. They seek greater clarity from Advance HE on the Charter, how to deliver it, how to embed it and how to report impacts arising from it. They seek support from peers and both within and outwith their Institution. And they seek support and guidance on what works, how and what to expect as a result. Improvements in support and guidance will not only make the exercise more efficient for all involved, it will make it more effective. It will also deliver indirect benefits too, such as the development of personal networks which could enhance careers and lead to greater impacts arising from the Charter.

The collation, analysis and presentation of data to support applications and to monitor and show evidence of progress is a huge challenge for those involved in the process. There is often a disconnect between departments and the institutional centre which manages many of the systems required to provide the data. Where local data exists it often is more detailed and more accurate than central data and resultant contradictions add to the time required to deliver an application. The range of data available is also often limited, as is the ability for award holders to benchmark performance, set targets and monitor progress.

The amount of work required to deliver a successful application is very significant. At present, given the range of resource constraints that most departments and institutions experience, this is perhaps the most significant threat to engagement with the Charter and the longevity of the Charter for existing award holders. There is a significant and persistent call for changes to be made to the application process to reduce the time required, iron out data challenges, simplify the process and enable everyone to focus more energy and resource on addressing equality issues.

The assessment process is seen to work well in most cases. However, even here the evidence of this study is that it could be modified and improved to reduce the time inputs required (by all parties –

Champions, SAT members, support staff within institutions and departments, panel members and Advance HE) and to deliver a more rounded and holistic assessment. Inconsistencies in assessment are also perceived which has the effect of undermining faith in the Charter and also has a demotivating effect on those involved. There is a fair amount of anxiety about the nature of current expectations that have been driven by changes in the Charter in 2015 and the sector is wary of more change (except any change that will simplify and clarify matters, which would be universally welcomed).

The HE sector and people working within it are under significant workload pressure. Key to addressing inequality, improving diversity and widening inclusion is the dedication of additional resource to the projects and people that deliver those outcomes. Seeking ways to increase the incentives that flow from engagement with equality and diversity initiatives would not only potentially unlock important resource, but would also challenge the remaining barriers to engagement which are still very much in evidence.

The Charter is seen as an important tool to either address gender equality challenges in isolation or as part of a wider programme of work to address inequality in all forms. However, there is confusion about how various tools available to the HE sector are evolving and how they might work with or against each other. Furthermore, there is a risk that resources are spread too thinly when the agenda is broadened out and this represents a threat to delivering impacts from Athena SWAN. Finding ways to evolve the Charter to apply to and recognise work to address other aspects of equality and diversity would be welcomed, whilst ensuring that initiatives are not watered down.

8.7 Ingredients for success

There is clear evidence within the case studies that the impact of Athena SWAN in addressing gender equality challenges, in advancing women's careers and ultimately in changing cultures relies on a number of key ingredients:

- A philosophy that is based on the desire to create healthy, supportive and fair workplaces rather than simply to address gender equality issues.
- Leadership and commitment from senior staff within the Department, Institution (or both) to delivering fundamental cultural change.
- Resources secured for and committed to support the Athena Swan process.
- Skills and expertise necessary not only to navigate the application process successfully and to design and implement successful policies and initiatives that address issues of gender equality.
- Support and guidance from a network of experienced colleagues and peers.
- Effective, continual communication of equality and diversity goals, actions to deliver on those goals, and progress towards them.
- Appropriate structures through which to drive the work involved (e.g. SAT or EDI committee).
- Direct links identified between achieving equality and diversity goals and delivering the strategic objectives of the Department, institution or institute.
- Policies and practices which mean that those involved in delivering the core workload associated with Athena SWAN are given the time and capacity to do so without fear of interrupting their career path.

In summary, Advance HE should seek to evolve the Charter so that the resource inputs required are minimised and to encourage the ingredients of success to be in place.

8.8 Recommendations

The findings and conclusions produced by this study has led to the identification of a number of recommendations for Advance HE and Athena SWAN stakeholders. These can be found in section 9.4 below (page 121).

9. Impact Evaluation Summary

9.1 Introduction

In 2018 Advance HE began a process to review the Athena SWAN Charter. As part of that process, Advance HE commissioned Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University to evaluate the impact of the Charter across the higher education (HE) and research sector to determine its effectiveness as a vehicle for sustainable change, and to identify areas for further development.

The study seeks to deliver evidence and insight in relation to the following five key research questions:

1. The effectiveness of the Athena SWAN Charter in facilitating improvement in the gender profile of universities and research institutes, including:
 - The effectiveness of the Charter in advancing women's careers in STEMM.
 - Early indicators of the effectiveness of the Charter in improving gender equality in AHSSBL.
2. The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in processes such as recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training.
3. The impact of the Athena SWAN Charter in changing the culture and attitudes across the participating institutions to address gender inequality and unequal representation, and any other indirect impacts on particular groups.
4. The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement with the Athena SWAN Charter in participating institutions, including:
 - The extent to which Athena SWAN practices and learning have been incorporated into mainstream strategies and processes in participating HEIs.
 - The sustainability of the changes that HEIs are making as a result of their participation in the Athena SWAN Charter.
5. An exploration and testing of the experiences and perceptions of HEIs of implementing the Athena SWAN Charter and awards process.

9.2 Methodology

The study has been delivered across three related strands of activity, each with its own methodology.

These are:

- HESA matched data analysis, which involved matching HESA staff and student data to Advance HE's Athena SWAN master record dataset. The matched data was then analysed to establish key trends and changes in gender representation across staff and students in STEMM and AHSSBL subject areas and to identify the relationships between observed changes and the profile of Athena SWAN awards across the HE landscape.
- Athena SWAN Applications data capture and analysis, involving:
 - identifying and collating common quantitative data across a sample of applications, to investigate patterns and trends in recruitment, promotion and maternity/paternity/parental/adoption/other leave.
 - A qualitative assessment of a small sample of Gold and Silver application forms to examine the approaches adopted to evidencing impact arising from Athena SWAN actions.
- Mixed methods fieldwork, combining:
 - Large scale surveys of students and staff across the HEI and Research Institute landscape, within institutions/departments both with and without Athena SWAN awards. The surveys achieved 2,293 completed responses.

- Delivery of 13 case studies, involving qualitative interviews with staff and students within hand-selected departments and institutions, in order to investigate the impact of Athena SWAN in greater depth. The case studies engaged over 80 individuals in depth interviews of 30-45 minutes in length.

9.3 Research Findings

The key findings related to impact of the Charter and barriers to delivering further impact are summarised below, structured by the five key research questions. The recommendations that are summarised at the end of the Executive Summary are signposted throughout.

Research Question 1 – The effectiveness of the Charter in improving the gender profile of universities and research institutes and advancing women’s careers

- The **statistical analysis of HESA data** examining trends in the proportion of female staff and students over the period 2013-2017 identifies significant differences between departments with an award and those departments with no award. For example, departments with an award have on average 7% more female staff compared to no award departments (i.e. 32% cf. 25% respectively). And award departments have on average 4% more female MSc students than no award departments.
- However, when the HESA analysis examined whether the length of time engaged with Athena SWAN was related to increases in the proportion of female academic staff in STEMM departments over time, it found that it is not a significant predictor of change. In other words, the analysis did not indicate a statistical relationship between the Charter and increases in the proportion of female staff over time.
- It is not possible to test causality (in either direction) with the data available. However, the results suggest that it is more likely that a higher proportion of female staff and students leads to an award than the other way around, given the lack of evidence of change over time in departments with awards compared to departments without awards.
- The **case study programme** found that the Charter is regularly described as a positive agent for change in gender balance and in support of women’s career advancement.
- A wide range of impacts around gender balance have been reported. These include an increase in the number and proportion of women in academic and research posts, from the most junior to the most senior.
- Some of the individuals that play or have played key roles in driving Athena SWAN work report very positive personal impacts including awards which recognise their input, promotions and changes in their contractual positions which provide more security.
- Although most case study departments/institutions report positive impact on gender balance in academic/research staff, there is evidence that such impacts can take time to materialise.
- Respondents felt the greatest challenge remains in addressing gender balance in the most senior positions (e.g. professorial, senior management). Some case studies reported progress at this level, whilst others reported none.
- With the scope of the Charter being widened beyond STEMM subjects to include AHSSBL, there are some departments which have a higher proportion of female staff than male staff. Even in these departments, however, the proportion of senior positions held by men is higher than that for women. Addressing this challenge is seen as a major focus of Athens SWAN work.

- [Link to Recommendation 18](#)

- There are also numerous changes within the higher education sector which are constraining impacts and are causing significant uncertainty, such as changes to A levels, reductions in funding available for certain courses and the wider fiscal environment for HE.
- Despite the positive findings, some challenging issues remain. An important example is the recognition that it will take a significant amount of time to influence gender balance at the very top of departments or institutions. There is also some concern within those at the Gold level that the challenges they are now targeting are the most intransigent and deep rooted, and this has raised questions about the timescale over which they can realistically be expected to address them.
- The **analysis of quantitative application data** around recruitment, promotion and maternity/parental leave shows modest trends towards improvement over a three year period in the following areas:
 - Gender balance in successful promotions to Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Reader level at both Department and HEI level;
 - Increase at Department level in percentages of women on job shortlists, and in percentages of appointments to women;
 - Possible trend towards either greater uptake of paternity leave or more consistent reporting of leave taken at both Department and HEI level.
- **Qualitative analysis of applications** focusing on how impact is evidenced demonstrates that there have been many actions designed and implemented as a result of the Charter.
- However, often the evidence base for the impact of these actions on the stated goals of the Athena SWAN Charter is weak. The impacts stated often relate to the introduction of new policies and practices, rather than evolution in culture (which is seen as particularly hard to describe and measure). There is little evidence of impacts on the quality of the experience that staff and students are exposed to within departments.
 - [Link to Recommendation 14](#)
- The numerical data that are used to demonstrate impact often shows 'noisy' or disjointed patterns and this suggests that other factors beyond the Charter are also influencing these data.
 - [Link to Recommendation 6](#)

Research question 2 - The effectiveness of the Charter in improving the engagement and success of women in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training

- **The staff and student surveys** were designed to identify the impacts arising from the Charter through an examination of the views and opinions of those working in Gold departments/institutes compared to those in Silver and Bronze departments/institutes. Overall, the study finds that women working in departments with Gold awards respond more positively to the survey questions than those in departments with lower awards.
- For example, when compared to Silver and Bronze departments/institutes, women in Gold departments/institutes are more satisfied with performance/development reviews, more familiar with criteria and processes for promotion, more likely to have been encouraged to apply for promotion, to believe that there are more flexible working practices, to be more optimistic about career prospects and to have a mentoring scheme available to them.
- In some areas, including satisfaction with performance or development review, or familiarity with criteria and processes for promotion, the responses from women in departments and research institutes with a Gold award are more positive than men's. The survey results make it clear that an Athena SWAN award at the Gold level signifies more effective practice in these areas than awards at lower levels.

- The results also indicate that departments with higher awards are more successful at ensuring both male and female staff engage with the following key areas of career development: availability of and satisfaction with development/performance reviews, familiarity with criteria and processes for promotion, encouragement to apply for promotion, belief that promotion policies are flexible and optimism about career prospects.
- However, the surveys also identify a number of areas where the results for women are less positive than those for men. These include satisfaction with their performance/development review, familiarity with their university's or research institute's criteria and processes for promotion, encouragement to apply for a promotion and likelihood of success, and optimism about career prospects. Women are also generally less likely than men to believe they have adequate opportunities for training and development, and to report that they have been encouraged to take up the training and development opportunities that are available.
- **The case study interviews** revealed that some interviewees (who played or play the role of Athena SWAN Champion) identified positive impacts arising from career development and mentoring approaches which have been introduced through the Charter. This includes being encouraged and supported to apply for promotions, engaging in mentoring at key points in their careers and positive experiences of recruitment processes which are based on revised practices and policies.
- In a small number of cases, involvement in the project to acquire and deliver Athena SWAN was said to have directly and negatively affected career development and promotion prospects. This situation arose when individuals were given the additional workload of leading Athena SWAN applications without any allowance being made for the impact of this on their existing responsibilities, most notably research outputs. The implication is that unless departments reduce other aspects of workload and adjust promotions criteria, then those leading Athena SWAN work (who are more likely to be women) may see a negative impact on career progression by undertaking that role.

Research question 3 - The Impact of the Charter in changing culture and attitudes and other indirect impacts

- **The surveys found** that 93% of Champions believed that the Charter has had a positive impact on gender issues in their university, department or research institute, 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on equality and diversity issues, and 78% believed the Charter had a positive impact on the career progression of women.
- Academic staff and administrative or support staff are also broadly positive about the Charter's impacts, though less so than their Champions. 55% of academic staff and 50% of administration or support staff believed that the Charter had a positive impact on the work environment, while 57% of academic staff and 54% of administration or support staff believed that the Charter had a positive impact on work practices.
- Female staff were often less positive about the impact of the Charter than male staff, though this was not always the case. For example, female staff were less likely than male staff to agree that their university department or research institute had a positive work environment, and less likely than male staff to agree that the work environment had become more positive in the last three years.
- While staff in departments and research institutes with an Athena SWAN award at Gold level tended to be the most positive about the impacts of the Charter, staff in departments and institutes with an award at Silver level were often less positive than those in departments and institutes with a Bronze award. It is not clear from survey analysis why this is the case.

- **Case study interviews** revealed that the Charter is commonly perceived as a key tool to help in the process of delivering real behavioural and cultural change. Where the Charter is most effective, it is implemented as a tool to ensure that practices and policies present no disadvantage to any member of staff or student. This 'holistic' approach targets cultural change through the modification of behaviours and attitudes of all involved.
- There is strong evidence that the Charter processes and methodologies have supported cultural and behavioural change – not just around gender equality, but equality and diversity in all its forms.
- The Charter is seen as a tool that unlocks open communication, honest discussion, real scrutiny of practices and commitment to a common purpose.
- Even those that do not consider their department or institute to be on the journey of cultural change see the value in the Charter in driving changes in attitudes and behaviours.

Research question 4 - The permeation, quality and longevity of engagement (incorporation of learning and sustainability of changes)

- The **analysis of matched HESA** data demonstrates that permeation in the sector is very good, suggesting that the Athena SWAN Charter has been very successful in engaging institutions and departments.
- The Charter has been crucial in raising the profile of gender equality across the HE and research institute sectors. It is important that future developments of the Charter seek to increase permeation and bolster the pre-eminence of the Charter as the key award in the field of gender equality.
- Later sections of the study show that there have been a huge number of actions and benefits identified by participants but there are some considerable challenges which threaten both ongoing permeation but also future efforts to demonstrate impact, such as department size, resource requirements and leadership support, for example.
- The analysis also identified evidence of barriers to engagement with the Charter. In particular it found that engagement with small departments is comparatively low, as it is with departments with a lower Research Excellence Framework (REF) intensity. The analysis also suggests that departments struggle to maintain engagement with the Charter. These challenges point to ways in which the Charter could be redesigned to address these, particularly around the balance of responsibilities between institutions and departments.
 - [Link to Recommendations 5 and 9](#)
- **The case studies** have provided numerous examples of how gender equality work driven through Athena SWAN has led to the widening out of such work to cover equality and diversity more generally. There is no evidence that any departments or institutions with an Award wish to limit its application to gender alone.
- However, alongside this broadening out comes the risk that focus on gender becomes watered down. Therefore, it is essential that the focus on gender is not allowed to diminish.
 - [Link to Recommendation 19](#)
- Case studies also provide examples of where the good practice has been shared beyond their department to other departments and indeed the institution itself.
- Athena SWAN has in many cases led to institution-wide coordinated activity including support, good practice sharing and the provision of central resource to assist departments in their Athena SWAN applications (and beyond, into action plan delivery).
 - [Link to Recommendations 1, 2 and 3](#)

- However, some departments report that they feel they are moving forward at a faster pace than their institution and that there are some tensions arising from this (including limitations on what departments can achieve imposed by the centre).

Research question 5 - Experiences and perception of implementing the Charter

- **The surveys found** that other schemes promoting equality and diversity and/or the career progression of women are common in universities, departments and research institutes engaged in Athena SWAN. Athena SWAN is generally considered to be of similar or greater value than these other schemes.
- The workload involved in preparing an Athena SWAN application is substantial. This is particularly the case for Athena SWAN Champions and colleagues involved in writing the application, and particularly in the final stages prior to submission.
- The resource required is not always recognised in workload allocation models (where these are adopted), and the process often relies on the motivation and commitment of a small number of individuals.
- Obtaining, analysing and presenting the required data is the most commonly cited barrier to the Athena SWAN process. Engagement of senior management in driving the implementation of action plans was also cited as a barrier.
 - [Link to Recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 7](#)
- Some Athena SWAN Champions also identified a lack of understanding of how to effectively demonstrate 'impact', with a small number suggesting this was complicated by colleagues' differing experiences of the expectations of assessment panels.
- There were many positive comments made **by case study interviewees** about the Charter itself, their fundamental belief in its aims and its effectiveness as a tool through which to drive change. Many also commented positively on the information and guidance provided by Advance HE where they had directly experienced that, though new applicants in particular would be assisted through an increase in the volume and applicability of such information.
- Whilst there is huge commitment and goodwill towards the Charter, there are some significant drawbacks which are limiting the take-up of the Charter and threaten its longevity.
 - [Link to Recommendations 16, 17 and 18](#)
- The amount of work (estimated to be equivalent to 3 FTEs for one year by one department) required to deliver a compelling application is seen as unnecessarily burdensome. The level of resources required to apply for Athena SWAN is seen as the biggest barrier to participation. For many, there are serious questions being asked about whether the investment of time and effort is warranted.
 - [Link to Recommendations 8, 9, 10 and 11](#)
- All case study interviewees that have been part of the process of applying talked about the significant problems faced in acquiring, analysing and reflecting on the required data. Whilst it is difficult to estimate the proportion of the workload overall that is dedicated to this aspect, it is a very significant overhead.
 - [Link to Recommendation 12](#)
- There are a number of issues – perceived and real – with the assessment process. The call from those involved in Athena SWAN is for Advance HE to reconsider the assessment process in order to reduce the amount of time input required for panels, to provide more consistency of assessment and to blend consideration of written material with visits to departments and institutes in order to facilitate a more rounded assessment.
 - [Link to Recommendations 13, 14 and 15](#)

- The **quantitative analysis of application data** identified that the best data available for analysis were for recruitment, with 82% of Departmental and 77% of HEI applications presenting this data in a format that permitted comparison.
- Next best were the data for leave, with between 60-66% of Departmental applications and 64-69% of HEI applications having data in a useable format (with the highest proportions for maternity leave, and lower proportions for other types of leave). The least valuable and insightful were the data on promotions, in which only 62% of Departments and 64% of HEIs had data in a usable format.
- The main sources of variation in data presentation included:
 - Combining data across years;
 - Combining different types of data (e.g. different levels of promotion, academic leave with leave by other staff);
 - Providing data as percentages rather than raw numbers;
 - Failing to provide full data (e.g. data was commonly missing for parental leave, number of offers made during recruitment processes, numbers of applications for promotion).
- The degree of variability of responses and data provision suggest that there are issues with one or more of the following: data collection, data provision, data analysis or the level of understanding of the requirement.
 - [Link to Recommendation 4](#)

9.4 Recommendations

A number of recommendations have been developed based upon the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from them. These have been grouped thematically and are presented below.

9.4.1 Support & Guidance

1. Advance HE should seek to work with professional societies to develop support networks for departments within a subject area to share experience, good practice and advice (such as Juno, London Mathematical Society Good Practice Scheme).
2. Universities should be encouraged to develop and support (financially, through central administrative support, etc) networks of Athena SWAN champions at their institutions.
3. Advance HE should work with experienced Athena SWAN Champions to develop a “Quick Start” guide for those starting on the Athena SWAN process. This can link to the resources on Advance HE but give an efficient way in and suggested timelines.

9.4.2 Data

4. Advance HE should seek to develop an online submission process with clear guidance on the data to be provided as part of applications and how it is to be presented (e.g. individuals, FTE/FPE, aggregated or separated by year, level, etc.). It should be ensured that this is compliant with data protection requirements.
5. When developing new approaches to data, it will be important to focus not only on data collation (to help pre-populate application forms, for example), but also the added-value outputs such as summaries of trends and quartiles that will help applicants understand where they stand, to set targets and to monitor progress.

Recommendations specific to HEIs:

6. Approaches should be sought to make the development of university systems and processes for collating and summarising data for departmental applications a requirement of HEIs in their applications rather than expecting each department to do this.
7. Advance HE should work with other organisations (e.g. Royal Society of Chemistry, London Mathematical Society) to pursue the most effective ways to achieve this goal and also to think about what data is the most useful to collect. For example, it would be useful to have a standard set of survey questions whose response statistics should form part of every application.

9.4.3 Application process

8. The application process needs to be considerably less resource intensive for all parties (universities and departments, research institutes, panellists, Advance HE staff). The aim should be to reduce all workloads significantly.
9. Coupled with actions to make the Charter more accessible to all institutes and departments, Advance HE should give clear guidance about the level of institute, institutional and departmental commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in terms of funds, staff time, policies and actions required for various award levels. Guidelines should be phrased in terms of percentage of annual budget, percentage of staff FTE, etc. so as not to disadvantage small or less well-resourced universities or departments.
10. The application process should be redesigned to reduce the need for extensive polishing of applications in terms of, for example, photos, quotes and case studies, which may not present a representative view. This could also be done by moving to an online application in which only limited text can be uploaded.
11. Advance HE should consider extending the reapplication cycle to five years.

Recommendations specific to HEIs:

12. Advance HE should determine what the relationship should be between university level and department level applications (as is also being done, e.g. with the Teaching Excellence Framework, TEF). For instance, university level applications could be responsible for:
 - a. Collation and presentation of all HESA student and staff data disaggregated by cost centre.
 - b. Collation and presentation of data on staff and student application processes, progression and promotion, all leave uptake and return statistics.
 - c. Running and collating data from regular staff surveys that can be adapted to include a certain number of questions specific to individual departments.
 - d. Development of a set of university-level actions to address common issues in consultation with departments (the consultation process should be described).

Departmental applications could then be considerably shorter than currently and be responsible for:

- e. Brief commentaries where data in university application are far outside benchmarks or show clear negative trends.
- f. Description of policies and practices at departmental level of relevance to equality and diversity.
- g. List of equality and diversity activities undertaken over the past three years together with summary data about uptake and feedback.
- h. Development of a list of actions (which may include continuation of existing activities) aimed at meeting challenges that have been identified, together with an indication of

what challenge each is intended to address and a plan and timeline for evaluation of the action.

9.4.4 Assessment process

13. Advance HE should consider combining application forms with site visits. Ideally, this would be combined with efforts to reduce the total workload associated with applications. Certainly, this would necessitate a reduction in the effort required to complete forms, but would provide a more rounded assessment – especially of culture change. The process would need careful thinking to avoid the mistakes made by other such processes and to tackle practical issues (e.g. logistics when departments/schools are spread across a number of sites, have a clinical element, etc.).
14. Award level should specifically NOT be linked to staff or student percentages by gender (as these are very noisy and vary depending on many uncontrollable factors), though other statistics may be relevant (for example, progression data for students, time to promotion for staff, etc).
15. In evaluating culture change, Advance HE should note that it is two things:
 - a. The experience that people have of working/studying in a department/institute, which should be evaluated by survey data.
 - b. Good practice in setting policies that encourage diversity. It is likely that some of these will be standard expectations of policies, some will be expectations depending on resources available to institutions, departments and research institutes, and some will be innovative practices proposed. It would be useful to have some guidance about the first two sets, arrived at in consultation with both panellists and Athena SWAN Champions nationally.

9.4.5 Motivating participation

16. A significant difficulty at the moment is that there is no direct financial incentive for good practice regarding equality and diversity. The financial incentive at the moment is through the ways in which Athena SWAN may feed into REF or TEF (and future Knowledge Exchange Framework, KEF) evaluations and the way in which research councils may choose to count equality and diversity in terms of their activities. For example, Advance HE should explore with partners whether it is possible to identify and ringfence funding associated to equality and diversity, for its own sake. Research grant applicants could also be required to demonstrate their personal engagement with equality and diversity challenges during the application process.
17. Advance HE should seek to work with REF, TEF, and funding agencies to better incorporate equality and diversity into these processes, as well as creating guidance on how best to achieve this.
18. Advance HE should consider how to ensure that the key 'ingredients for success' are in place at the start of the Athena SWAN journey to maximise the likelihood of success.

9.4.6 Widening application of the Charter

19. Formalising recognition of the broadening out of equality and diversity work would create efficiencies and iron out some of the conflicts/issues that relate to this area (e.g. watering down of activities, lack of recognition within Athena SWAN where work has spread well beyond gender). This could be through the development of an integrated Charter, or an umbrella Charter.

10. Appendix

10.1 HESA data matching – addition information

There is not a perfect match between HESA cost centres (or cost centre group) and Athena SWAN submitting departments, or between Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) subject codes and Athena SWAN departments or department groups. There are different possible matchings to Athena SWAN application data:

- **SINGLE_CODE** match (when there is a clear match between a HESA cost centre at a university and a submitting Athena SWAN department from that university, OR that there was no Athena SWAN submitting group that overlapped that given HESA cost centre)
- **MULTICODE** indicates that more than one HESA cost centre at a given university was represented by a single Athena SWAN submission
- **PARTIAL COST CENTRE** indicates that only part of the indicated HESA cost centre was included in an application. It can happen that this cost centre is duplicated for each Athena SWAN application that part of it was associated to.

We can see below how many of the HESA cost centres conformed to which type of matching:

- Multicode – 338 cases
- Single_code – 538 cases
- Partial Cost Centre – 182 cases

Note that cost centres or cost centre groups that could not be linked to any of the Athena SWAN applications are not included in any of these categories.

10.2 Example survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire below is one of fourteen developed and employed in this study. Questionnaires covered a very similar question set, with modifications being made to recognise the type of respondent being targeted (students, academic staff, Champions, professional and support staff) and the Athena SWAN status of the institutions or department (Athena SWAN award, previous applicants without awards, non-engaged departments/institutions). The example below is the questionnaire targeted at academic staff in departments holding Athena SWAN awards.

AS Academic Staff Survey (final)

Background Information for Participants

About this study

What is the purpose of the project?

A Research Team from Loughborough University and Ortus Economic Research Ltd, a professional research company, is conducting research on behalf of Advance HE on factors which impact on gender equality and career advancement within higher education. Your School / Department has been selected to be involved in the study and for this reason we are inviting you to share your experiences of working or studying within this School / Department by completing this online survey.

What am I required to do?

To answer the questions in the accompanying survey as completely and honestly as you can.

How long will the survey take to complete?

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, depending on your responses to open questions. You can edit your answers (i.e. go back and change a response), but once you leave the survey you will not be able to edit the answers you have given.

Will my individual data be kept confidential?

Yes. All data will be kept strictly confidential. All electronically stored data will be stored in a password protected file and identified only by a unique reference number. Any hard copies of data collected will be stored in a locked office. Your name will not be collected as part of the survey. Any information that might specifically identify you will never be used when the

project is written or talked about. No-one in your School / Department will have access to the individual data that you provide.

We will only collect your data if you consent to provide it, at Question 1 below. This is the legal basis upon which we will collect and process the data.

The Research Team abides by statutory data protection requirements. The data you provide will be combined with responses from other staff within your School / Department, and also with responses from staff in other universities, and then summarised and analysed in order to inform future developments that aim to support career advancement for all.

Data will be kept for a maximum period of 6 months (from the date of completion of the survey, which is end January 2019) after which it will be deleted. The data will never be shared or transferred outside of the study research team. It will only be used for analytical purposes in relation to the Advance HE study.

The study will be operated in compliance with the Loughborough University Privacy Policy which can be found here: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/privacy/research-privacy/>

Note that all procedures associated with this research study have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee.

Do I have to participate?

No. You do not have to participate in this research and you have the right to withdraw consent for us to use your data. See the Consent section below.

Where can I get more information should I wish to?

If you have any questions about completing this survey or wish to request that your data is withdrawn or deleted, please contact: Andrew Graves, Director, Ortus Economic Research by telephone on 07966 582 133 or by email at andrew.graves@OrtusER.co.uk.

Participant Consent

The data you provide by completing this survey will be used to support an analysis of equality and diversity issues in your University or Institute. All data will remain anonymous at all times. The analysis we perform will be at a level of aggregation which ensures that no individual respondent can be identified by virtue of their responses or the demographic characteristics they hold.

You can withdraw from the research study at any time. Incomplete responses will be discarded when the survey closes.

You have the right to request the withdrawal of your data from the analysis process at any time before the end of the research period (to end January 2019). You may also request that your data be deleted at any time, though it will be deleted automatically after six months.

The data you provide is anonymised and we will not ask you to provide your name or any other data that can be used to identify you. Your identity is protected at all times.

If you consent to your participation in this survey, please click 'Yes' in Question 1.

1. I consent to participate in this survey and for the data I provide to be used in the ways described. * *Required*

- ☐ Yes (proceed to Q2)
- ☐ No (leave survey)

2. Today's date * *Required*

Dates need to be in the format 'DD/MM/YYYY', for example 27/03/1980.



(dd/mm/yyyy)

Career Development and Progression

3. I know who my line manager or appraiser is.

- ☐ yes
☐ no

4. I have had a career performance / development review in the last 12 to 18 months.

- ☐ yes
☐ no - If "no" please go to Question 6

5. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
I was satisfied with my career performance /development review.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
I am familiar with the University's criteria and processes for promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been encouraged to apply for promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am optimistic about my career prospects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I consider the the University's criteria and processes for promotion to be.... (please select any that apply):

- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Unbiased
- ☐ Subjective
- ☐ Evidence-based
- ☐ Transparent
- ☐ Obstructive
- ☐ Valid
- ☐ Reliable
- ☐ Motivating
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Opaque
- ☐ Arbitrary
- ☐ Biased
- ☐ Unfair
- ☐ Unclear
- ☐ Inconsistent

8. Have you applied for promotion in the last 3 years?

- ☐ Yes, I applied and was successful
 - ☐ Yes, I applied and was unsuccessful
 - ☐ No, I have not become eligible for a promotion in that time
 - ☐ No, there are no positions above mine which I can apply for
-
- ☐ No, I am satisfied with my current position
 - ☐ No, I wanted to but I felt unable to
 - ☐ No, other

Career Development and Progression Support from the wider UNIVERSITY

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
Adequate opportunities exist within my University for personal development and training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My University encourages me to undertake further training and pursue personal development opportunities relevant to my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are rewards, incentives and awards available to me at my University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received rewards, incentives or awards from my University for my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are flexible promotion policies (e.g. take into account part-time work, career breaks) at my University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is real commitment at my University to promote equality and diversity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Please indicate whether the following statements apply or not.

	yes	no
There is a mentoring scheme available to me at my University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am currently mentored at my University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have previously been mentored at my University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Which of the following initiatives and practices does your department or school operate? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- ☐ Commitment to equality and diversity communicated on marketing and recruitment material
- ☐ Compulsory equality and diversity training
- ☐ Mandatory gender balance on interview panels
- ☐ All new staff have a welcome event or meeting
- ☐ Assigning all new staff a 'buddy' as part of the induction process
- ☐ Discussion of career development at performance development reviews
- ☐ Leadership training
- ☐ Workshops on promotion
- ☐ Feedback from Senior Management Team/ Head of Department for staff who unsuccessfully applied for promotion
- ☐ Provision of a fund to support staff returning to work

12. Which of the following challenges associated with diversity and equality do you feel apply to your institution? (Please tick as many as apply)

- ☐ Attracting sufficient numbers of female students to undergraduate courses
 - ☐ Providing sufficient staff cover for parental/maternity leave
 - ☐ Attracting female staff to apply for positions
 - ☐ Identifying training and development needs in relation to diversity and equality
 - ☐ A lack of time available to take up training and development opportunities
 - ☐ Heavy workload
 - ☐ Inconsistencies in the gender balance in recruitment/promotion panels
 - ☐ Attracting sufficient numbers of female applicants to postgraduate taught or research posts
 - ☐ Low awareness of career progression and promotion system
 - ☐ Low numbers of female staff overall
 - ☐ The more senior the position, the fewer women there are applying (i.e. a leaky career pipeline)
-
- ☐ Promoting parental/maternity leave policies
 - ☐ Improving the work-life balance for all
 - ☐ Improving uptake of training and development related to equality and diversity
 - ☐ Inconsistencies in induction/support for new staff

Career Development and Progression Support from your SCHOOL / DEPARTMENT

13. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
My line manager or appraiser encourages me to progress in my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager or appraiser encourages me to undertake further training and pursue personal development opportunities relevant to my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager or appraiser gives me helpful feedback about my performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager or appraiser encourages me to have a strategic plan for promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager or appraiser has encouraged me to apply for University rewards, incentives or awards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate opportunities exist in my School / Department for personal development and training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My School / Department takes part-time work and / or career breaks into account when putting staff forward for promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would find a sabbatical beneficial.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Have you applied for a sabbatical in the last 3 years?

- ☐ Yes, I applied and was successful
☐ Yes, I applied and was unsuccessful
☐ No, I have not become eligible for a sabbatical
☐ No, I wanted to but I felt unable to
☐ No, other

15. Have you applied for an additional increment/salary increase in the last 3 years?

- ☐ Yes, I applied and was successful
- ☐ Yes, I applied and was unsuccessful
- ☐ No, I have not become eligible for an increment/salary increase in that time
- ☐ No, there are no additional increments/increases available to me in my current role
- ☐ No, I am satisfied with my current salary
- ☐ No, I wanted to but I felt unable to
- ☐ No, other

Career Satisfaction

16. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for salary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Career

17. The following factors have most **benefitted** my career (please select up to five):

Please select no more than 5 answer(s).

- ☐ Ability / aptitude
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ My pregnancy/maternity/paternity
- ☐ Workload
- ☐ Luck
- ☐ Support of line manager
- ☐ My ethnicity
- ☐ Personality
- ☐ My gender
- ☐ My confidence
- ☐ Recognition
- ☐ Publication record
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Colleagues
- ☐ My sexual orientation
- ☐ Career Partner / spouse
- ☐ Hard work
- ☐ Part-time / flexible working hours
- ☐ Other diversity characteristics
- ☐ My religion/beliefs
- ☐ My marriage/partnership
- ☐ Family/Caring responsibilities
- ☐ Personal motivation
- ☐ My age
- ☐ My disability

18. The greatest **obstacles** to my career have been (please select up to five):

Please select no more than 5 answer(s).

- ☐ Ability / aptitude
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ My pregnancy/maternity/paternity
- ☐ Workload
- ☐ Luck
- ☐ Support of line manager
- ☐ My ethnicity
- ☐ Personality
- ☐ My gender
- ☐ My confidence
- ☐ Recognition
- ☐ Publication record
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Colleagues
- ☐ My sexual orientation
- ☐ Career Partner / spouse
- ☐ Hard work
- ☐ Part-time / flexible working hours
- ☐ Other diversity characteristics
- ☐ My religion/beliefs
- ☐ My marriage/partnership
- ☐ Family/Caring responsibilities
- ☐ Personal motivation
- ☐ My age
- ☐ My disability

Workload Management and Worklife Balance

19. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
I feel that the allocation of workload in the School / Department is fair (i.e. teaching, administrative duties, pastoral care, laboratory work etc).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can manage my workload in the time available to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The School's / Department's workload model is transparent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
Meetings and events are seldom scheduled outside of core hours.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I make use of flexible working hours.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager is quite accommodating of family-related needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The School / Department actively promotes a healthy work-life balance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My career break was not detrimental to my career (if you have not taken a career break please leave this question blank).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During my career break, the level of contact with / from the School / Department was appropriate (if you have not taken a career break please leave this question blank).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
I am successful at balancing my paid work and my personal life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I face much conflict in balancing my work and personal life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Work-life Balance Culture

22. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
In this School / Department, staff who use work-family policies (e.g. job sharing, part-time work) are considered to be less serious about their careers than those who do not use these policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this School / Department, staff who work flexibly are less likely to advance their careers than those who do not work flexibly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff are regularly expected to put their jobs before their families.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To be viewed favourably by the School / Department, staff must constantly put their jobs ahead of their families or personal lives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff are often expected to take work home at night and weekends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get ahead, staff are expected to work more than 50 hours a week.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To turn down career opportunities for family-related reasons will seriously hurt one's career progress in this School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many staff are resentful when men in my School / Department take extended parental leave.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many staff are resentful when women in this School / Department take extended parental leave.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Gender Climate

23. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
My School / Department has a positive work environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My School / Department has a more positive work environment now than a few years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My School / Department has a positive work environment for women.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My School / Department has a more positive work environment for women now than a few years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neither men nor women receive preferential treatment in promotion in my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My School / Department promotes adequate collegial opportunities for women.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Men have preferential access to lab / research space and resources in my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Men do not receive preferential treatment in promotion in my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women are proportionately represented in senior positions in the School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women do not receive preferential treatment in promotion in my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In meetings in my School / Department staff pay just as much attention when women speak as men do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In meetings in my School / Department managers pay just as much attention when women speak as men do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women have preferential access to lab / research space and resources in my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

There is gender equity for leadership development in my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is appropriate representation of women on major committees in my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My School / Department provides a positive work environment for people with all diversity characteristics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. I perceive gender attitudes in the School / Department to be... (please select up to five words, and / or add some more words of your own, or a comment):

Please select no more than 5 answer(s).

- ☐ Respectful
- ☐ Authoritarian
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Egalitarian
- ☐ Open-minded
- ☐ Unfair
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Bullying
- ☐ Discriminatory
- ☐ Reverse discriminatory

- ☐ Excluding
- ☐ Proactive
- ☐ Accomodating
- ☐ Inclusive
- ☐ Vindictive
- ☐ Malicious
- ☐ Resentful
- ☐ Empowering
- ☐ Limiting

24.a. Additional words / comments

25. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
I will actively look for a job at another University or School / Department in the next year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am considering leaving my job and pursuing a different career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Athena SWAN

The next set of questions relate to your views on your University's / School's / Department's Athena SWAN Award and how it has been applied in your School / Department.

26. Please indicate whether prior to taking part in this survey you were aware that your Department / School holds an Athena SWAN award

- ☐ Yes, I was already aware (please answer all questions below)
- ☐ No, I was not aware (go to Q31)

27. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The Athena SWAN process and Award has...

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
...helped to improve my visibility with my School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...had a positive impact on the work environment of the School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...had a positive impact on work practices of the School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...helped me to think more broadly about gender issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...had a positive impact on my career development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...helped me to increase my self-confidence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...helped me to develop leadership skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...had a positive impact on my views on the advancement of women.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. I know who is the primary lead on Athena SWAN work within **my University**.

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

29. I know who is the primary lead on Athena SWAN work within **my School / Department**.

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

30. I have had the opportunity to be involved in the Athena SWAN process within **my School / Department**.

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

School and Research Group

31. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
I feel confident to put myself forward for positions of responsibility within the School / Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident to put myself forward for positions of responsibility within the University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident to put myself forward as a Principal Investigator on a grant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident to put myself forward for promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident to put myself forward for an additional increment / salary increase.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. Please indicate your level of agreement that the following formal and informal networks in the School / Department are useful to you.

	1, strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6, strongly agree
My research group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching teams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal social groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal social events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Committees/working groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women only/men only networks/groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Participant Characteristics

Please remember that any information that might specifically identify you will never be used when the project is written or talked about.

No one in your School / Department will have access to the individual data that you provide.

33. The name of your University / Higher Education Institution is...

34. The name of your School / Department is...

35. What is your age?

- ☐ <30
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ >59
- ☐ Prefer not to say

36. What is your gender?

- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

36.a. Do you consider yourself transgender?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

37. What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Other ethnic background
- ☐ Not known
- ☐ Prefer not to say

38. What is your main role within your School / Department?

- ☐ Research Associate
 - ☐ Research Fellow
 - ☐ Lecturer
 - ☐ Senior Lecturer
 - ☐ Reader
-
- ☐ Professor
 - ☐ Dean / Head of School / Head of Department
 - ☐ Associate Dean
 - ☐ Athena SWAN Champion
 - ☐ Other (please provide additional information below)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say

38.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

39. What is your basic University / HEI salary (full-time equivalent) before any deductions?

- ☐ Under £20k
- ☐ £20k-£30k
- ☐ £30k-40K
- ☐ £40k-£50k
- ☐ £50k-£60k
- ☐ £60k-£70k
- ☐ £70k-£80k
- ☐ £80k-£90k
- ☐ Over £100k
- ☐ Prefer not to say

40. Contract type (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Part-time

- ☐ Fixed-term contract
- ☐ Permanent position
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

41. Do you have an impairment, health condition or learning difference that has a substantial or long term impact on your ability to carry out day to day activities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to say

42. Do you have a religion or belief or do you belong to a religion, religious denomination or body?

- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Any other religion
- ☐ Prefer not to say

43. What is your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual or Straight
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

44. Do you have caring responsibilities for any children?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Primary carer of a child or children (under 18 years)
- ☐ Primary carer of a disabled child or children
- ☐ Primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years and over)
- ☐ Primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 years and over)
- ☐ Secondary carer (another person carries out main caring role)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Final page

Thank you for completing the survey. Your efforts are much appreciated.

10.3 Additional survey tables – sample description

Table 2 describes the respondents to each survey in terms of gender and level of Athena SWAN award held by the institution, department or research institute. Award level was derived by comparing the institution names and, where relevant, department names provided by respondents with information supplied by Advance HE. Because of the variability in institution and department names provided by respondents, it was not always possible to derive award level.

Table 2: Survey sample description

Survey	Gender		Award level				Total
	Female	Male	Bronze	Silver	Gold	No award	
Academic staff in departments with an Athena SWAN award	293	239	201	231	115	0	571
Admin/Support staff in departments with an Athena SWAN award	118	303	127	404	98	2	452
Institutional Champion in HEIs with an Athena SWAN award	27	3	26	7	0	0	38
Department/School champions in departments with an Athena SWAN award	27	2	19	8	4	0	33
Postgraduate Researchers in departments with an Athena SWAN award	261	150	197	129	65	11	428
Undergraduate students in departments with an Athena SWAN award	179	100	111	84	31	28	287
Academic/Research staff in Research Institutes with an Athena SWAN award	183	104	181	73	33	0	293
Admin/Support staff in Research Institutes with an Athena SWAN award	44	88	90	42	0	0	142
Institutional Champions in Research Institutes with an Athena SWAN award	2	0	2	0	1	0	4
Academic staff in departments without an Athena SWAN award	19	9	0	0	0	32	32
Admin/Support in departments without an Athena SWAN award	0	12	0	0	0	12	12
Department/School Athena SWAN/Equality & Diversity Champions in departments without an Athena SWAN award	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
All surveys	1,154	1,010	954	978	347	86	2,293

Source: Ortus Economic Research Ltd & Loughborough University. Row totals may not sum as non-binary and other genders are not shown, and award level is not always known.

Surveys were merged for analysis, where appropriate. For example, Champions surveys were merged for analysis of their views on the impacts of the Athena SWAN Charter.

10.4 Example case study discussion guide – Departmental Athena SWAN Champion

10.4.1 Introduction

- What is your role within this Department? *Probe here for what authority is associated with the position, especially in terms of accessing relevant data and in terms of ensuring that EDI becomes embedded in department policies*
- How long have you been at this Department/University?
- How long have you been in this post?
- What was your role in developing the Athena SWAN bid?
Did you volunteer for the AS role or was it allocated to you?
- How were individual departments invited to engage in this process?

10.4.2 Motivations and aspirations

- Who or what was the driving force for starting the process within the University?
Which Award came first and how did this influence / encourage future applications?
- What were the Department's motivations for becoming involved in Athena SWAN?
- What were the Department's aspirations for becoming involved?

10.4.3 Comparison with other award submission processes

- Does the university hold any other awards for its equality and diversity work/policies?
- Is Athena SWAN similar/different to other awards? *In what way?*
- How is the Athena SWAN award viewed by the department in terms of its standing and worth? *How is this evidenced?*
- Is it mentioned in published recruitment materials?
- How visible are the awards within this department?

10.4.4 Experiences of the process of submitting an application for a department level award

- How long did it take the department to develop the bid? *Probe here both for the general timescale of activity (6 months? A year? More?) as well as total person-hours required of the entire team delivering the award, with some indication of how that divided up among the team.*
- How did you find the process of applying for Athena SWAN? *What was your role?*
- With hindsight is there anything you would have done differently when applying that may have eased the process? (for the University? For specific Schools / Departments?)
- Did you receive support from Advance HE in completing your application?
What support? How useful was that support?
- What other support did you seek/receive from Advance HE or others?
- Is there any additional support that you would have liked?

10.4.5 Impact

- What can you tell us about progress that has been made towards delivering the Athena SWAN action plan within your School / Department?
Examples?
- In what ways does being awarded the Athena SWAN award benefit:
 - your School / Department?
 - Women in the School/Department?
 - Staff across the university regardless of gender?

- Are you aware of any policy changes that have resulted from your School / Department being involved in Athena SWAN?
- Are you aware of any policy changes that have resulted from your University being involved in Athena SWAN?
- What actions (e.g. change in policy documents, changed membership on committees?) have occurred as a result of engaging in the Athena SWAN award and process that have been aimed at reducing gender inequality ?
- What actions (e.g. change in policy documents, changed membership on committees?) have occurred as a result of engaging in the Athena SWAN award and process that have been aimed at reducing gender unequal representation ? Examples
- What actions (e.g. change in policy documents, changed membership on committees?) have occurred as a result of engaging in the Athena SWAN award and process that have been aimed at advancing women's careers ?
- Is there any evidence that these actions have impacted favourably on:
 - reducing gender inequality?
 - reducing gender unequal representation ?
 - advancing women's careers ?
- What other factors have impacted on:
 - reducing gender inequality ?
 - reducing gender unequal representation ?
 - advancing women's careers ?

10.4.6 Future Challenges

- Thinking of your Department - What are the main challenges that remain in terms of:
 - reducing gender inequality within your School / Department? and the University as a whole?
 - reducing gender unequal representation within your School / Department? and the University as a whole?
 - advancing women's careers within your School / Department? and the University as a whole?
- In what ways does the prevailing culture within this Department enhance/inhibit the advancement of women's careers ? Evidence?
- Do you intend to continue being involved with the ATHENA SWAN charter?
 - In what ways? (e.g. higher level award, more departmental awards)
 - Are there any new bids underway/planned?
 - Why? Why not?

10.5 Qualitative Applications Analysis – Examples of evidencing impact

10.5.1 Application #1 (Gold, Russell Group, Award held since 2009, STEMM)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Monitor PGR student data by gender	Numbers: PGR data are in line with national statistics for the subject but not PGT data.	High level of uptake.
Ensure all HR procedures are followed	Inconsistencies in applying policies and procedures	All procedures have been monitored and 100% staff training (unconscious bias) has been achieved.
Maximise use of information obtained from PDR activities both for academic staff and research assistants	Support career development through PDR	Statement of target - Aim to involve 80% staff by 2018
Annual work experience programme for year 12 students – selected to ensure gender balance.	Improve gender balance of students studying physics	44% of participants who went on to study physics were female, in contrast to national trends.
An industry club was set up to promote engagement with companies with interests in research and/or potential career opportunities. An annual postgraduate research symposium has enabled PG students to interact with club members.	Not specified	40 industrialists a year have attended and feedback is very positive from both PGs and club members.

10.5.2 Application #2 (Gold, Russell Group, Award held since 2013, STEMM)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Increase training in unconscious bias and staff and equality training	To increase female success in promotion at all levels	Training uptake level increased from 10% in 2014 to 87% in 2017 – data regarding promotion attached below.
Support and encouragement for female career progression	Career progression challenges	A range of data, which show an increase in progression figures but it is hard to see causality with this action and the one in the row above.
Introduction of teaching training and opportunities for postdoctoral staff	Career development for PGRs	Successful completion of in-house training course by 20 postdocs. Continuing impact of the activity.
Promotion of family- friendly policies. Production of literature	Raise awareness of family-friendly policies	Increased awareness of family friendly policy as per staff survey.

Action	To Address	Evidence
and fact sheets about family-friendly policies for staff.		
Established a new Staff Review & Development Group to oversee staff development and promotion	Previously, the process for being put forward for promotion with Institute support relied on a PDR discussion and a 'go' or 'no go' decision from the HoDs and Hol. This gave the PDR reviewer and the HoD a gatekeeper role.	Evidence of a sustained increase in the proportion of female applicants for promotion, drawn from internal data
Creation of a blog site	To celebrate and record outreach activities of students, postdoctoral researchers and academic staff in [HEI].	In the site's first year, [HEI] recorded 33 outreach activities from 48 different researchers (46% male; 54% female) and the site was viewed ~2300 times by over a 1000 different people.

10.5.3 Application #3 (Silver, Russell Group, Award held since 2013, STEMM)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Create a new position of Advisor for Early Career Researchers (ECR) and annual ECR Career Development Review	Feedback from researchers indicated they would benefit from support from a second senior academic in addition to their PI	High level of uptake—78% have had a review. (Note no evidence from feedback of if the reviews provided the support researchers wished for.)
Informal events held to support women in department	"Addressing the need identified in our 2013 application"	Events took place. (No evidence based on numbers of individuals coming to the events or from survey data indicating improvements in staff or student attitudes about culture.)
Briefing sessions about year 4	Historical data on progression from UG to PGR suggested this was a key issue	Increase from 38% to 78% of students having heard about year 4. "signs that female undergraduates are now more likely to stay on to the fourth year" "in 2016 we achieved a higher proportion of women in the fourth year." (This is a single year of data rather than a clear trend. The data overall is quite uneven.)
Dedicated research facilitation team to support grant applications.	Not indicated	"Women appear to be more likely to apply for research funding than men" (No indication of success rates or of a change having occurred as a result of the formation of the facilitation team).

Action	To Address	Evidence
Development of scaffolded problem sheets for first year, training for tutors on supporting students in transition to Uni, particularly women.	UG gender attainment gap	"2017 exam results showing evidence of improvement in female performance" (no time series of data is provided).
Virtual open day on PGR admissions	Low % PGR application rates from women	Feedback from applicants indicates that Virtual Open Day contributed to decision to apply. (no information on % of women PGR applicants)
Supported students to establish a society for women in mathematics, and going support via funding, facilities, publicity and staff	Not indicated	Society is ongoing (No data on attendance/membership or survey data to indicate a perceived improvement in culture.)
Two graduate students on stipends received maternity pay	Not indicated	Policy now to underwrite maternity pay for any funded student. (No data available yet on improved outcomes for PhD students taking maternity leave during their degree.)
Mathematics Good Practice Facebook page set up	Improving communications within department about EDI activities	150 followers, some posts reach up to 1300 people. (No evidence from surveys of improved knowledge in department about these activities, or even information about what % of department are followers.)
Unconscious Bias training	Address unconscious bias	86% of staff have been provided with information or training on unconscious bias. (No evidence of improved outcomes in recruitment or promotion).

10.5.4 Application #4 (Silver, STEMM, Non-Russell Group, Award held since 2013, STEMM)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Athena SWAN self-assessment process	Desire to raise awareness of Athena SWAN principles and embed them in culture of department	Increased proportion of staff agreeing with statement "I am familiar with the Athena SWAN scheme." In staff survey between 2014-15 and 2017-18. Increased survey response rate from 11% to 25%.
Workshops for PDRA's	Support for PDRA career development	Attendance data with good gender split. Positive feedback quotes, but no evidence in terms of outcomes in workshop areas (Fellowship or grant success, job search success)
Improvements to annual staff reviews	Support academic career development including promotion	Larger proportion of staff than in 2014-15 survey agree with statement, "I have had a useful Progress and Development Review within the last year." (25% response rate.

Action	To Address	Evidence
		No data in terms of improvements in promotion applications and outcomes.)
Develop department-based mentoring scheme	In 2014-15, <50% of respondents (11% response rate) agreed that they were familiar with mentoring opportunities within the department.	In most recent survey, >80% agreed with this (25% response rate. No link to improved outcomes such as success in grants, teaching evaluations, promotions or job searches for PDRA's).
A transparent Workload Model was developed.	In 2014-15 staff survey, <50% of respondents agreed that they understood how work was distributed in the department.	In most recent survey, this increased to about 70% (25% response rate. No link to questions about fairness or reasonableness of workload. No link to improved outcomes in terms of career progression.)

10.5.5 Application #5 (Silver, Non-Russell Group, Award held since 2015, STEMM)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Athena SWAN commitment statement on all job applications and overhaul of recruitment and advertising materials to make more attractive to women.	Not indicated, but presumably unequal staff recruitment by gender.	Not indicated
Change in PGR recruitment protocol at interview stage.	Gender inequality in PGR community	"Now almost gender parity in PGR community" (However, last 5 years of recruitment data show variability in % acceptances going to women with a two year dip in the middle. It also shows a decrease over time in proportion of applications from women leading to acceptances, dropping steadily from 92% to 27% as application rates increase. Proportion of applications from men leading to acceptances varied over the same time, but was consistently below the rate for women in all years. So the link to changes in interviews is unclear.)
Workshop "Communicating your expert work with impact"	Not indicated	Two positive comments from feedback survey included (No link to outcomes or to overall feedback results, no indication of genders)
Workshop, "Making Professor"	Not indicated, but presumably improving success at promotion	"12% increase in number of feedback respondents with a clear progression plan post-workshop." (No link to promotion applications or outcomes. Attendance by 1F, 13M and 3 individuals who preferred not to give gender.)

Action	To Address	Evidence
School-specific appraiser/appraisee training offered to all staff.	Not indicated	96% attendance (no link to improved career progression, training feedback or review experiences, no gender breakdown).
Further support for [trust name] and two more Fellowships half-sponsored	Not indicated, but presumably to improve representation by women at Researcher level.	Two fellowships—increases female representation amongst researchers.
Supported development of UG societies: Chemical Society and Biochemical Society	Not indicated	Activities of the society listed, but not attendance, feedback or outcomes.

10.5.6 Application #6 (Silver, Russell Group, Award held since 2013, STEMM)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Academic Development Fund	Maintain academic trajectory during/after maternity leave	Six awards made (but no link to career outcomes for these individuals)
New policy to guarantee return to full-time working for staff who go part-time	Not indicated	Take-up by two women members of staff (not clear if this means reduction or return taken up, no link made to career outcomes for these individuals).
New policy to extend fixed term contracts to cover maternity leave.	Not indicated	Not indicated
Creation of [HEI] Female Leaders Network	Not indicated	680 members (take-up data)
Development of a breast-feeding room	Improve culture to be more family-friendly	Not specifically indicated but it is implied that the room has been created
Increase role of line manager in supporting promotion applications	Not indicated	Twice as many women as men have applied for promotion
Established an Early PI Career Development Programme	“For non-clinical academics, early career researchers, their progression to new academic group leader was testing.”	Proportion of School females attending has increased from 38% to 87% over three years (data indicates corresponding decreases in males attending).

10.5.7 Application #7 (Silver Institution, non-Russell Group, Award held since 2010)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Design and delivery of unconscious bias training	Common issue related to unconscious bias and its influence on decision making (e.g. recruitment, promotions)	High level of take up, with 90% of staff now having undergone the training.
A series of actions related to pay have been implemented (e.g. ensuring consistency of pay for successful candidates with those already in each grade, salaries for a very small number of previously promoted/appointed female professors and readers were increased to improve alignment with peers)	Gender pay gap evident at Professorial grade (pay for males was 12% higher)	Latest pay data indicates that the gap has been reduced to 8%.
Introduction of a new academic promotions framework for Teaching and Clinical staff that supports promotion to professorial level.	Gender representation throughout the hierarchy	Since 2017, 14 women and 9 men have been promoted on this framework.
Introduction of the [HEI] Women's Leadership Programme in 2015	Developing leadership skills and encouraging promotion for women	54% of A&R staff who completed the programme have since been promoted.
Ensure all applicants for promotion have a senior mentor. Delivery of tailored workshops delivered by Executive staff for all those (F&M) considering making an application for promotion.	Promotion rates for academic and research staff	100% success rate for women applying for lectureships and professorial positions
Improve the words and imagery used in recruitment materials (along with unconscious bias training)	Potential gender bias in recruitment adverts (content and placement) and recruitment processes	Applications from women for PDRA positions increased from 30% to 39% between 2014 and 2017.
Staff are also encouraged to apply for HEA fellowships	Support career progression through development and training	The proportion of successful applicants that are female has increased from 57% to 61%. 71% of Principal Fellowships have been awarded to women.
Developed the [HEI] Women's Leadership Programme (2015 Action), and 21 A&R staff have attended this	Representation of women at highest levels of academic and research staff	45% of participants being promoted since completion
Implementation of women's leadership programmes	Representation of women at highest levels of professional and support staff	24 staff have completed women's leadership programmes and 42% of these have since been promoted

Action	To Address	Evidence
Changes to the constitution of the University's Council	Gender representation in senior leadership positions	The proportion of women on Council has increased from 26% to 47%
Launched the Associate Dean & Subject Group Head Leadership Programme in 2017	Internal progression to higher grades	Ten female and seven male staff members have completed the programme. Each School has appointed Deputy Deans; two female and three males have been appointed so far, improving gender balance in SMTs

10.5.8 Application #8 (Silver Institution, Russell Group, Award held since 2009)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Panel Chairs and all involved in recruitment required to complete E&D online training. In 2017 PVCI informed Heads of Schools that completion needed to improve. Monthly reports are sent to each Department with PVCI following up where progress was slow.	To embed E&D Principles in recruitment	The overall E&D online training completion rate is >75%, representing a 115% increase since 2014
Mandating induction for Postdocs.	Not clear from the application, other actions point to improving the consistency of the induction process.	>70% of Postdoctoral researchers have attended a Postdoc-specific Induction.
A package of 6 actions listed (a couple listed here as examples) - a greater focus on the HoD reviewing readiness for promotion, including the launch of specific Staff Review and Development (SRD - or appraisal) guidance for academic staff. Strengthened guidance on additional considerations, where applicants can include caring responsibilities and periods of caring leave to be considered by promotions committees.	In previous years women have been less likely to apply for promotion	Several points of evidence listed including - In 2017, more women applied for promotion compared to the previous three years, especially for Professorships. A record 8.6% (66) of women in the eligible pool applied for promotion in 2017 compared to 3.9% in 2016. Female promotion success rates have been higher than males in three of the last four years, with a particularly large difference of 12% in 2017 (in previous years, success rates for M & F matched). In 2017 there was an 83% success rate for female applicants for Professorships

Action	To Address	Evidence
		compared with 55-70% from 2013-2016 inclusive.
SAP Open Fora, hosted by PVCI, have been delivered twice a year	A need to improve transparency and dispel misconceptions about the promotions process and to encourage staff to apply.	Since 2014, 7 SAP Fora have been held with >250 attendees (65%F).
Introduction of SAP CV Mentoring Scheme. CV and application is reviewed by an experienced academic before it is submitted. An online system was introduced in 2016.	To encourage and support more female academics to apply for promotion.	In 2016-17 the SAP CV Scheme supported 37 mentees (81%F) up from 23 in 2015-16 (70%F).
A Leadership Competency Framework, was incorporated within Senior Leadership Programmes (SLP), which has been redeveloped with a 3-level structure.	To develop further aspiring senior leaders and those already in post.	There have been 107 academic SLP participants since 2014 (40%F). Currently 5F (11.6%) and 6M (9.4%) have been promoted (most reaching grade 12).
Chemistry initiated a bespoke leadership programme	Issues over PI management of students and Postdocs	Lower reported management issues, benefiting women in particular.
Briefings were developed to support SAP/SRP in 2015-16	To increase engagement with appraisals	Major progress in STEMM Departments where Athena SWAN work has focused on appraisal with a 45% increase in female uptake and 61% increase in male uptake since 2014.
The creation of a new Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPdA) which employs 7FTE at three Postdoc Centres and is dedicated to advocating on behalf of Postdocs. Support provided includes Mandatory Postdoc induction (70% uptake), Successful Senior Leadership Mentoring Initiative pilot being rolled-out University-wide.	More support for PostDocs	Several examples of evidence given including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 85% of Postdocs are represented to senior management on departmental committees • Successful Postdoc mentoring scheme with 64%F mentees. Mentoring model being piloted elsewhere in the University • Between 2012 and 2015, the number of careers appointments delivered to Postdocs increased by 70% • increasing numbers of female Postdocs attend Postdoc career events

Action	To Address	Evidence
OPdA has supported initiatives with Departmental Postdoc committees and PdOC Society	To enhance the postdoc experience	Over 85% of Postdocs are now represented to senior management via a committee in their department or school.
OPdA has organised events connecting Postdocs to career and training opportunities.	To prepare women for their next career stage.	In 2016 47% of attendees were female compared to 42% of the Postdoc population,
Pilot of a Senior Leadership Mentoring Initiative	Provide support for Academic career progression	The pilot comprised 14 partnerships. 40% mentees and 33% mentors were women. The feedback from the pilot has been unanimously positive and the initiative will be rolled out over the next academic year, continuing on an annual basis.
Pilot initiative was launched in May 2017 in collaboration with My Family Care (MFC) which gives employees access to emergency childcare, school holiday cover and back-up adult and elder care.	Not specified	As at November 2017, 419 staff (68%F) have registered with MFC, with 44 backup care sessions booked. Two Schools and one department have opted to fund two caring sessions/per year/per employee as part of the pilot. A 6-month survey of MFC users 90% said the service relieved stress and offered peace of mind, 90% said they would use the service again.
Departments have been reminded of the value of diverse leadership and work to encourage staff from underrepresented groups to consider roles as they become vacant.	To improve gender balance of leadership	Currently, one of the six Heads of School (SBS) and 11 of 58 Heads of Departments are female (16.7%F and 18.9%F respectively) compared to 2014 where 100% of Heads of School were men.

10.5.9 Application #9 (Silver Institution, non-Russell Group, Award held since 2009)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Provided focused leadership training for females	Not specified	65F have completed Aurora training in the past 3 years and 41 internal Leadership training.
Transformed the promotion processes and career map to reflect contributions to leadership, engagement and citizenship as well as teaching and research	Not specified	2017/18 promotion round for chair saw 17/32 (53%) applications for Chair from females compared to 3 (14%) in 2016/17.

Action	To Address	Evidence
A list of 12 actions are listed including Ensuring job specifications adhere to standardised, objective criteria, including EDI information and logos e.g. Athena SWAN, Stonewall, Race Equality Charter, Disability Confident on all job descriptions and adverts, targeted posting of adverts for vacancies in areas with a gender imbalance e.g. on WISE.	Improve recruitment processes by embedding gender equality for women (and men in underrepresented disciplines)	2017 survey 87% (87%M: 89%F) of staff felt the University acts fairly, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation with regards to recruitment.
A list of 6 actions relating to promotions, including the development of a detailed Academic Career Map illustrating expected contributions and achievements across five domains (research, teaching, leadership, citizenship and engagement), for all grades and career paths, the introduction of personal emails to all staff notifying them of the details of the annual promotions round signposting them to our 'Pay and Reward' site, introduction a range of 'career pathways' that can be taken.	Not specified	An increase from 36% of G10 promotion applications from females in 2012/13 to 53% in 2018, successful applications for promotion to Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer have increased with 93% of female applications being successful, compared to 59% of applications from male staff.
Established a task and finish group in 2015 to review all appraisal processes and piloted a new appraisal process in two academic departments: Performance Development Discussion (PDD) was subsequently launched in May 2016.	Increase number of appraisals	Survey 2017 (academic staff): 82% (78%F, 85%M) answered YES to the question 'have you had a performance development discussion in the last 12 months', compared to 2016 survey showed that only 59% (60%F, 60%M) of colleagues had an appraisal in the preceding 12 months.
Established a fund for carers to pay for childcare or other caring responsibilities whilst attending conferences or work-related training.	Not specified	The fund has been accessed 16 times: 14/15- accessed 6 times, 15/16- accessed 5 times, 16/17- accessed 5 times.
Proactively supported female members of staff in gaining membership of senior management committees	Not specified	Both ULT (the most senior committee) and UEB (the larger committee comprising all HoDs and services and ULT) have increased the proportion of females on their committees. ULT: 0% (2014/15) to 33% (2016/17), UEB: 19% female membership (2014/15) to 42% (2016/17)

10.5.10 Application #10 (Silver Institution, Russell Group, Award held since 2010)

Action	To Address	Evidence
Having both the EPVC and Director of Athena SWAN on the steering group, direct communication to senior management and fast resolution to questions raised became possible.	Previously Athena SWAN activity at local level was not easily shared throughout the institution and actions requiring resolution by senior management did not have a champion.	Additional resources provided to benefit the Athena SWAN agenda (e.g. resourcing a fulltime administrator for gender/equalities data provision) and provided support for all Athena SWAN leads and SATs.
Increased leadership training for women and improvements to processes around promotion	Females were under-represented at senior level	List of six achievements including, an increase in the proportion of female professors from 18% to 24%, promoted 31 women to chairs and 30 to readerships, have doubled female clinical professors (from 7% to 14%), and appointed the first two female chairs on the newly developed teaching and scholarship pathway.
Reviewed and communicated promotion criteria and provided positive messages about the value the institution placed on having excellent teachers	Teaching and scholarship roles were much more likely to be held by women throughout the university and career progression perceived as difficult.	Led to an increase in men recruited into this career path and the progression of women already on this path to senior grades in Teaching & Research roles.
The training and development staff reviewed and enhanced the induction processes	A need to improve the focus of inductions after staff feedback	Increase from 75% to 87% those highly satisfied or satisfied.
List of 8 actions taking relating to promotions, including promotion panel members are representative of the academic workforce, developed a range of career paths reflecting type of academic roles, provision of Career and CV mentoring, Unconscious Bias training for panel members.	Reticence on the part of women to apply for promotion, and the 2013 staff survey showed concerns about transparency of the promotions process.	Number of pieces of evidence cited including doubling of female clinical professors, 31 women promoted to Chairs and 30 to Readerships.
Ran a pilot scheme - "Maternity mentors".	Consultation identified that many women would welcome local informal contacts for guidance.	Feedback has been extremely positive, and the scheme will be rolled out across the university.
Recruitment and promotion of more women to senior roles	Need to improve gender balance of the University's senior management committees.	Council had 24% female membership and now has 30%. SEG was 23% female and is now 45%.

Changed how Senate membership is structured and introduced role/grade specific elections in 2013, (rather than having all professors and resulting gender imbalance).	Gender imbalance on Senate	Currently Senate has 29 women and 45 men
The University has resourced a Gender Equality Officer (full-time) and a Director of Athena SWAN (0.4 FTE) to provide support to departments.	Not specified	The achievement of Athena SWAN awards in all STEMM areas (5 Silver and 5 Bronze awards)