Transformed UK Athena Swan Charter: Information pack for Research Institutes

Contents

Welcome

I am delighted to share this information pack with you. Gender equality remains a priority, for the sector, for Advance HE, and for me personally. The transformed UK Athena Swan Charter takes forward the recommendations of the Independent Review established by Advance HE, significantly enhancing the Charter to bring about:

+ a paradigm shift that champions institutional autonomy and flexibility

+ a reduction in administrative burden, including a halving of data requirements

+ a more developmental and supporting approach from Advance HE.

This is a very significant step in advancing gender equality, ensuring that the Charter centres the key dimension of positive and supportive cultures.

We have also reviewed this guidance to ensure that members undertaking the charter remain on solid legal footing. The guidance clearly relates to UK equality legislative requirements, whilst supporting members to achieve their broader ambitions in relation to gender equality in a manner that is legally compliant.

Inclusivity is central to the Charter, which recognizes that advancing gender equality encompasses addressing inequalities experienced due to sex, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity, as well as broader equality work relating to gender identity, trans inclusion and caring responsibilities, as well as addressing intersectional inequalities.

I am grateful for the very positive part you have played in helping to shape these important enhancements. These documents will guide you through the changes.

We will continue to work with the Athena Swan Governance Committee and the higher education sector as a whole to ensure the Charter remains current and relevant, and meets the needs of all to drive forward gender equality in higher education and research institutes.

Alison Johns

Chief Executive, Advance HE

Introduction

Athena Swan UK is a sector-led charter that universities and research institutes voluntarily participate in to advance gender equality for staff and students. The Charter supports institutions to undertake an assessment of their context, identify priority issues, and design and implement actions to advance gender equality autonomously and flexibly. Advance HE provides and manages the Charter infrastructure on behalf of the sector and our members. The Charter is a framework used across the globe to promote gender equality in higher education and research. Established in the UK in 2005 by the sector to recognise commitment to advance the careers of academic women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine (STEMM), the charter is now being used around the world to address gender inequality more broadly. Over time the sector has asked that the Charter be more inclusive, which has seen it expand to include all disciplines, and professional staff, and to address the inclusion of trans people and the underrepresentation of men where appropriate.

In June 2021, the transformed UK Athena Swan Charter was launched based on recommendations from an Independent Review and consultation with the sector, including through its Athena Swan Governance Committee.

In this document, participants will find all the information and materials you need to apply for a University award under the transformed Athena Swan Charter. This includes:

+ the Charter Principles, which underpin Athena Swan and set out shared goals for gender equality

+ the Award Criteria, providing clear and transparent descriptions of each level of award

+ the application materials, including guidance on application forms, data requirements, word limits and consultation word limits, consultation, and the departmental culture survey

+ a glossary of key terms.

Advance HE is committed to supporting all Athena Swan participants to progress their gender equality goals, and we will provide additional developmental guidance and resources in the comingmonths.

For more information and access to our other Charter services and support, please visit our website. We look forward to working with you.

Gender equality and the supporting legal frameworks in the UK

The Athena Swan Charter's strength rests in being a flexible, sector-led framework for institutions to develop their own plans and initiatives to create inclusive teaching and research environments. Institutions participating in the Charter are encouraged to adopt approaches that work in their contexts. It is also important for institutions to understand the connection between Charter activities and their broader legal or regulatory obligations.

Terminology

Athena Swan recognises that sex and gender are different. Please see the Glossary for further definitions of the terminology used in this guidance. For the purposes of Athena Swan guidance, 'gender equality' is used as an umbrella term and covers the legal protections relating to sex, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity, as well as broader equality work relating to gender identity, trans inclusion and caring responsibilities. This is in keeping with a key recommendation of the Independent Review that the sector want the Charter to recognise gender as a spectrum. Where appropriate, the guidance distinguishes between sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, gender identity, trans status, and caring responsibilities.

Equality law and institutions' responsibilities

Individuals and groups across the UK are protected from discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Public sector bodies (including most higher education institutions) have statutory responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations between different people. In England, Scotland, and Wales these laws and the associated responsibilities for public bodies are within the Equality Act 2010 and the specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In Northern Ireland, there are several relevant pieces of legislation, most notably Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, and the Fair Employment & Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

When engaging with the Athena Swan Charter, institutions will undertake activities that can support them in their work to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including:

+ collecting equality monitoring data for staff and students

+ developing targeted initiatives and actions to advance equality and inclusion. This includes positive action where justified and focused on protected characteristics

+ evaluating progress and success of actions in relation to equality and inclusion outcomes.

For more information on the relevant legislation, please see [the Equality and Human Rights Commission website](#) for those working in England, Scotland and Wales and [the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland website](#) for those working in Northern Ireland.

Freedom of speech and academic freedom

Free speech and academic freedom are core values of the higher education sector which work in tandem with other laws and rights. Institutions have a responsibility to balance their free speech duty with their responsibilities to safeguard the dignity and respect of students and staff, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and other related legislation mentioned above.

Freedom of expression is protected in all UK nations through the Human Rights Act 1998. Additionally, in England and Wales, laws and associated responsibilities relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom are enshrined in the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 and the Education Act 1994, the last of which has elements relevant to Scotland. Scottish institutions can find additional responsibilities under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 and in Northern Ireland, the Education (Academic Tenure) (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.

An institution's Athena Swan activity complements their duties and goals relating to freedom of speech as it helps promote the voices of all, including those who may have previously lacked the opportunity to engage.

The Athena Swan Charter Principles and senior leaders' commitment

Introduction to the Charter Principles

The first, and arguably most important, aspect of the Athena Swan Charter are the Charter Principles. These are the commitments that underpin Athena Swan and set out shared goals for gender equality that all participants agree to support. These Principles act as the foundation for the transformed Charter, with all other elements – including criteria, application and assessment – aligned to the commitments and values within it.

The updated Charter Principles have been revised to:

+ empower participants to join a global community through a shared commitment to tackle genderinequality and shared principles that align with local gender equality goals

+ support greater inclusivity for people of all gender identities and people facing intersectional inequalities

+ ensure that participating institutions, departments and directorates recognise and reward staff

+ working on gender equality.

The Principles of the Athena Swan Charter articulate positive statements that participants demonstrate their support for. Support for these Principles underpins the Athena Swan Awards, which act as a framework for sustainable change through which participants enhance their inclusivityand performance, with a particular focus on gender equality. The Awards recognise commitment and achievement in upholding the Principles and driving positive change.

Institutions, departments, and directorates across the UK can use the Charter Principles to help focus and structure their gender equality work and to highlight their ongoing commitment to gender equality to their staff, students and wider community.

Based on members' feedback, in August 2022 we revised the wording of two principles. These changes do not alter the intent of the principles but aim to give members confidence that Athena Swan is compatible with their wider obligations to protect and promote freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Guidance for participants

Any university, department or directorate interested in participating in the transformed AthenaSwan Charter should first consider the Principles, and together with their senior leadership teams and communities decide if they can agree to these commitments.

Under the transformed Charter, each applying unit will commit to the principles; for example,the Vice-Chancellor will commit to the Principles on behalf of the university and the Head ofDepartment will also commit to the Principles on behalf of a departmental applicant in that university.

Any university intending to apply for an Athena Swan Award will need to first submit confirmation from the Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) that they commit to the Charter Principles. You can find a template letter on our website and on Connect here and once confirmed, you will receive a co-signed certificate which you can use to help promote your gender equality work to your community. You can commit to the Principles at any time prior to submitting your application.

Athena Swan Principles

In committing to the principles of the Athena Swan Charter, we recognise that we join a global community with a shared goal of addressing gender inequalities and embedding inclusive cultures.

Each institution, research institute, department and directorate has different gender equality challenges and development priorities. These priorities are determined by an understanding of the local evidence-base and national and global gender equality issues.

In determining our priorities and interventions, we commit to:

1. adopting robust, transparent and accountable processes for gender equality work, including:

    a. embedding diversity, equity and inclusion in our culture, decision-making and partnerships, andholding ourselves and others in our institution/institute/department/directorate accountable

    b. undertaking evidence-based, transparent self-assessment processes to direct our prioritiesand interventions for gender equality, and evaluating our progress to inform our continuous development

    c. ensuring that gender equality work is distributed appropriately, is recognised and properly rewarded

2. addressing structural inequalities and social injustices that manifest as differential experiences and outcomes for staff and students

3. tackling behaviours and cultures that detract from the safety and collegiality of our work and study environments, including not tolerating gender-based violence, discrimination, bullying, harassment or exploitation

4. understanding and addressing intersectional inequalities

5. recognising that individuals can determine their own gender identity, and tackling the specific issues faced by trans and non-binary people

6. examining gendered occupational segregation, and elevating the status, voice and career

7. opportunities of any identified under-valued and at-risk groups

8. mitigating the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks, and supporting

9. flexibility and the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'

10. mitigating the gendered impact of short-term and casual contracts for staff seeking sustainable careers.

The Athena Swan award criteria

Introduction to the Award Criteria

The Athena Swan Charter provides a framework which supports participants to make sustainable change toward gender equality, with Awards recognising participants' commitment and achievement along this journey. The Awards build on the Charter Principles and are defined with a set of clear and transparent Award Criteria.

The updated Award Criteria:

+ provide greater clarity and transparency on the expectations at each award level and whatapplicants must do to meet the award criteria

+ embed greater flexibility for applicants to focus on what is important within their context

+ support greater transparency and consistency of decision making at assessment.

Over the following pages you will find the details of the Award Criteria at each level and what applicants demonstrate for each criterion when applying. The Criteria are designedto be flexible and developmental, supporting applicants through a journey of self-reflection, action and learning from success.

Transparent and consistent

These Award Criteria form the basis of how your award application will be assessed. The peer review panels that assess your application are made up of experts from across the sector who have been rigorously trained using the same detail and definitions provided over the coming pages, to ensure transparency and a shared understanding for both applicants and Reviewers. For more information about how your application is assessed, please see our website and Connect.

Athena Swan Award Criteria

	High-level award criteria	Bronze	Bronze Renewal	Silver	Silver Renewal	Gold	Gold Renewal
A	Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	Evidence-based recognition ofthe key issues facing the applicant	X	X	X	X	X	X
C	Action plan to address identified key issues	X	X	X	X	X	X
D	Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previouslyidentified priorities		X	X	X	X	X
E	Evidence of success addressinggender inequality			X		X	
F	Evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve					X	

Expectations underpinning the Athena Swan award criteria

Bronze applicants - Research Institute

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality

+ evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
+ clear governance structure for EDI
+ formal processes for recognition and reward of EDI work
+ self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students
+ processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies
+ processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies to include and support staff and students of all gender identities.

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

+ collected and analysed mandatory data
+ evaluated their policies
+ evaluated their approach to exploring intersectional inequalities[1]
+ evaluated the inclusivity of their culture for staff and students of all gender identities
+ evaluated practices and policies for the inclusion and support of staff and students of all gender identities
+ identified and justified key priorities.

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

+ SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas
+ actions which will enable the applicant to evaluate intersectional inequalities in the future.

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[1] No quantitative or demographic data is required for this evaluation

Bronze Renewal applicants – Research Institute

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality

+ evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
+ self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students.

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

+ collected and analysed mandatory data
+ evaluated their progress
+ identified and justified key priorities.

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

+ SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas.

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

+ the previous Bronze action plan is underway or completed.

Silver applicants – Research Institute

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

+ evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
+ clear governance structure for EDI
+ formal processes for recognition and reward of EDI work
+ self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students
+ processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies, including evaluation forintersectional inequalities
+ processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies to include and support staff and students of all gender identities.

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

+ collected and analysed mandatory data, including intersectional analysis wherever possible
+ evaluated their policies
+ evaluated intersectional inequalities
+ evaluated the inclusivity of their culture for staff and students of all gender identities
+ evaluated practices and policies for the inclusion and support of staff and students of all gender identities
+ + identified and justified key priorities.

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

+ SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas
+ actions which address intersectional inequalities as identified through the applicant's priority areas, if relevant.

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

+ the previous Bronze action plan is completed or superseded.

Criterion E: Evidence of success addressing gender inequality

+ evidence of desired outcome/improvement against at least two priorities
+ policies are considered to be effective and appropriate by staff/students, and/or, evidence of thepositive impact of policies on staff/students.

Silver renewal applicants – Research Institute

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

+ evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
+ self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students.

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

+ collected and analysed mandatory data
+ evaluated their progress
+ identified and justified key priorities.

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

+ SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas.

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

+ the previous Silver action plan is underway or completed.

Gold applicants – Research Institute

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

+ evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
+ clear governance structure for EDI
+ formal processes for recognition and reward of EDI work
+ self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students
+ processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies, including evaluation for intersectional inequalities
+ processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies to include and support staff and students of all gender identities.

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

+ collected and analysed mandatory data, including intersectional analysis wherever possible
+ evaluated their policies
+ evaluated intersectional inequalities
+ evaluated the inclusivity of their culture for staff and students of all gender identities
+ evaluated practices and policies for the inclusion and support of staff and students of all gender identities
+ identified and justified key priorities.

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

+ SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas
+ actions which address intersectional inequalities as identified through the applicant's priority areas, if relevant.

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

+ the previous Silver action plan is completed or superseded.

Criterion E: Evidence of success addressing gender inequality

+ evidence of desired outcome/improvement against at least three priorities
+ evidence of longitudinal improvement, over the course of more than one award cycle
+ policies are considered to be effective and appropriate by staff/students, and/or, evidence of the positive impact of policies on staff/students.

Criterion F: Evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve

+ evidence of how the applicant continually monitors and updates their policies and practice in order toremain innovative, intersectional, and inclusive of people of all gender identities, providing (where possible) examples of innovation
+ evidence that through their activity, good practice has been taken up by other institutions/sectors.

Gold Renewal applicants – Research Institute

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

+ evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
+ self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students.

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

+ collected and analysed mandatory data
+ evaluated their progress
+ identified and justified key priorities.

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

+ SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas.

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

+ the previous Gold action plan is underway or completed.

Athena Swan application materials

Introduction to the award application materials

Participants seeking recognition through Charter Awards of their commitment to and achievements in gender equality will submit an application for assessment by peer-review.

Over the following pages you will find guidance to help you prepare for your application, including:

+   details of the application forms and guidance to help you answer the application questions

+   guidance on the mandatory data requirements

+   guidance relating to word limits

+   guidance relating to consultation.

The application materials are designed to be flexible and developmental, supporting applicants' self-assessment and future gender equality work, with clear alignment to the Award Criteria so that applicants and Reviewers alike are confident about what is required at each level and why.

The updated application materials:

+   reduce the administrative burden through streamlined, shorter application forms and data requirements which have been more than halved

+   enable greater flexibility for applicants to focus on their key priorities

+   provide greater clarity and transparent alignment to the Award Criteria

+   empower applicants to focus on the assessment of culture

+   embed greater inclusivity for all staff types, people of all gender identities and people facing intersectional inequalities.

+   You can find editable versions of the application forms on our website.

We're here to help

As you prepare to submit your application, if you encounter any challenges remember that Advance HE is here to help. We have a wealth of strategic and operational experience in gender equality and can also connect you with a vast network of universities, research institutes, departments and directorates globally who have faced similar challenges in their own gender equality journeys. Get in touch!

Bronze research institute application form

Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to genderequality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

+ structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work

Recommended word count: 3000 words

1. **Letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute**

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute.

Guidance

Please highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the research institute relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter is an opportunity to evidence the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the research institute (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and how the research institute's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the research institute.

2. **Description of the research institute and its context**

Please provide an introduction to the research institute.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of the research institute, including a description of the contextual factors that are particular to the research institute; for example, location, research focus, funding relationships, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institute's structure, relationship with sub-units or community partners). If relevant, outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections so there is no need to include it this section.

3. **Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work**

Please provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and resources.

Guidance

Please describe the research institute's key management and committee structures, and the formal structures in place to carry out and support the research institute's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. Please describe the formal processes in place to distribute, recognise and reward EDI work.

Please provide an overview of how EDI work is supported by and embedded within the governance structure of the research institute. Detail should be provided about how the research institute supports gender equality activity in sub-units across the institute where relevant (such as research departments and professional, technical and operational directorates).

Please explain how EDI work (including work relating to Athena Swan) is distributed, accounted for, recognised and rewarded; for example, in how workload is allocated, at appraisal, and/or through promotions and progression pathways.

4. **Development, evaluation and effectiveness of policies**

Please describe the processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of how the research institute ensures that policies are fit-for-purpose, how they are evaluated, and how their effectiveness and impactare assessed.

Please include an overview of any consultative approaches (eg. with staff, students – ifrelevant – or external stakeholders) which are used to inform these processes. Please explain how the research institute ensures that policies support an inclusive culture and do not negatively impact on staff or students due to sex, pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibilities, gender identity, gender reassignment or trans status, describing the use of Equality Impact Assessment where relevant.

5. **Athena Swan self-assessment process**

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the research institute's future gender equality work.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work, including a table briefly describing SAT members' professional/student role in the research institute and their role in the SAT. The SAT's composition should reflect the profile of the research institute in relation to staff type, grades and roles.

Where possible, SAT membership should include a diverse range of people in relation to sex, trans status, gender identity and caring responsibilities, including those experiencing intersectional inequalities. Please explain how the process for recruiting SAT members has considered the diversity of the research institute. Research institutes are not required to provide data on the characteristics of individual SAT members.

In constituting and describing their SAT, research institutes are reminded to be mindful of individuals' privacy and confidentiality, that an undue burden of work or emotional labour is not placed on those impacted negatively by existing structures, policies and cultures and that the work of the SAT members is appropriately recognized and rewarded (see section 1.3).

Please include a summary of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff (and students if relevant). Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by sex. If the SAT have collected additional demographic information on consultation respondents, disaggregation of consultation response rates by other characteristics can be provided, where this is appropriate, and confidentiality can be assured.

Applicants should reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application, where relevant.

Please also include an overview of how the research institute plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated (where appropriate).

Section 2: An assessment of the research institute's gender equality context

In Section 2 applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion B:

+ evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant

Recommended word count: 3500 words

1. **Culture, inclusion and belonging**

Please describe how the research institute ensures their culture and practices support inclusion and belonging.

Guidance

Please outline key findings from the research institute's evaluation of its culture as it relates to gender equality and inclusion. This could include the research institute's values, traditions, leadership, practices and behaviours and other formal and informal structures and interactions that characterise the working environment of the research institute. Please reflect on how the research institute actively considers gender equality and inclusivity within their culture, including how instances of negative practices or behaviours are addressed, such as bullying and harassment. Please draw, where appropriate, on data presented in Appendices 1-2.

Please reflect on the research institute's current understanding of and capacity to identify and address intersectional inequalities for staff (and students, where relevant), drawing on the research institute's cultural, qualitative and quantitative evidence. If existing infrastructures and evidence-bases do not support the evaluation of intersectional inequalities, please include actions in the action plan that will support the research institute to evaluate and address intersectional inequalities in the next award cycle. The research institute can choose which intersectional characteristics to focus on providing the evaluation of intersectional inequalities is relevant to the understanding of gender equality. The choice of intersecting characteristics should be evidence-based, informed by the research institute's specific context and/or regional or national data and trends.

Please evaluate the ways in which the research institute actively strives (or could in future, through action) for the inclusion of trans and non-binary people within the research institute's culture and practices. The provision of quantitative data is not required. If applicants choose to draw on quantitative data and the data indicate no or low rates of disclosure from eg. trans or non-binary people, applicants should still consider how to embed inclusive practices and approaches within culture and activity and are encouraged to use knowledge of wider good practice to do this.

Please evaluate the research institute's approach to ensuring culture and practices are inclusive and supportive of people with caring responsibilities, and how the research institute strives (or could in future, through action) to mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the research institute supports flexibility for staff (and students, where relevant) and supports the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.

2. **Key priorities for future action**

Please describe the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Please reflect on the evaluation in previous sections (including of policies and culture), and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality. Please draw on analysis of the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant). Please analyse data by sex as a minimum and present data tables and/or charts in Appendices 1-2.

Please reflect on insights from the data analysis particularly as these relate to gender equality (eg. the representation and progression of people of a particular sex, or trans or non-binary status). Please consider any trends or issues across job families, contract types or functions, grades, or sub-units where relevant and possible (such as research departments and professional, technical and operational directorates). Please consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. Please also consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the identification of the research institute's key issues, please identify between four and eight key priorities that the research institute seeks to address with future action. Please ensure key priorities are appropriate to the research institute's context and justified based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Please consider how the priorities address intersectional inequalities.

If applicable, applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, please explain the rationale for these changes.

Please ensure priorities are specific and detailed, allowing the research institute to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple SMART actions. Please cross-reference the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 3: Future action plan

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

+ an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

1. **Action plan**

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

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Guidance

Based on the research institute's evidence base and self-assessment, please present an action plan that addresses the research institute's key issues and priorities. Please ensure the plan covers ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross-references the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/ position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant). Please provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues.

Applicants will need to assure themselves that their planned actions are within the law, including when making use of positive action measures (the Equality and Human Rights Commission provide further guidance for those working in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland offer guidance for those working in Northern Ireland.)

While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, please ensure these actions are balanced with proactive intervention that will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Please ensure actions, and their measures of success, are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

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Appendix 1: Consultation data

If desired, please present the results of any relevant consultation/surveys used to inform the research institute's submission.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Silver research institute application form

Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

+ structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work.

In Section 1.4, applicants should also evidence how they meet the following expectation relevant to Criterion E:

+ policies are considered to be effective and appropriate by staff/students, and/or, evidence of thepositive impact of policies on staff/students.

Recommended word count: 3000 words

1. **Letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute**

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute.

Guidance
Please highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the research institute relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter is an opportunity to evidence the personalcommitment and involvement of the head of the research institute (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and how the research institute's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the research institute.

2. Description of the research institute and its context

Please provide an introduction to the research institute.

> ## Guidance
> Please provide an overview of the research institute, including a description of contextual factors that are particular to the research institute; for example, location, research focus, funding relationships, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institute's structure, relationship with sub-units or community partners). Outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections so there is no need to include it in this section.

3. Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work

Please provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and resources.

> ## Guidance
> Please describe the research institute's key management and committee structures, and theformal structures in place to carry out and support the research institute's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. Please describe the formal processes in place to distribute, recognise and reward EDI work.
>
> Please provide an overview of how EDI work is supported by and embedded within the governance structure of the research institute. Detail should be provided about how the research institute supports gender equality activity in sub-units across the institute where relevant (such as research departments and professional, technical and operational directorates).
>
> Please explain how EDI work (including work relating to Athena Swan) is distributed, accounted for, recognised and rewarded; for example, in how workload is allocated, at appraisal, and/or through promotions and progression pathways.

4. **Development, evaluation and effectiveness of policies**

Please describe the processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of how the research institute ensures that policies are fit-for-purpose, how they are evaluated, and how their effectiveness and impact are assessed.

Please include an overview of any consultative approaches (eg. with staff, students – if relevant – or external stakeholders) which are used to inform these processes. Please explain how the research institute ensures that policies support an inclusive culture and do not negatively impact on staff or students due to sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, gender identity, trans status, or caring responsibilities, describing the use of Equality Impact Assessment where relevant. Please consider how policies are evaluated for intersectional inequalities and impact.

Please provide evidence of how policies are considered by the people utilising them; for example, whether they are considered effective and appropriate, and whether they have had a positive impact.

5. **Athena Swan self-assessment process**

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the research institute's future gender equality work.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work, including a table showing the gender of SAT members, their role in the research institute, and their role in the SAT. The SAT's composition should reflect the profile of the research institute in relation to staff type, grades and roles.

Where possible, SAT membership should include a diverse range of people in relation to sex, trans status, gender identity and caring responsibilities, including those experiencing intersectional inequalities. Please explain how the process for recruiting SAT members has considered the diversity of the research institute. Applicants are not required to provide data on the characteristics of individual SAT members.

In constituting and describing their SAT, research institutes are reminded to be mindful of individuals' privacy and confidentiality, that an undue burden of work or emotional labour is not placed on those impacted negatively by existing structures, policies and cultures and that the work of the SAT members is appropriately recognized and rewarded (see section 1.3).

Please include a summary of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff (and students if relevant). Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by sex. If the SAT have collected additional demographic information on consultation respondents, disaggregation of consultation response rates by other characteristics can be provided, where this is appropriate, and confidentiality can be assured.

Please reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application.

Please outline how the research institute plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated (where appropriate).

Section 2: An evaluation of the research institute's progress and success

In Section 2, applicants should evidence how they meet Criteria D and E:

+ progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities has been demonstrated

+ success in addressing gender inequality has been evidenced

Recommended word count: 2000 words

1. **Evaluating progress against the previous action plan**

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

Guidance

Please provide the most recent iteration of the action plan associated with the researchinstitute's previous award. Please 'RAG' rate (rate 'red', 'amber' or 'green') the action plan using the following definitions:

+ Red: No progress was made on this action. For example: The action was never undertaken; the action was started but was permanently discontinued; further work is needed to begin the action or to revise the approach.
+ Amber: Partial progress was made on this action. For example: the action has begun but is incomplete; the action was completed but the outcomes or impacts were not as predicted/desired; further work is needed to complete the action or to obtain the desired outcome or impact.
+ Green: Good progress was made on this action. For example: the action was completed with outcomes or impacts as (or very close to) predicted/desired; no further work is needed on this action.

Please provide an overview of the progress achieved in implementing the research institute's previous action plan. Please describe the methodology of action implementation, evaluation and iteration. Please reflect on actions from the previous action plan which have been rated as amber or red, and any actions which were removed over the course of the award. Please detail how the research institute evaluated the success (or otherwise) of actions, and what factors (internal or external to the research institute) acted as barriers or facilitators to the implementation of actions and achievement of success measures.

Where challenges to successful implementation were noted, please outline what steps were made to respond to these, and how the action plan was adjusted. Please describe the main learnings and outcomes from the evaluation of the action plan, and consider how the research institute can apply the learning to ensure an improved implementation of the future action plan, and secure better outcomes or impacts.

2. **Evaluating success against the research institute's key priorities**

Please describe the research institute's key achievements in gender equality.

Guidance

Please provide evidence of how the research institute has achieved the desired outcome or improvement against at least two of the research institute's previously identified key priorities. Please evidence how the research institute has achieved longitudinal improvement over the course of more than one award cycle.

When describing success observed against the key priorities, please refer to qualitative and quantitative data to evidence their statements where possible. Please reflect on the main facilitators or factors that supported them to achieve success and identify whether there are any aspects that could be translated to other areas to support success against the research institute's other key priorities.

Section 3: An assessment of the research institute's gender equality context

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion B:

+ evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant

Recommended word count: 3500 words

1. **Culture, inclusion and belonging**

Please describe how the research institute ensures their culture and practices support inclusion and belonging.

Guidance

Please outline key findings from the research institute's evaluation of its culture as it relates to gender equality and inclusion. This could include the research institute's values, traditions, leadership, practices and behaviours and other formal and informal structures and interactions that characterise the working environment of the research institute. Please reflect on how the research institute actively considers gender equality and inclusivity within their culture, including how instances of negative practices or behaviours are addressed, such as bullying and harassment. Please draw, where appropriate, on data presented in Appendices 1-2.

Please reflect on the research institute's current understanding of intersectional inequalities for staff (and students, where relevant), drawing on the research institute's cultural, qualitative and quantitative evidence. Where issues have been identified, please include actions in the action plan that will support the research institute to address intersectional inequalities within this award cycle. The research institute can choose which intersectional characteristics to focus on providing the evaluation is relevant to the understanding of gender equality. The choice of intersecting characteristics should be evidence-based, informed by the research institute's specific context and/or regional or national data and trends.

Please evaluate the ways in which the research institute actively strives (or could in future, through action) for the inclusion of trans and non-binary people within the research institute's culture and practices. The provision of quantitative data is not required.

If applicants choose to draw on quantitative data and the data indicate low or no rates of disclosure from eg. trans or non-binary people, applicants should still consider how to embed inclusive practices and approaches within culture and activity and are encouraged to use knowledge of wider good practice to do this.

Please evaluate how the research institute's approach to ensuring culture and practices are inclusive and supportive of people with caring responsibilities, and how the research institute strives to mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the research institute supports flexibility for staff (and students, where relevant) and supports the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.

2. **Key priorities for future action**

Please describe the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Please reflect on the evaluation in previous sections (including of policies, progress and culture), and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality. Please draw on the analysis of mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant). Please analyse data by sex as a minimum and present data tables and/or charts in Appendices 1-2.

Please reflect on insights from the data analysis particularly as these relate to gender equality (eg. the representation and progression of people of a particular sex or trans or non-binary status) and consider intersectional inequalities wherever possible. Please consider any trends or issues across job families, contract types or functions, grades, or sub-units where relevant and possible (such as research departments and professional, technical and operational directorates). Intersectional analysis should draw on the research institute's cultural, qualitative and quantitative evidence where possible. Please note that depending on the research institute's overall size, a primarily quantitative approach to intersectional analysis may not be appropriate for all areas of consideration (eg. to analyse intersectional data disaggregated by contract type or sub-unit).

Please consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. Please also consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the identification of the research institute's key issues, please identify between four and eight key priorities that the research institute seeks to address with future action. Please ensure key priorities are appropriate to the research institute's context and justified based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Please consider how the priorities address intersectional inequalities.

Applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, please explain the rationale for these changes.

Please ensure priorities are specific and detailed, allowing the research institute to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple SMART actions. Please cross-reference the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 4: Future action plan

In Section 4, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

+ an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

1. **Action plan**

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

Guidance

Based on the research institute's evidence base and self-assessment, please present an action plan that addresses the research institute's key issues and priorities. Please ensure the plan covers ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross- references the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/ position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant). Please provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues.

Applicants will need to assure themselves that their planned actions are within the law, including when making use of positive action measures (the Equality and Human Rights Commission provide further guidance for those working in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland offer guidance for those working in Northern Ireland.)

While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, please ensure these actions are balanced with proactive intervention that will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Please ensure actions, and their measures of success, are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Appendix 1: Consultation data

If desired, please present the results of any relevant consultation/surveys used to inform the research institute's submission.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Gold research institute application form

Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

+ structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work

In Section 1.4, applicants should also evidence how they meet the following expectation relevant to Criterion E:

+ policies are considered to be effective and appropriate by staff/students, and/or, evidence of the positive impact of policies on staff/students

Recommended word count: 3000 words

1. **Letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute**

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute.

> ### Guidance
> Please highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the research institute relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter is an opportunity to evidence the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the research institute (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and how the research institute's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the research institute.

2. Description of the research institute and its context

Please provide an introduction to the research institute.

> ### Guidance
> Please provide an overview of the research institute, including a description of contextual factors that are particular to the research institute; for example, location, research focus, funding relationships, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institute's structure, relationship with sub-units or community partners). Outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections so there is no need to include it in this section.

3. Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work

Please provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and resources.

> ### Guidance
> Please describe the research institute's key management and committee structures, and the formal structures in place to carry out and support the research institute's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. Please describe the formal processes in place to distribute, recognise and reward EDI work.
>
> Please provide an overview of how EDI work is supported by and embedded within the governance structure of the research institute. Please detail how the research institute supports gender equality activity in sub-units across the institute where relevant (such as research departments and professional, technical and operational directorates).
>
> Please explain how EDI work (including work relating to Athena Swan) is distributed, accounted for, recognised and rewarded; for example, in how workload is allocated, at appraisal, and/or through promotions and progression pathways.

4. **Development, evaluation and effectiveness of policies**

Please describe the processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of how the research institute ensures that policies are fit-for-purpose, how they are evaluated, and how their effectiveness and impact are assessed.

Please include an overview of any consultative approaches (eg. with staff, students – if relevant – or external stakeholders) which are used to inform these processes. Please explain how the research institute ensures that policies support an inclusive culture and do not negatively impact on staff or students due to sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, gender identity, trans status, or caring responsibilities, describing the use of Equality Impact Assessment where relevant. Please consider how policies are evaluated for intersectional inequalities and impact.

Please provide evidence of how policies are considered by the people utilising them; for example, whether they are considered effective and appropriate, and whether they have had a positive impact.

5. **Athena Swan self-assessment process**

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the research institute's future gender equality work.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work, including a table showing the gender of SAT members, their role in the research institute, and their role in the SAT. The SAT's composition should reflect the profile of the research institute in relation to staff type, grades and roles.

Where possible, SAT membership should include a diverse range of people in relation to sex, trans status, gender identity and caring responsibilities, including those experiencing intersectional inequalities. Please explain how the process for recruiting SAT members has considered the diversity of the research institute. Research institutes are not required to provide data on the characteristics of individual SAT members.

In constituting and describing their SAT, research institutes are reminded to be mindful of individuals' privacy and confidentiality, that an undue burden of work or emotional labour is not placed on those impacted negatively by existing structures, policies and cultures and that the work of the SAT members is appropriately recognized and rewarded (see section 1.3).

Please include a summary of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff (and students if relevant). Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by sex. If the SAT have collected additional demographic information on consultation respondents, disaggregation of consultation response rates by other characteristics can be provided, where this is appropriate, and confidentiality can be assured.

Applicants should reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application.

Please also include an overview of how the research institute plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated (where appropriate).

Section 2: An evaluation of the research institute's progress and success

In Section 2, applicants should evidence how they meet Criteria D and E:

+ progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities has been demonstrated

+ success in addressing gender inequality has been evidenced

Recommended word count: 2500 words

1. **Evaluating progress against the previous action plan**

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

Guidance

Please provide the most recent iteration of the action plan associated with the researchinstitute's previous award. Please 'RAG' rate (rate 'red', 'amber' or 'green') the action plan using the following definitions:

+ Red: No progress was made on this action. For example: The action was never undertaken; the action was started but was permanently discontinued; further work is needed to begin the action or to revise the approach.
+ Amber: Partial progress was made on this action. For example: the action has begun but is incomplete; the action was completed but the outcomes or impacts were not as predicted/desired; further work is needed to complete the action or to obtain the desired outcome or impact.
+ Green: Good progress was made on this action. For example: the action was completed with outcomes or impacts as (or very close to) predicted/desired; no further work is needed on this action.

Please provide an overview of the progress achieved in implementing the research institute's previous action plan. Please describe the methodology of action implementation, evaluation and iteration. Please reflect on actions from the previous action plan which have been rated as amber or red, and any actions which were removed over the course of the award. Please detail how the research institute evaluated the success (or otherwise) of actions, and what factors (internal or external to the research institute) acted as barriers or facilitators to the implementation of actions and meeting of success measures.

Where challenges to successful implementation were noted, please outline what steps were made to respond to these, and how the action plan was adjusted. Please describe the main learnings and outcomes from the evaluation of the action plan and consider how the research institute can apply the learning to ensure an improved implementation of the future action plan, and secure better outcomes or impacts.

2. **Evaluating success against the research institute's key priorities**

Please describe the research institute's key achievements in gender equality.

Guidance

Please provide evidence of how the research institute has achieved the desired outcome or improvement against at least three of their previously identified key priorities. Please evidence how the research institute has achieved longitudinal improvement over the course of more than one award cycle.

Please outline the key priorities for action previously identified by the research institute at Bronze and Silver levels in this section in order to support the applicant's evaluation of longitudinal success.

When describing success observed against the key priorities, please refer to qualitative and quantitative data to evidence their statements where possible. Please reflect on the main facilitators or factors that supported the research institute to achieve success and identify whether there are any aspects that could be translated to other areas to support success against the research institute's other key priorities.

Section 3: An evaluation of the research institute's sector-leading activity

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion F:

+ evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve.

Recommended word count: 1500 words

1. **Maintaining good practice and innovation**

Please provide exemplars of good practice and/or beacon activities which demonstrate that the research institute is, and strives to remain, sector leading.

Guidance
Please provide examples of how the research institute has been innovative in their gender equality work. Please outline how the research institute continually monitors and updates their practices and policies in order to remain innovative and inclusive. Please take into account how the research institute is embedding an intersectional approach and ensuring the inclusion of and support for people of all gender identities. Please consider how the research institute supports its subunits (eg. research departments, PTO directorates or equivalent) and individuals to advance gender equality work within their own units and networks.

2. **Supporting others to improve**

Please describe how the research institute has supported others to achieve success in gender equality.

Guidance
Please outline how the research institute has supported others to improve, and how the research institute's activity has resulted in good practice being taken up by others. Please consider the research institute's influence on, mentorship of and support for others outside the research institute; for example, this could include other research institutes, organisations, industry partners, or professional bodies, within or beyond the research sector.

Section 4: An assessment of the research institute's gender equality context

In Section 4, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion B:

+ evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant.

Recommended word count: 3500 words

1. **Culture, inclusion and belonging**

Please describe how the research institute ensures their culture and practices support inclusion and belonging.

Guidance

Please outline key findings from the research institute's evaluation of its culture as it relates to gender equality and inclusion. This could include the research institute's values, traditions, leadership, practices and behaviours and other formal and informal structures and interactions that characterise the working environment of the research institute. Please reflect on how the research institute actively considers gender equality and inclusivity within their culture, including how instances of negative practices or behaviours are addressed, such as bullying and harassment. Please draw, where appropriate, on data presented in Appendices 1-2.

Please reflect on the research institute's current understanding of intersectional inequalities for staff (and students, where relevant), drawing on the research institute's cultural, qualitative, and quantitative evidence. Where issues have been identified, please include actions in the action plan that will support the research institute to address intersectional inequalities within this award cycle. The research institute can choose which intersectional characteristics to focus on providing the evaluation is relevant to the understanding of gender equality. The choice of intersectional characteristics should be evidence-based, informed by the research institute's specific context and/or regional or national data and trends.

Please evaluate the ways in which the research institute actively strives (or could in future, through action) for the inclusion of trans and non-binary people within the research institute's culture and practices. The provision of quantitative data is not required. If applicants choose to draw on quantitative data and the data indicate no or low rates of disclosure from eg. trans or non-binary people, applicants should still consider how to embed inclusive practices and approaches within culture and activity and are encouraged to use knowledge of wider good practice to inform how to do this.

Please evaluate the research institute's approach to ensuring culture and practices are inclusive and supportive of people with caring responsibilities, and how the research institute strives to mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the research institute supports flexibility for staff (and students, where relevant) and supports the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.

2. **Key priorities for future action**

Please describe the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Please reflect on the evaluation in previous sections (including of policies, progress and culture), and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality. Please draw on the analysis of the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant). Please analyse data by sex as a minimum and present data tables and/or charts in Appendices 1-2.

Please reflect on insights from the data analysis particularly as these relate to gender equality (eg. the representation and progression of people of a particular sex, or trans or non-binary status) and consider intersectional inequalities wherever possible. To support their evaluation, applicants should consider any trends or issues across job families, contract types or functions, grades, or sub-units where relevant and possible (such as research departments and professional, technical and operational directorates). Intersectional analysis should draw on the research institute's cultural, qualitative and quantitative evidence where possible.

Depending on the research institute's overall size, a primarily quantitative approach to intersectional analysis may not be appropriate for all areas of consideration (eg. to analyse intersectional data disaggregated by contract type or sub-unit).

Please consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. Please also consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the identification of the research institute's key issues, please identify between four and eight key priorities that the research institute seeks to address with future action. Please ensure these key priorities are appropriate to the research institute's context and justified based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Please consider how the priorities address intersectional inequalities.

Applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, please explain the rationale for these changes.

Please ensure priorities are specific and detailed, allowing the research institute to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple SMART actions. Please cross-reference the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 5: Future action plan

In Section 5, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

+   an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

1. **Action plan**

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

Guidance

Based on the research institute's evidence base and self-assessment, please present an action plan that addresses the research institute's key issues and priorities. Please ensure the plan covers ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross- references the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/ position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant). Please provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues.

Applicants will need to assure themselves that their planned actions are within the law, including when making use of positive action measures (the Equality and Human Rights Commission provide further guidance for those working in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland offer guidance for those working in Northern Ireland.)

While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, please ensure these actions are balanced with proactive intervention that will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Please ensure actions, and their measures of success, are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Appendix 1: Consultation data

If desired, please present the results of any relevant consultation/surveys used to inform the research institute's submission.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Research Institute renewal application form

Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

+ structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work

Recommended word count: 3000 words

1. **Letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute**

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the research institute.

Guidance
Please highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the research institute relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter is an opportunity to evidence the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the research institute (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and how the research institute's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the research institute.

2. **Description of the research institute and its context**

Please provide an introduction to the research institute.

Guidance
Please provide an overview of the research institute, including a description of contextual factors that are particular to the research institute; for example, location, research focus, funding relationships, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institute's structure, relationship with sub-units or community partners). Please outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections so there is no need to include it in this section.

3. Athena Swan self-assessment process

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the research institute's future gender equality work.

Guidance

Please provide an overview of the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work, including a table briefly describing SAT members' professional/student role in the research institute and their role in the SAT. The SAT's composition should reflect the profile of the research institute in relation to staff type, grades and roles.

Where possible, SAT membership should include a diverse range of people in relation to sex, trans status, gender identity and caring responsibilities, including those experiencing intersectional inequalities. Please explain how the process for recruiting SAT members has considered the diversity of the research institute. Research institutes do not need to provide data on the characteristics of individual SAT members.

In constituting and describing their SAT, research institutes are reminded to be mindful of individuals' privacy and confidentiality, that an undue burden of work or emotional labour is not placed on those impacted negatively by existing structures, policies and cultures and that the work of the SAT members is appropriately recognized and rewarded (see section 1.3).

Please include a summary of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff (and students if relevant). Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by sex. If the SAT have collected additional demographic information on consultation respondents, disaggregation of consultation response rates by other characteristics can be provided, where this is appropriate, and confidentiality can be assured.

Please reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application.

Please include an overview of how the research institute plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated (where appropriate).

Section 2: An evaluation of the research institute's progress and issues

In Section 2, applicants should evidence how they meet Criteria B and D:

+ progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities has been demonstrated

+ evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant

Recommended word count: 3000 words

1. **Evaluating progress against the previous action plan**

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

Guidance

Please provide the most recent iteration of the action plan associated with the researchinstitute's previous award. Please 'RAG' rate (rate 'red', 'amber' or 'green') the action plan using the following definitions:

+ Red: No progress was made on this action. For example: The action was never undertaken; the action was started but was permanently discontinued; further work is needed to begin the action or to revise the approach.
+ Amber: Partial progress was made on this action. For example: the action has begun but is incomplete; the action was completed but the outcomes or impacts were not as predicted/desired; further work is needed to complete the action or to obtain the desired outcome or impact.
+ Green: Good progress was made on this action. For example: the action was completed with outcomes or impacts as (or very close to) predicted/desired; no further work is needed on this action.

Please provide an overview of the progress achieved in implementing the research institute's previous action plan. Please describe the methodology of action implementation, evaluation and iteration. Please reflect on actions from the previous action plan which have been rated as amber or red, and any actions which were removed over the course of the award. Please detail how the research institute evaluated the success (or otherwise) of actions, and what factors (internal or external to the research institute) acted as barriers or facilitators to the research institute's implementation of actions and meeting of success measures.

Where challenges to successful implementation were noted, please outline what steps were made to respond to these, and how the action plan was adjusted. Please describe the main learnings and outcomes from the evaluation of the action plan and consider how the research institute can apply the learning to ensure an improved implementation of the future action plan, and secure better outcomes or impacts.

2. **Key priorities for future action**

Please describe the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Please reflect on the evaluation of progress and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the research institute's key issues relating to gender equality.

Please consider whether and how the research institute's gender equality issues have changed since their previous award. Please draw on the analysis of the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant). Please analyse data by sex as a minimum and present data tables and/or charts in Appendices 1-2. Please reflect on insights particularly as these relate to gender equality (eg. the representation and progression of people of a particular sex, trans or non-binary status).

Please consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. Please consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the identification of the research institute's key issues, please identify no more than 4-8 key priorities that the research institute seeks to address with future action. Please ensure these key priorities are appropriate to the research institute's context and be justified based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Please consider how the priorities address intersectional inequalities.

Please refer to previously identified key priorities. If applicable, applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, please explain the rationale for these changes.

Please ensure priorities are specific and detailed, allowing the research institute to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple SMART actions. Please cross-reference to the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 3: Future action plan

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

+ an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

1. **Action plan**

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

Guidance

Based on the research institute's evidence base and self-assessment, please present an action plan that addresses the research institute's key issues and priorities. Please ensure the plan covers ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross-references the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/ position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant). Please provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues.

Applicants will need to assure themselves that their planned actions are within the law, including when making use of positive action measures (the Equality and Human Rights Commission provide further guidance for those working in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland offer guidance for those working in Northern Ireland.)

While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, please ensure these actions are balanced with proactive intervention that will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Please ensure actions, and their measures of success, are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Appendix 1: Consultation data

If desired, please present the results of any relevant consultation/surveys used to inform the directorate's submission.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Athena Swan data requirements for Research Institute applicants

All applicants

Wherever possible, please disaggregate data by sex, grade (for staff data), and sub-unit (eg. research department, PTO directorate or equivalent). In addition, applicants can choose to collect and analyse data about gender identity and/or trans status.

When collecting data on sex, it is important to accept the sex that staff and students declare; responses do not need to be verified and applicants are advised not to ask staff or students to prove their sex by showing a birth certificate or Gender Recognition Certificate. Asking about a respondent's gender identity in the same form as asking about their sex can inadvertently out someone who has a trans identity or history. For this reason, research institutes are advised only to ask both questions where 'prefer not to say' options are available, and respondents are informed about the level of confidentiality that can be assured. Further guidance on questions for asking staff about their sex, gender identity or trans status can be found in [Advance HE's Guidance on the Collection of Diversity Monitoring Data](#).

Please disaggregate data by the sub-unit that is most helpful for the research institute's gender equality analysis and objectives – this could be by directorate or department, for example. When presenting data, please include both numbers and proportions for ease of interpretation.

Bronze Research Institute

For Bronze applicants who do not already hold an award, please present three years of data where possible (where not possible, please explain why). In Bronze renewal applications, please present data covering the period since the previous application.

Silver and Gold Research Institute

Please present data covering the period since the previous application where possible (where not possible, please explain why). Data for earlier periods can be included if desired; for example, to support the applicant's demonstration of longitudinal improvement. When presenting data, please include both numbers and proportions for ease of interpretation.

To support the institute's intersectional analysis, please give due regard to intersectionality wherever possible. Depending on the research institute's overall size, a primarily quantitative approach to intersectional analysis may not be appropriate for all areas of consideration (eg to analyse intersectional data disaggregated by contract type or sub-unit).

Research Institute data requirements

Please present the following datasets where possible. Where not possible, please explain why and where appropriate include an action in the action plan to address this moving forward. If the research institute hosts or is responsible for students, applicants should also provide data for students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level and, where relevant, their degree attainment and/or completion rates.

	Research institute data requirement
1	Research staff by contract function and grade
2	Research staff by contract type and grade
3	Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff by job family and grade
4	PTO staff by contract type and grade
5	Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to research posts by grade
6	Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to PTO posts by grade
7	Applications and success rates for research promotion by grade
8	Applications and success rates for PTO progression by grade (where there are formal routes for progression)
9	Students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level (only applicable if the research institute hosts or is responsible for students)
10	Degree attainment and/or completion rates for students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level (only applicable if the research institute hosts or is responsible for students)

Please present these data in Appendix 2 and can be cross-reference from the main sections of the application.

Consultation with your community

To explore the gender equality context and identify priorities for action, all applicants are expected to undergo a self-assessment, led by a representative team reflecting the profile of the research institute, and informed by their staff communities (and the student community where relevant). There are a variety of ways that staff and students can input to and inform your self-assessment, including full or pulse surveys, focus groups, interviews, liaising with networks and unions, town hall meetings, and many more.

As you begin your application preparation, we encourage applicants to map existing opportunities to gather information and input from your communities – this will help you mitigate 'consultation fatigue'. For example, you may already be collecting relevant evidence through an annual staff survey, collecting feedback after events or training, or gaining feedback from staff networks. If desired, you can include the results of consultation exercises such as these in Appendix 1 of your application.

Additionally, as you progress through your self-assessment, you might find that you require further exploration to help you understand the issues emerging from your assessment. For example, a staff survey may help you to evaluate the culture in your directorate and to identify your key gender equality issues. You might need to triangulate these findings with other forms of evidence or staff and student consultation in order to fully understand the issues and propose priorities for future action.

The academic departmental culture survey
We have created a survey to support academic departmental applicants within universities so that they may explore and assess their culture. Research institute applicants may also wish to consider the themes and questions of that survey in your self-assessment to aid your analysis.

For further details about the departmental culture survey and themes, please see the Guidance Pack for Departments.

When to consult

Data collection and analysis takes time, so we encourage applicants to consider and make a plan for the timing of any surveys or consultation as you begin your application preparation. Consider other events in the research institute calendar that might be facilitators or barriers to gaining good participation in the survey; eg school holidays or other consultation deadlines. So that you understand your current context and can use this in your application, ideally your consultation exercise should be run no more than a year prior to the application submission date and at a minimum within two years of submission.

Word allocation guidance

Each award application has an overall word allocation, shown below. Word allocations are limited in order to help applicants retain a focus on what is most important, and to support review panels which assess up to 10 applications per panel.

Recommended word allocations are provided for each section; these are purely for guidance and applicants have the flexibility to use the overall word allocation across the application as they deem appropriate. At the beginning of every section, please state how many words have been used in that section.

Bronze Research Institute	
Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to gender equality	3000 words
Section 2: An assessment of the research institute's gender equality context	3500 words
Section 3: Future action plan[4]	
Appendix 1: Consultation data[4]	
Appendix 2: Data tables[4]	
Appendix 3: Glossary[4]	
Overall word allocation	**6500 words**

Silver Research Institute	
Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to gender equality	3000 words
Section 2: An evaluation of the research institute's progress and success	2000 words
Section 3: An assessment of the research institute's gender equality context	3500 words
Section 4: Future action plan[4]	
Appendix 1: Consultation data[4]	
Appendix 2: Data tables[4]	
Appendix 3: Glossary[4]	
Overall word allocation	**8500 words**

Gold Research Institute	
Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to genderequality	3000 words
Section 2: An evaluation of the research institute's progress and success	2500 words
Section 3: An evaluation of the research institute's sector-leading activity	1500 words
Section 4: An assessment of the research institute's gender equality context	3500 words
Section 5: Future action plan[4]	
Appendix 1: Consultation data[4]	
Appendix 2: Data tables[4]	
Appendix 3: Glossary[4]	
Overall word allocation	**10,500 words**

Research Institute Renewal	
Section 1: An overview of the research institute and its approach to gender equality	3000 words
Section 2: An evaluation of the research institute's progress and issues	3000 words
Section 3: Future action plan[4]	
Appendix 1: Consultation data[4]	
Appendix 2: Data tables[4]	
Appendix 3: Glossary[4]	
Overall word allocation	**6000 words**

4   These sections and appendices should not contain any commentary contributing to the overall word limit.

What is included in and excluded from the wordcount?

The word count includes all body text throughout the application, including quotes from qualitative analysis and readable words in screenshots. It also includes any standalone text or prose included intables, graphs, footnotes or references.

The following are not counted towards the word limit:

+ data tables, figures and graphs providing they do not include standalone prose. These data should be presented in appendices 1-2 and can be cross-referenced from the main sections of the application

+ details of your self-assessment team when displayed as a table

+ action points within the body of the application and references to them

+ references; for example, to literature or benchmarking sources

+ your future action plan, which should not include any commentary contributing to the overall word limit

+ your 'RAG' rated action plan, which should not include commentary beyond brief status updates

+ your glossary of terms used in the application (appendix 3).

Any application found to have exceeded the word allowance may be rejected and not assessed by the peer-review panel.

Additional word allocation

The overall word allocation for your application can be increased in certain circumstances. The process relating to some common circumstances are listed below:

Covid-19 pandemic

In recognition of the impact of the pandemic on institutions a 500-word extension to the application word limit to consider the impact of Covid-19 is available. These words can be used to discuss practical impacts on the self-assessment process (eg. format and timing of SAT meetings and/or membership; consultation methodologies; resourcing changes), on action plan implementation, or to address gender equality impacts of Covid-19 more broadly (eg. publication outputs). The additional words are available to both existing award-holders and to those who currently do not hold an award.

In the case of existing award-holders, the word count extension applies to the first application after March 2020. In the case of applicants who do not currently hold an award, the word count extension applies up to (and including) the July 2026 submission round. This extension is all-inclusive meaning there is no need to apply to the Equality Charters team for permission to use the additional words. Applicants are also not obliged to use the additional words if the self-assessment team determine that the application has not been impacted by Covid-19 or the extra words are not needed.

Organisational restructure

If an organisational restructure has recently taken place, applicants can avail of a 750-word extensionto reflect on the impact of the restructure to their gender equality work in their application (eg. arising from changes to their staff or student demographic profile, policies, or context). Please email the Equality Charters team no less than one month prior to the application submission date toconfirm this additional word allowance and ensure it is noted in our records.

Exceptional circumstances

Requests for additional word allowances to account for exceptional circumstances are considered ona case-by-case basis. Any increase in the word allowance should always be used to explain how the special circumstances have impacted on or been taken into account with respect to the applicant's gender equality context or activity. Please email the Equality Charters team no less than two months prior to the application submission date to agree and confirm this additional word allowance and ensure it is noted in our records.

Submitting your application

There are six submission dates a year for Athena Swan applications, normally on the last working day of January, March, May, July, September and November. For details of these deadlines and to provide notice of your intention to submit an application, please see the Advance HE website. Please provide us with notice of your intention to submit at least two months prior to the submission deadline.

Please submit your application via the Equality Charters Portal found on the My Advance HE platform.

Only those with a My Advance HE account can access the portal (you can sign in or create a new account here). We encourage all institutions to ensure that the individual responsible for submitting the application has a My Advance HE account prior to the application deadline.

Should you have any issues using the Portal please get in touch with us via email at: athena.swan@advance-he.ac.uk.

Considering the accessibility of your application

Your Athena Swan application is an important resource which will be of interest to a wide range of people within and beyond your staff and student communities. Your application will also be processed by Advance HE staff members and reviewed by panel Chairs and Reviewers. For it to be readable by as wide an audience as possible, including those with visual impairments and dyslexia, it is good practice to consider the accessibility of the document and how well it works with assistive technology.

Please submit your application in Microsoft Word format (or equivalent) as well as PDF format, as PDF files are often more challenging to access using assistive technology.

Some tips for ensuring your document is as accessible as possible:

+ Use the built-in Accessibility Checker to identify any issues with the document

+ Keep the language simple – avoid jargon and write in short, simple sentences

+ Avoid italics and all caps text, only underline hyperlinks

+ Use built-in styles (e.g. headings, paragraphs, lists) to provide a structure that can be navigated by assistive technology

+ Use tables for tabular data

+ If you are using images, include alternative text (Alt Text)

+ Use a sans serif font like Arial or Helvetica and a minimum size of 12 points

+ Ensure hyperlink text describes where the link goes and is understandable on its own, even if read out of context.

+ Do not use colour or shape alone to show meaning

+ Do not use images containing text (eg. screenshots), as it's not possible to resize the text in the image and screen readers cannot read text which is part of an image

More guidance can be found online, including:

+ the Accessible Digital Office Document (ADOD) Project website.

+ the AbilityNet website.

+ the British Dyslexia Association website.

Glossary

Glossary of terms

Within individual institutions terminology may be used in different ways, with differing names given to units or practices. To support your engagement with the Athena Swan Charter framework, over the next few pages, we have provided definitions for some of the terms we use.

All Athena Swan award applicants are encouraged to include their own glossary of terms in Appendix 3 of their applications. This can include any acronyms or institution-specific terminology used in the application.

We're here to help
If you are unsure about any terminology used in this document or the Athena Swan framework, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our Equality Charters team for more support.

Term	Definition
Academic staff	Staff responsible for the planning, direction and/or undertaking of academic teaching and/or research. This includes staff with teaching-only, research-only, and teaching and research contractfunctions.
Appraisal	Appraisal (sometimes called a performance review) is a processproviding a formal opportunity for constructive dialogue and feedback on an individual's work, effectiveness and development.
Beacon activity	Activity which disseminates and promotes the uptake of innovativeand impactful good practice to others.
Bullying	Bullying is behaviour from a person or group that's unwanted andmakes you feel uncomfortable, including feeling frightened, lessrespected, made fun of, or upset.
Career break	A career break is a period of time out from employment or career. Career breaks are often taken by parents and carers, and can alsobe used to take time for personal or professional development.
Caring leave	A period of absence from work or study relating to a person's caringresponsibilities. This includes maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave, parental leave, time off for dependents.

Casual contract	Contracts where staff deliver non-permanent or intermittent services,often in response to seasonal or fluctuating trends in the volume of work. This includes single assignment contracts, zero-hour contracts.
Charter Principle	The commitments that underpin the Athena Swan Charter and set out shared goals for gender equality that all participating institutions,departments and directorates agree to upholding.
Clinical staff	Staff who normally undertake clinical duties in addition to teaching and/or research activities. This includes academic Clinical Fellows, academic Clinical Lecturers, health professionals employed directly by your department/institution, academic staff employed directly by your department/institution who also carry out programmed activitiesoutside the institution in a medical or healthcare setting.
Completion rate	The proportion of a student cohort successfully completing their studies. This is a useful dataset for analysis particularly for programmes that do not award classifications upon completion, forexample PhD programmes.
Contract function	The main function of employment a staff member is employed todeliver, as set out in their employment contract. This includes teaching-only, research-only, teaching and research.
Contract type	The type of contract a staff member is employed on, including open-ended, permanent, fixed-term, atypical, casual.
Degree attainment	The awarding of degree classifications to students; for example,first-class honours, upper second-class honours, lower second- class honours, third-class honours/pass.
Department	A sub-unit within an institution that normally aligns with a particular academic discipline or professional area. Institutions may use otherterms to describe these units, such as 'School'. Department is theterm used by Advance HE to refer to academic sub-units eligible to apply for an Athena Swan award.
Directorate	A sub-unit within an institution that normally aligns with a particular professional, technical or operational area, and which may be madeup of smaller units or departments. Institutions may use other terms to describe these units. Directorate is the term used by Advance HEto refer to professional, technical and/or operational sub-units eligibleto apply for an Athena Swan award.
Diversity monitoring	The collection of data about staff and student identity characteristics to provide insights into the demographic diversity of a population.

Equality Impact Assessment	An evidence-based assessment tool to help institutions ensure that their policies, practices and decisions are fair, meet the needs of theirstaff and students and that they are not inadvertently discriminating against any protected group.
Faculty	A group of sub-units, often called departments, in related academic fields that are managed through an over-arching decision-making body or governance structure. Institutions may use other terms to describe these groupings, for example 'College'. Faculty is the term used by Advance HE to refer to groups of academic sub-units eligibleto apply for an Athena Swan award. Faculty applicants use the same application materials as departments but should note additional considerations in the departmental guidance.
Flexible working	A working arrangement which gives some flexibility on how long, where, when and at what times employees work. Flexible workingincludes part-time working, term-time working, compressed hours,annual hours, flexitime, working remotely on a regular basis.
Freedom of expression / Freedom of speech	Freedom of expression (which is typically defined so as to include freedom of speech) relates to the right which every person has to express lawful views and opinions freely, in speech or in writing, without interference from the state or other bodies carrying out public functions, including most higher education providers.
Gender	Gender can be considered to consist of three related aspects: gender roles, socially constructed norms and behaviours which are essentially based on stereotypes associated with the sex recorded atbirth; gender identity, which is a person's internal perception of their identity; and gender expression, which is the way a person lives in society and interacts with others. These different aspects of gender have typically been understood as binary. However, gender does not represent a simple binary choice, it is more fluid and some people have a gender identity that cannot be defined simply by the use of theterms woman or man. A person's gender is self-determined by their internal perception, identification and experience. Therefore, a person's gender identity may not be the same as the sex the individual was recorded as at birth. It may also change over time.

Gender-based violence	Gender-based violence refers to harmful acts directed at people based on their real or perceived sex, gender identity or trans status or that disproportionately affects people of a particular sex, gender identity or trans status. It includes physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm; examples of gender-based violence include (but are not limited to) domestic violence and sexual harassment. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms.
Gender equality	For the purposes of Athena Swan guidance, 'gender equality' is used as an umbrella term and covers the legal protections relating to sex, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity, as well as broader equality work relating to gender identity, trans inclusion and caring responsibilities. This is in keeping with a key recommendation of the Independent Review, that the sector wanted the Charter to recognise gender as a spectrum. Where appropriate, the guidance distinguishes between sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, gender identity, trans status, and caring responsibilities.
Gender identity	A person's internal perception of their identity. A person's gender isself-determined by their internal perception, identification and experience. Therefore, a person's gender identity may not be the same as the sex the individual was recorded as at birth. It may alsochange over time.

Gender reassignment	The term used in UK legislation to describe the process of reassigning a person's sex. Across the UK, legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender reassignment. In England, Scotland and Wales, gender reassignment is a protected characteristic and is defined as anyone who 'proposes to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex'. This is the characteristic that protects trans people from discrimination and harassment in employment, education and in using services in England, Scotland and Wales. Importantly, the Equality Act 2010 requires no medical supervision or interventions for a trans person to be afforded protection. As part of reassigning their sex, trans people often change their sex/gender markers on their day-to-day identity documents and educational records to reflect how they are living in society. Trans women and trans men can subsequently formally change their legal sex by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate, at which point a new birth certificate is issued if the person was born or adopted in the UK. In Northern Ireland, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in relation to employment (including the provision of vocational training) and in the provision of goods, facilities and services. Gender reassignment is defined as 'a process which is undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reassigning a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex, and includes any part of such a process.'

Governance structure	The key management and committee structures, and other formalstructures in place to carry out and support the organisation's activity.
Harassment	Harassment is bullying or unwanted behaviour that has the purposeor effect either of violating a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. In England, Scotland and Wales, harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 if related to a protected characteristic.
Institution	An organisation, often made up of academic, research and/or professional, technical and operational sub-units. Institution is the term used by Advance HE to describe the organisational-level unitseligible to apply for an Athena Swan award, namely universities andresearch institutes.

Intersectional inequality	Intersectionality is the understanding that social inequalities are not just summative, they are mutually constituting. For example, the disadvantage experienced by a Black woman is compounded by the inequalities she faces as a woman and as a Black person, and is distinct from the experiences of a Black man or a White woman. In the Athena Swan framework, applicants are encouraged to reflect onand address how their staff and students experience intersectional inequalities, as relevant to the understanding of gender equality.
Intersex/variations of sex characteristics	Some people are born with variations of sex characteristics, which do not fit society's perception of male or female bodies and are often referred to as intersex.
Job family	A group of jobs with similar characteristics, which are engaged in similar work. Although the level of responsibility, skill or competence will differ, the essential nature of activities carried out is similar across the job family. Examples of job families include: research and teaching; operations and facilities; technical services; administrative,professional and managerial.
Non-binary	Non-binary is used to refer to a person who has a gender identity which is in between or beyond the two categories 'man' and 'woman',fluctuates between 'man' and 'woman', or who has no gender, eitherpermanently or some of the time. People who are non-binary may have gender identities that fluctuate (genderfluid), they may identify as having more than one gender depending on the context (eg bigender or pangender), feel that they have no gender (eg agender, non-gendered), or they may identify gender differently (eg third gender, genderqueer). Where a non-binary person is proposing to, is undergoing or has undergone any part of a process to reassign their sex, they will have protection from discrimination under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.
Occupational segregation	The underrepresentation of certain groups (eg based on gender) inparticular occupations or sectors. Occupational segregation is sometimes referred to as horizontal segregation. For example, the predominance of men in Estates roles and women in Catering roles,or the predominance of men in Computing and women in Education disciplines.
Performance review	Performance review (sometimes called appraisal) is a process providing a formal opportunity for constructive dialogue and feedback on an individual's work, effectiveness and development.
Positive action	Positive action enables education providers and employers to take proportionate action to remedy disadvantage faced by particular groups. Such action could include targeted provision or resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision

	to benefit a particular disadvantaged group. There are limitations on when this is justified within the law and the Equality and Human Rights Commission provides further guidance for those working in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland offers guidance for those working in Northern Ireland.
Progression	A process or processes through which existing members of staff canmove to a higher job grade, sometimes involving the submission of asuccessful application to an advertised vacancy. Professional, technical and operational members of staff are often subject to progression pathways that differ from academic promotion.
Promotion	A formal process for existing members of staff to move to a higher jobgrade usually within a defined career track. Academic members of staff can often progress through a promotion pathway; for example, academic promotion between Lecturer and Senior Lecturer roles. Professional, technical and operational staff are often subject todifferent progression pathways (see progression).
Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff	Staff not employed on an academic contract function. This includesadministrators, technical staff, non-academic professionals, maintenance staff.
Protected characteristics	Under the Equality Act 2010, in England, Scotland and Wales, it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are the nine 'protected characteristics'. In Northern Ireland this term is often used to describe the grounds on which discrimination is prohibited, but other terminology is also used.
Qualitative data	Non-numerical information often related to characteristics and qualities rather than trends and statistics. It can be collected using questionnaires, interviews, or observation, and is often presented innarrative form.
Quantitative data	Numerical information describing measurements or counts, often related to trends and statistics. It can be collected using census exercises, monitoring processes such as recruitment or promotion,or surveys featuring a rating scale. Quantitative data is often presented in graphical or tabular format.

RAG rating	A rating system wherein items are rated 'red', 'amber' or 'green' dependent on progress. Advance HE recognises that the application of RAG ratings can be subject to different definitions. For the purposeof presenting the previous action plan, please use the following definitions: + Red: No progress was made on this action. For example: The action was never undertaken; the action was started but waspermanently discontinued; further work is needed to begin the action or to revise the approach. + Amber: Partial progress was made on this action. For example: the action has begun but is incomplete; the action was completedbut the outcomes or impacts were not as predicted/desired; further work is needed to complete the action or to obtain the desired outcome or impact. + Green: Good progress was made on this action. For example: theaction was completed with outcomes or impacts as (or very close to) predicted/desired; no further work is needed on this action.
Recognition	The Athena Swan framework encourages applicants to consider howgender equality work is recognised. This refers to how this work is formally acknowledged and accounted for through processes such as those relating to workload allocation, appraisal and progression.
Research institute	An organisation established to undertake research and development.Research institutes eligible to apply for Athena Swan awards must beindependent of any higher education institution. Research institutes embedded within a university should participate through the departmental route.
Reward	The Athena Swan framework encourages applicants to consider howgender equality work is rewarded. This refers to how appreciation isformally shown through processes such as those relating to appraisal, progression and pay.
Self-assessment team (SAT)	The term used by Advance HE for a team made up of staff and student (where relevant) members, who are representative of the unitapplying for an Athena Swan award. They are responsible for carrying out an assessment of the unit's gender equality context, issues and priorities and planning and evaluating future action.

Sex	In England, Scotland and Wales, sex is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and is defined as a male or female of any age (Equality Act 2010, Section 212 (1)). In UK equality law 'sex' is understood as binary – being male or female – with a person's legal sex being determined by what is recorded on their birth certificate. A trans person can change their legal sex by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate, at which point a new birth certificate is issued if the person was born or adopted in the UK. In most circumstances it would be inappropriate to ask a person to prove their legal sex by producing a birth certificate or Gender Recognition Certificate, and in some circumstances this could be unlawful. In Northern Ireland, under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, public authorities are required to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. People are additionally protected against discrimination on the grounds of sex under the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976.
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. In setting their plans for future action, applicants are encouraged toinclude actions and measures of success which are SMART in nature.
Social injustice	Disparity and injustice in relation to the distribution of and access to wealth, health and well-being, opportunities, and privileges within asociety.
Structural inequality	Structural inequality refers to the systems in which institutional policies and practices and individual behaviours are located, andhow these systems interact with institutional culture, environmentand other 'norms' compounded by history, culture and systemic privilege, to perpetuate inequality.
Trans/transgender people	Trans people and transgender people are inclusive umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex(male or female) recorded at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, trans men, trans women and non-binary people. Not all people that can be included in the term will associate with it. 'Trans' is often used interchangeably with the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment', which has a narrower definition set out by the Equality Act 2010 and Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. People have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if they have stated their intent to transition.

University	An organisation established to deliver higher education and researchwhich grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects. Universitiesmay be made up of academic and/or professional, technical and operational sub-units (referred to within the Athena Swan Charter as departments and directorates respectively).
Whole life balance	The ability for workers to enjoy a reasonable balance between allaspects of their lives, so that the demands of work do not pose a challenge to gaining satisfaction from their life outside work, and aspects of their personal life do not pose a challenge to being successful in their work or career.
Workload allocation model	A tool or process used to ensure the allocation of work among staff is fair, reasonable and equitable.