



Athena SWAN Bronze department award application

Name of university: University of Oxford

Department: Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics

Date of application: April 2013

Date of university Bronze SWAN award: 2010

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Abbreviations used in the application and action plan:

DPAG	Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
MSD	Medical Sciences Division
OLI	Oxford Learning Institute
PDR	Personal Development Review
PDRA	Post-doctoral Research Assistant
PI	Principal Investigator
RA	Research Assistant
RODE	Recognition of Distinction Exercise
SAT	Self-Assessment Team
SDTA	Student Doctoral Training Advisor
UL	University Lecturer
DGS	Director of Graduate Studies



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PA: Mrs Laurie Surman (laurie.surman@dpag.ox.ac.uk)

February 2013

Dear Athena SWAN Panel Members

**Re: HoD Letter of Endorsement for Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics'
Athena SWAN Application**

I write to offer my full and unconditional support for our Athena SWAN application and the associated action plan.

Our Department has an outstanding reputation for its teaching and research thanks to the talent, hard work and dedication of all our staff. We are proud that as a result of our supportive culture our two most senior scientists, Prof Fran Ashcroft FRS (who holds the 2012 European Laureate for the L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science Award) and Prof Dame Kay Davies FRS, are both female and offer wonderful role models for their more junior colleagues. Despite this, as the analysis contained within our Athena SWAN application demonstrates, women are significantly under-represented in our more senior positions. This must be a serious matter of concern for any society that believes in and promotes equal opportunities for all, regardless of their personal characteristics. However, it is also directly a matter of concern for our local scientific mission. We simply will never be as strong a department as we could be unless we are able to attract, recruit and retain successfully from across the full pool of human talent.

I do not believe that there is any single magic bullet to solve these problems. Rather, I believe that it is a matter of steadily breaking down many smaller obstacles that, put together, form the significant barrier that stops so many women from achieving their full potential in science. As a relatively recently appointed head, I have been delighted by the support and energy put into this by our Athena SWAN committee, and I personally have found the process associated with Athena SWAN - and especially our questionnaires - enormously helpful in approaching these problems in a systematic manner. Following our reviews and analysis, we have a strong action plan to work on and I hope this will help us to develop a heightened awareness of, and sensitivity towards, issues of equal opportunity for women in all areas of departmental activity.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Peter A. Robbins

B. THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

[SECTION: 974 words]

a) A description of the self-assessment team: members' roles (both within the department and as part of the team) and their experiences of work-life balance.

The SAT (Self-Assessment Team) was selected to ensure full representation across the Department. The team comprises seven women and five men, including three professors, two lecturers, two research fellows, two post docs, three graduate students and two administrators.

The committee was advised by the divisional Athena SWAN co-ordinator, Dr. Bríd Cronin.

Professor Dame Kay Davies (co-chair) is Dr Lee's Professor of Anatomy, and Director of the MRC Functional Genomics Unit, working in the application of genomics tools for the analysis of neurological disorders. She is Associate Head (Development, Impact and Equality) of the Medical Sciences Division. [REDACTED]

Professor Anant Parekh (co-chair) is Professor of Physiology. His scientific interests lie in how cells communicate with each other. [REDACTED]

Mrs Julia Allen has worked for the University for twenty-one years, the last five of them in the Department as a Deputy Administrator and then as Operations Manager for HR and PA Support. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is a DPhil student in Chromosome and Developmental Biology, and a graduate representative in the Department.

Mr John Deller is the Departmental Administrator, since 2011, having previously worked in the Department of Chemistry.

[REDACTED] is a DPhil student in Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics. She has had the opportunity to teach and is involved in several science communication activities.

Dr Maïke Glitsch is a University Lecturer and tutorial fellow at St Hilda's college. She has worked in DPAG for fourteen years, first as post-doctoral fellow and now as a member of academic staff. She [REDACTED].

Dr Deborah Goberdhan is a University Research Lecturer, who has been in the Department for seven years as a Research Fellow and then Departmental Lecturer. She is involved in developing Outreach Activities. [REDACTED]

Dr Kristine Krug is a Royal Society University Research Fellow. She leads a research group on the neural basis of perceptual decisions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is a DPhil student, and a graduate representative in the Department.

Dr Mary McMenamin is a Departmental Lecturer. She co-ordinates regular meetings and activities for post-doctoral researchers within the Department and is the Departmental Safety Officer.

Professor Peter Robbins is Head of Department (HoD). His scientific interests lie in integrative human physiology. [REDACTED]

Dr Jan Schnupp is a University Lecturer and tutorial fellow at St Peter's College. He has been at the Department for over twenty years, and has experienced working here as graduate student, post-doctoral research assistant and as a member of the academic staff. [REDACTED]

Dr Damian Tyler is a University Research Lecturer and a British Heart Foundation Intermediate Research Fellow. He contributes experience as a junior academic [REDACTED]

b) An account of the self-assessment process: details of the self-assessment team meetings, including any consultation with staff or individuals outside of the university, and how these have fed into the submission.

In November 2011 the HoD requested that Kay Davies chair a departmental committee responsible for making an application for an Athena SWAN bronze award. Kay Davies invited representatives that covered the diversity of staff to join the committee. As the process developed, new members were recruited to cover areas which were considered under-represented. The committee attended a presentation by Prof S. West of Zoology, who explained how his department had conducted the process. This was followed by an overview of staff and student data available from the University and a description of the Athena SWAN process from the University's Equality and Diversity Unit.

A series of meetings were then scheduled with the first full meeting of the committee on 23rd January 2012. A target date of April 2013 was set for submitting an application. As the committee grew and tackled a range of issues, it was felt a co-chair was needed. Anant Parekh, as a representative of the Department's senior management committee was invited in October 2012 to co-chair the committee with Kay Davies.

An Athena SWAN intranet site was set up both to update all staff and to deposit post meeting minutes. A SharePoint site was also established for the use of the SAT to consolidate data and provide useful information used in the preparation of the application. Focus groups were established according to the different staffing groups; Academics, Fellows, Post-doctoral Researchers and Postgraduate Students.

Following discussion, the committee designed a series of questions concerning views on gender and equality issues, career progression, transparency and involvement in decision making, and overall job satisfaction. This survey was sent to all members of the Department, who were informed that the responses would be treated in strictest confidence and any information provided to the SAT from these surveys would be presented in an anonymous form. The overall response rate from all categories of staff was 52% (187/357); Academic and Fellows 92% (44/48); Post-doctoral Research Assistants (PDRAs) 36% (48/134); Students 44% (48/109); Admin/Tech/Support 71% (47/66). The collated information accrued from an in depth analysis of these surveys was used by the individual focus groups to develop follow up questions which were circulated directly to their respective groups. The responses to both the initial survey and follow-up questions have been used in developing our action plan.

- c) Plans for the future of the self-assessment team, such as how often the team will continue to meet, any reporting mechanisms and in particular how the self-assessment team intends to monitor implementation of the action plan.*

The SAT will continue to meet quarterly in order to monitor carefully the progress of the action plan. The Department is committed totally to Athena SWAN, which has become a standing item at departmental meetings (Academic Staff Meeting, Departmental Management Committee Meeting, Group Leaders Coffee Morning discussions). SAT members will provide regular updates on progress made in achieving our action plan at these meetings. Overall responsibility for implementing our action plan rests with the HoD and the people identified in our action plan. SAT will revise and develop new actions and work towards a silver award.

C. A PICTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT

[SECTION: 1619 words]

a) Provide a pen-picture of the department to set the context for the application, outlining in particular any significant and relevant features.

The Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics (DPAG) is part of the Medical Sciences Division (MSD), the largest of Oxford University's four academic divisions. The Department is actively engaged in research with a turnover in excess of £20 million per year. The Department also makes a substantial contribution to teaching undergraduate students in Pre-Clinical Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, across all stages of their courses. DPAG also provides teaching for various MSc courses (Neuroscience, Developmental and Chromosomal Biology).

The research interests within DPAG are necessarily broad, spanning the gamut of physiological sciences from single molecules to whole animal behaviour. The Department brings together physiologists, biochemists, geneticists, cell and developmental biologists, systems/computational biologists and clinicians.

DPAG has a long-standing reputation for world-class research and teaching. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, the Department (in combination with Pharmacology) was rated the leading pre-clinical biomedical science department in the UK. Several principal investigators (PIs) are international leaders in their fields. The Department has two fellows of the Royal Society, a governor of the Wellcome Trust, five fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences and overall responsibility for research centres (Centre for Neural Circuits and Behaviour, MRC Functional Genomics Unit) and training initiatives (Oxion, CGAT). The last Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) review awarded pre-clinical medicine full marks for all aspects of teaching, of which DPAG provides the largest single contribution.

Members of the Department are categorised as i) academics and senior research fellows (individuals with a contract to retirement age); ii) research fellows (individuals with a fixed-term contract to pursue research and the option to contribute to some teaching should they wish to); iii) post-doctoral scientists (individuals with a fixed-term contract usually from a grant awarded to an academic or research fellow); iv) graduate students, working towards a Masters or DPhil.; v) academic-related and support staff (individuals who are involved with the running of the Department, providing administrative and technical support).

Academics and research fellows are distributed between seven major research themes. Each research area is led by a theme leader, and is designed to foster interaction between staff with related research interests in addition to providing academic leadership and mentoring. Themes get together regularly to discuss research initiatives/strategies and distribution of teaching loads.

DPAG is multi-ethnic, with members from across the world who make essential contributions to the success of the Department. DPAG is committed to inclusiveness, integrity and equal opportunity for all (gender, race, disability and sexual orientation). DPAG strives to ensure members of the Department feel comfortable and valued. During the development of our Athena SWAN programme, our consultations and surveys revealed that our commitments are being broadly met. However, some areas could be strengthened and new initiatives have been suggested, which form part of our action plan. Implementation of these actions will reinforce and strengthen our drive for equality for, and value in, all our members.

- b) *Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.*

STUDENT DATA

- (i) **Numbers of males and females on access or foundation courses** – *comment on the data and describe any initiatives taken to attract women to the courses.*

Although individual members of DPAG are involved with the running of access and foundation courses (such as UNIQ summer school), the Department itself does not provide any foundation courses.

- (ii) **Undergraduate male and female numbers – full and part-time** – *comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the impact to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.*

DPAG provides 60% of the teaching for the 461 students on the pre-clinical medicine degree course. Currently there are 43.6% female and 56.4% male students studying preclinical medicine at Oxford. DPAG does not carry out the administration or recruitment for those students as the process is centralised through the Colleges and the Medical Sciences Teaching Centre.

- (iii) **Postgraduate male and female numbers completing taught courses – full and part-time** – *comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.*

DPAG does not run any taught PG courses and has no plans to do so.

- (iv) **Postgraduate male and female numbers on research degrees – full and part-time** – *comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.*

Many of our graduate students are recruited from outside of Oxford with degrees in biological sciences. 67% of students accepted to study Biological Sciences across the Russell Group are female (data from HESA, average 2008-11). These students are representative of the pool of students from which our graduates are recruited.

Figure 1 shows the postgraduate student numbers by gender for the 2010-12 cohorts. The Department has had 47% female students for this period. This is a higher proportion than the combined total for Oxford departments (32%) and the whole Russell Group (42%) for postgraduate research students in Subjects Allied to Medicine (data from HESA). However the proportion of women is lower than expected from the proposed undergraduate pool (Fig. 1). Our graduate committee will continue to monitor these statistics and we discuss this further in the next section.

The Department does not have any part-time students.



Figure 1. Gender profile of postgraduate cohorts 2010-13

- (v) **Ratio of course applications to offers and acceptances by gender for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research degrees –** *comment on the differences between male and female application and success rates and describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and their effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.*

We do not select undergraduate students nor do we provide any taught postgraduate courses.

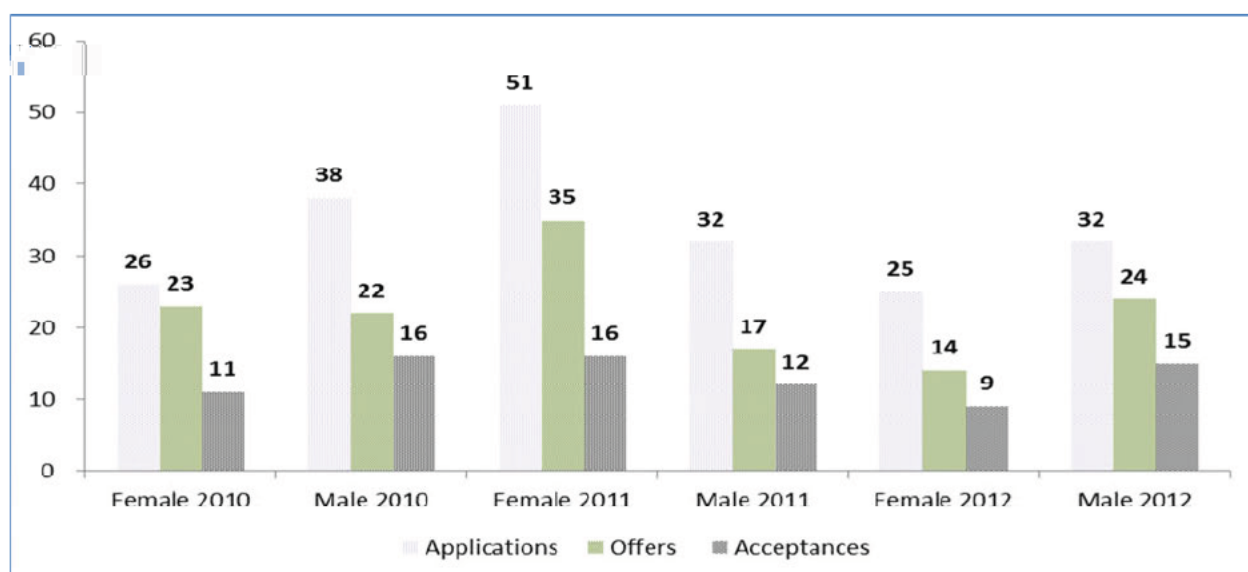


Figure 2. Numbers of postgraduate applications, offers, and acceptance of places by gender.

The Department recruits approximately 30 new DPhil students each year. Figure 2 shows the number of applications, offers, and acceptances by gender over a period of three years. The differences in our cohort and admissions data are due to a small number of students who apply to other departments and later transfer to DPAG. The data show that female students are more likely to be offered places (the average success rate to offer in 2010-12 period is 71% for female applicants and 62% for male applicants) but less likely to take up a postgraduate place (the average success rate from application to a place for 2010-12 is 36% for female applicants and 42% for male applicants). At present, we are unclear about the reasons for these differences and they will be investigated as part of our action plan. One element of the investigation will be to see if there is a gender difference in the available funding to prospective students. Not all places are

funded, the Department ranks students in order of achievement and this information is used in prioritising candidates against the limited funding available. Since the 2012 intake we operate a gathered field approach; all prospective students are now interviewed by a selection committee rather than by individual academics as in previous years. As a consequence, we will be able to interrogate more effectively the relationship between gender, ranking, offers of places and funding, as well as acceptance rates. We will also investigate how these changes to the recruitment process affect the intake.

Action plan – 2.3.1 // 2.3.2

- (vi) **Degree classification by gender** – *comment on any differences in degree attainment between males and females and describe what actions are being taken to address any imbalance.*

Postgraduate research degrees are not classified. However, we have examined the cohorts from 2006 to 2008 to identify if there are any gender differences in completion rates or withdrawals from the programme. The completion rate was 77% (82 students, 38F, 44M) with no significant gender difference. However, the percentage of female students (24%) withdrawing or allowing their study to lapse was close to twice that of male students (the remaining students either transferred out of the programme or accepted a lower award). We plan to identify and record reasons for discontinuing by speaking with PIs and discontinued students where possible. We will also implement exit evaluations for students to learn how we can minimize discontinuation or lapse of study. We have recently appointed a new Graduate Studies Administrator, Sarah Noujaim, in order to improve the experience of graduate students in DPAG.

Action plan – 1.4

STAFF DATA

- (vii) **Female:male ratio of academic staff and research staff – researcher, lecturer, senior lecturer, reader, professor (or equivalent)** – *comment on any differences in numbers between males and females and say what action is being taken to address any under-representation at particular grades/levels.*

The current gender profile of staff in the Department is summarised in Figure 3.

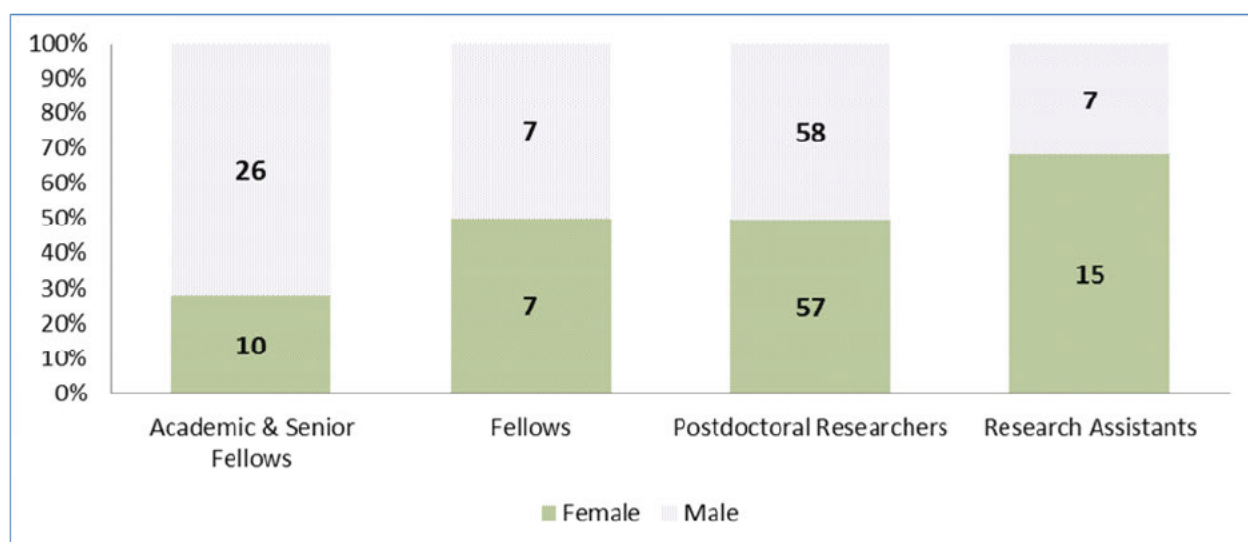


Figure 3. Gender profile of all academic and research staff currently in post (snapshot March 2013)

Within our academic and senior fellow category, we have 17 individuals who are either statutory professors or hold the title of professor (4F/13M), we have 17 individuals who are University lecturers (ULs) (4F/13M) and two departmental lecturers (2F/0M). Females within this Academic group comprise 28%.

We have 129 contract research staff. Within this category 115 (57F/58M) are PDRAs and 14 (7F/7M) fellows (50% female), with the remainder being research assistants (RAs) (75%). Within this category, we have recently created five new fellowships (Early Career Fellows: 2F/3M).

We can see from Figures 4 and 5 that these staff numbers have not changed significantly in the last three years. There is a decline in the number of women as the level of seniority increases from the more junior grades of RAs (75% female) and PDRA/ fellows (50% female) to the more senior grades of ULs (29% female) and statutory/titular professors (22% female). This is a worrying trend, albeit a University wide and national trend, which is discussed further in *Section D. 1. a) (i)* examining job application and success rates by gender. We currently have two female grade 9 researchers but the numbers of researchers at this grade are small. The three year average of grades 7 (61% female) and 8 (50% female) shows there is also a decrease in the proportion of women between grade 7 and 8 (*Section D. 1. a) (i)*).

There is a large proportion of women working as RAs (15/20). This is potentially an important issue because it could reflect women accepting positions for which they are over-qualified. However further analysis showed that only three individuals in this group held a postgraduate qualification. In one case, a male RA with a doctoral qualification had taken the post to support his wife who took a post elsewhere in Oxford. One female post-doc, took an RA position in order to gain enough experience to successfully apply to study medicine. It is also possible that graduates in these positions view them as training to prepare for a postgraduate research degree. We will investigate this further as part of our action plan.

Action plan – 1.1.4

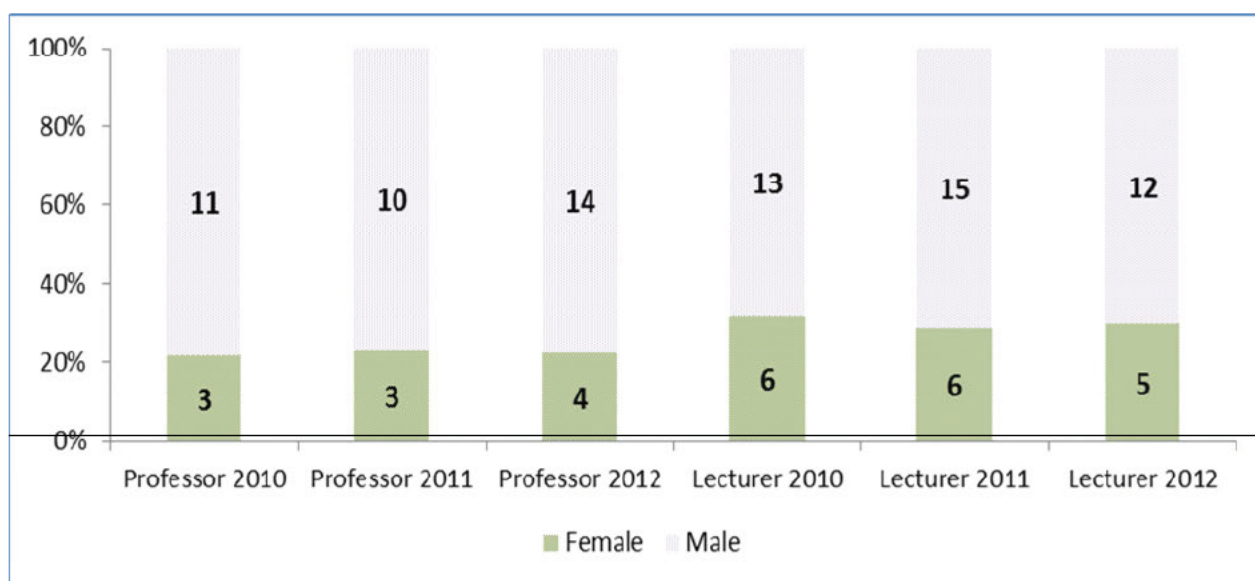


Figure 4. Gender profile of Professors (both statutory and titular) and Lecturers in post 2010-12

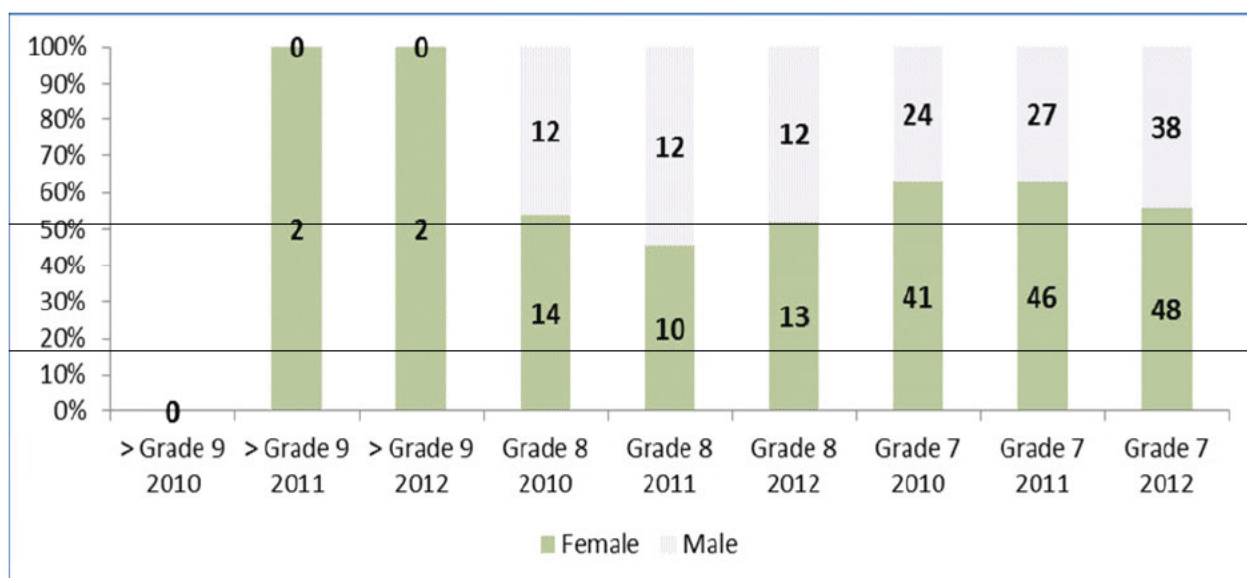


Figure 5. Gender profile of staff in research posts 2010-12

- (viii) **Turnover by grade and gender** – *comment on any differences between men and women in turnover and say what is being done to address this. Where the number of staff leaving is small, comment on the reasons why particular individuals left.*

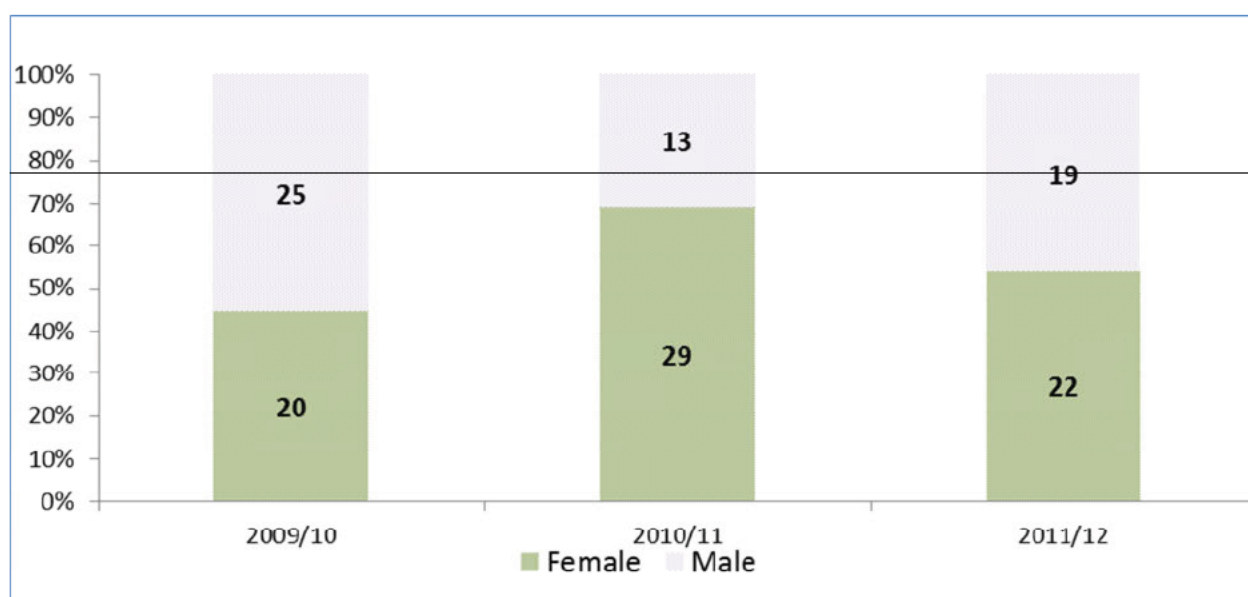


Figure 6. Gender profile of all leavers (research and academic grades) by year.

The turnover rate amongst tenured staff is low; in the past three years, three titular professors have retired (all male) and one UL (also male) has moved on to a professorship elsewhere. There was no gender bias observed for leavers from Grades 7 and 8: 26M and 35F leavers over the three year period from an average employment level of 39M and 57F researchers.

Information on leavers has been recorded across all staff categories. Of these 132 records the majority leave due to coming to the end of a fixed term research contract (43%), which typically last 2-3 years. Other factors include promotion/career prospects (24%) and then personal reasons (15%). We plan to introduce a more formal exit evaluation to capture this information fully.

D. SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S CAREERS

[SECTION: 5189 words]

1. Key career transition points

a) *Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.*

(i) **Job application and success rates by gender and grade** – *comment on any differences in recruitment between men and women at any level and say what action is being taken to address this.*

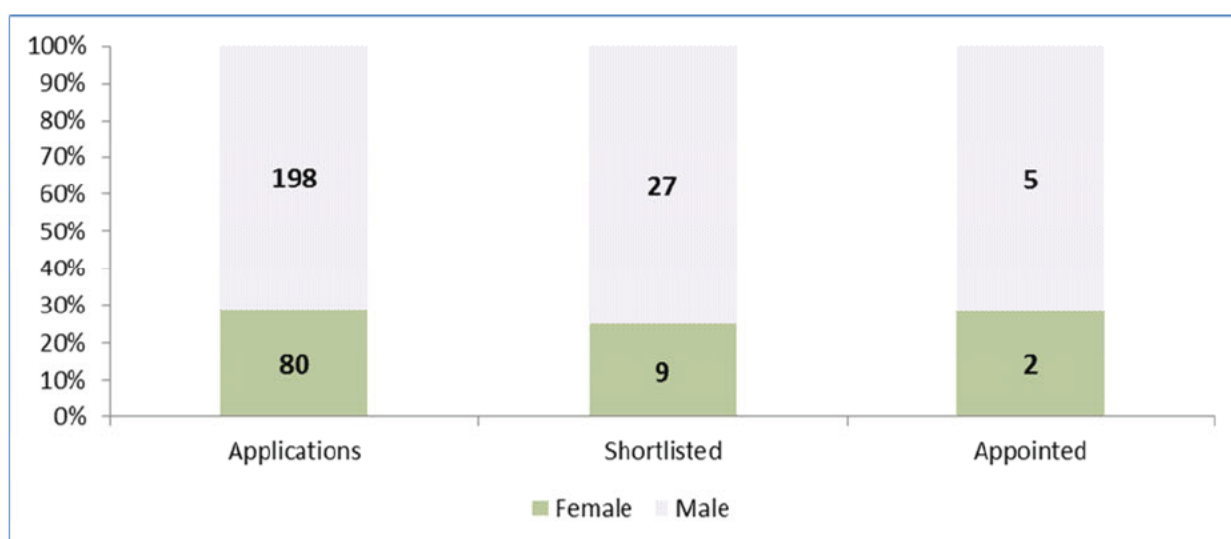


Figure 7. Gender profile of recruitment to University Lectureships for the 2009-12 period

The lower proportion of women occupying academic positions (29%) does not seem to reflect an inherent bias in appointment as a similar fraction (29%) apply for posts as are short-listed (25%). Clearly, more female applicants should be encouraged to apply. To ensure fair recruitment we are also encouraging all senior staff to complete training in Equality and Diversity.

Recently we appointed a female head-hunter to solicit applicants of both genders for our Early Career Fellowships. Seven candidates (3F/4M) were shortlisted from 102 applicants (50F/52M) of which 5 were appointed (2F/3M). Nevertheless, we need to increase the number of qualified female applicants and we will address this through direct actions as well as measures to support women's career development and work-life balance.

While DPAG has made some progress in terms of appointing female applicants, it is apparent that an imbalance in female/male ratios still persists at the transition from fixed term fellowships to University lectureships.

Action plan – 2.1 // 2.2

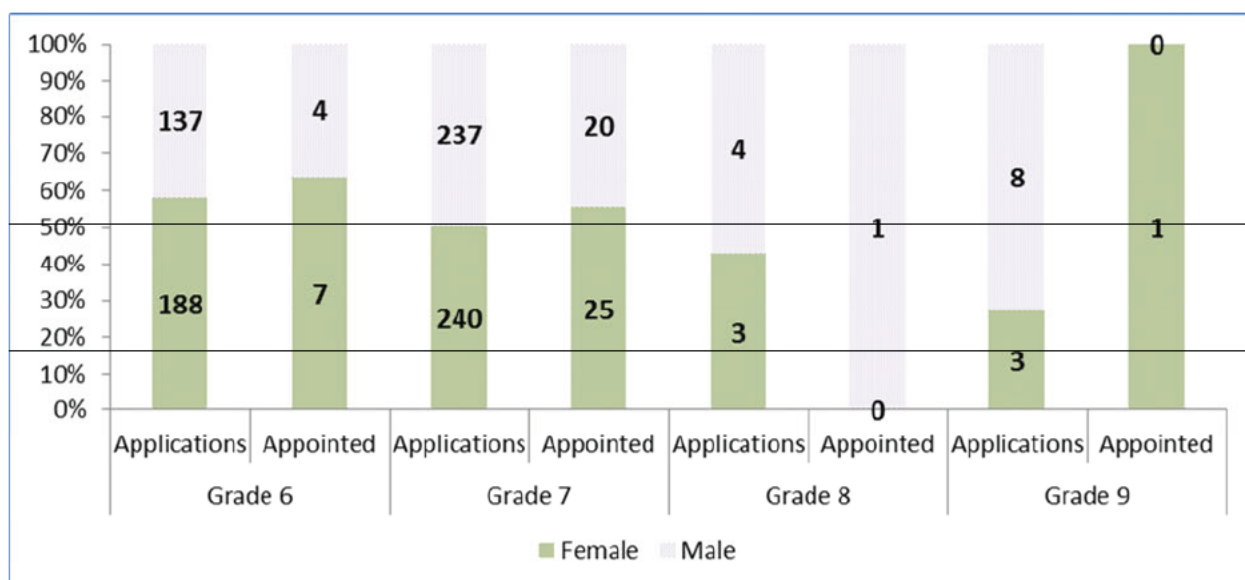


Figure 8. Gender profile of recruitment to research positions for the 2009-12 period

Between 2009 and 2012, 60 research appointments were made on grades 6-9. At grade 6, the average number of applicants per post was 29 of which 57% were female with a similar percentage shortlisted. Of the 11 appointments made, 7 were female (64%). At the RA/PDRA level (grade 7), 45 appointments were made (56% female). For these posts, there were 10 applicants per post (50% female). At grade 8 and higher, the number of appointments made (two) is too small to comment statistically, but we will monitor these numbers.

- (ii) **Applications for promotion and success rates by gender and grade** – *comment on whether these differ for men and women and if they do explain what action may be taken. Where the number of women is small applicants may comment on specific examples of where women have been through the promotion process. Explain how potential candidates are identified.*

Oxford does not have a formal promotions process. Promotion of Lecturers is through open competition for one of a small number of Statutory Chairs. The University holds a biennial Recognition of Distinction exercise (RODE) for ULs and Senior Fellows, who are invited to apply for a titular professorship. In the last exercise, 2/4 applicants (all male) were successful. We will encourage more female scientists to apply for future RODEs.

Action plan – 1.2

The University confers the title of University Research Lecturer on senior post-doctoral scientists or fellows who have the academic standing expected of a UL. The Department annually reviews its staff against the strict criteria required which include: independent external funding, a track record of good publications, and contributions to the Department in teaching and administration. Since 2009 there have been six applications (4F) and three lectureships (1F/2M) have been awarded.

There are two mechanisms for promotion available to post-doctoral scientists in the University:

- **Promotion via application to a different post:** in the past three years, three internal candidates (2F/1M) applied and were appointed to University Lectureships. The

Department has recently held a recruitment exercise to appoint five Early Career Research Fellows. Two internal candidates, both female, were successful in their applications.

- **Regrading:** over the past three years, three members of the research staff have applied for regrading. All three (all female) were successful. Our staff survey has indicated that there is a lack of awareness about the regrading process. Ways of disseminating this information, both to supervisors and members of staff, will be investigated as part of the action plan.

Action plan – 1.1.2

b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

- (i) **Recruitment of staff** – *comment on how the department's recruitment processes ensure that female candidates are attracted to apply, and how the department ensures its short listing, selection processes and criteria comply with the university's equal opportunities policies.*

DPAG advertises its posts widely, including posting on the Departmental Website, the University's Jobs and Vacancies website, on jobs.ac.uk, in publications including Nature and on websites of professional bodies (e.g. Physiological Society, British Endocrinological Society) and includes the University's bronze Athena SWAN logo as appropriate. In addition, we have recently used a female head-hunter to increase international awareness of our positions. Care is taken in advertisements to use inclusive language, and adverts include the phrase 'committed to equality and valuing diversity', or – in the case of ULs, 'applications are particularly welcome from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in Oxford'.

Selection panels must include at least one female member of staff, and recruitment is always monitored by a representative from DPAG's HR team. We are encouraging more senior members of staff to complete the OLI's on-line course on 'Recruitment and selection' as well as the on-line 'Equality and Diversity' course.

Action plan – 2.2

Our recruitment data indicate that applications for research posts are generally well balanced in terms of gender. Fewer females apply for ULs and this is reflected in a correspondingly smaller number of female appointments. A review of methods to encourage more women to apply will include establishing links to family friendly information, the possibilities for flexible working and other staff benefits, as well as reviewing actions taken by those science departments in other universities with higher female recruitment. We will also explore how best to help applicants who need to plan a workable dual career structure with their partner.

Action plan – 6.1.1 // 6.1.2

- (ii) **Support for staff at key career transition points** – *having identified key areas of attrition of female staff in the department, comment on any interventions, programmes and activities that support women at the crucial stages, such as personal development training, opportunities for networking,*

mentoring programmes and leadership training. Identify which have been found to work best at the different career stages.

Support for staff in DPAG begins at interview: the HR team issues each applicant with a hard copy of the University's 'New to the University' information, so that they have as much background information to (a) inform their decision to accept an offer of employment at DPAG and (b) help establish themselves in their Oxford career.

The OLI provides a very thorough support base for staff, with courses for academic, research and support staff at different stages of their careers. Further support is provided as various skills training courses organised by the MSD. A support base especially for research staff has also recently been set up by the University's careers service. Information about programmes offered by OLI is emailed to all staff, including PIs, on a termly basis by DPAG HR. PIs are requested to encourage attendance when relevant.

Support specifically for women is provided by the Springboard professional development programme, and, for academic staff, the Ad Feminam mentoring scheme which offers women the opportunity to explore leadership roles in their academic lives. Springboard provides opportunities to network with other women in the University, solicit career advice, gain skills and confidence to apply for promotion, and take on positions of leadership both within the Department and the University. The number of women attending Springboard from DPAG is low (4 over the last three years and 2 scheduled to attend). We plan to advertise the programme more widely and encourage female members of staff to participate in Springboard and other OLI courses. The Department's HR manager will talk to the various groups (students and staff) about her experience of Springboard and this will be followed up with talks from other participants.

Action plan – 1.1.6 // 6.2.3

Our Department has, for the past four years, run a women-only dinner twice a year, where female group leaders and senior post-doctoral researchers gather and discuss science, career progression and mentorship. Issues/concerns are fed back regularly to the HoD. The Department has also been in discussion with the Department of Biochemistry who has invited us to join in their 'Women in Science' seminar series.

Within the Department, there is a mentoring scheme for all newly appointed ULs. Our new Early Career Fellows will also be appointed a mentor. As yet, there is no formal Personal Development Review (PDR) in DPAG, although some PIs do have informal reviews with their staff.

Our survey revealed that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement 'My supervisor takes an interest in my career development'. However, 10 women and 3 men disagreed with this statement (14% of respondents) indicating that interest from supervisors is variable. Our action plan explores ways of addressing these issues with the introduction of a PDR scheme.

Action plan – 1.1

DPAG now has a dedicated Research Facilitator from whom support and advice is provided on grant proposals to PIs and individual members of staff as they approach key transition points.

The Department is piloting a scheme for its early career researchers funded on fixed term contracts which will allow individuals to develop novel pilot projects around which they can apply

for future funding. The scheme will provide up to one year's salary costs together with some support for consumables to bridge the funding gap. There were 11 applicants for the scheme (5F/6M) with four awards being offered (2F/2M). It is too early to estimate the impact this programme will have. One success measure of the programme will be the ability of the applicant to have gained independent funding. This will be monitored and reviewed over the next two years.

Action plan – 1.5

2. Career development

For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

- (i) **Promotion and career development** – *comment on the appraisal and career development process, and promotion criteria and whether these take into consideration responsibilities for teaching, research, administration, pastoral work and outreach work; is quality of work emphasised over quantity of work?*

Restructuring the Department into research themes has facilitated appraisal and mentoring for *Academic Staff* by the relevant theme leader, who feeds back to the HoD. However, this has been rather informal, at the discretion of the theme leader and with no systematic annual appraisal. Dissatisfaction about the lack of formal appraisal and mentoring was a consistent theme in our staff survey. Regardless of gender, younger members of academic staff felt there was limited advice on career progression and occasionally felt isolated. We have recognised this shortcoming and part of our action plan is to develop a more frequent and formal appraisal process with the involvement of the HoD, as appropriate.

Action plan – 1.1

Feedback from our survey demonstrated that *Research Fellows* were particularly concerned about the lack of a formal PDR scheme, the need for clearer advice on career progression, salary regrading, and access to titular promotion. Although this is independent of gender, we are eager to correct this as a matter of urgency, given that research fellows are at a particularly vulnerable stage of their careers. With input from the fellows on the SAT, we have identified several mechanisms we will implement to address this.

The Department does not currently operate a formal PDR scheme for *PDRAs*. Career advice and mentoring is provided by each PI. Our survey indicated that there is considerable variability amongst PIs. 60% of respondents indicated that they were provided with regular advice/guidance whereas some supervisors rarely raised these issues. Career progression within academia for PDRAs generally involves the transition to an independent research position. The major factor determining award of an independent fellowship is the applicant's publication record. We recognise the difficulties in improving publication records but we aim to provide a supportive environment with more mentoring/career advice within the research theme framework.

Action plan – 1.1

Graduate students provide and receive formal feedback on a termly basis via the Graduate Supervision System. These student/supervisor reports are read by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who can provide guidance and advice when necessary. In addition, the student's College allocates an Advisor who can offer additional support. The student survey revealed that the majority (90% regardless of gender) are content with the support structure available.

- (ii) **Induction and training** – *describe the support provided to new staff at all levels, as well as details of any gender equality training. To what extent are good employment practices in the institution, such as opportunities for networking, the flexible working policy, and professional and personal development opportunities promoted to staff from the outset?*

The staff survey indicated that most respondents did not feel they had received an adequate induction to DPAG, and only 17% of respondents had any equality and diversity training. The HR department will implement a new Induction programme, which will include regular induction days supplemented by on-line information and checklists. The programme will include greater promotion of good employment practices, including the University's on-line induction course and equality and diversity programmes. During induction, we will alert members to the Athena SWAN and OxFEST (Oxford Females in Science, Engineering and Technology) websites and female specific courses in the University.

Action plan – 4.1.1

The University and Division provide a regular series of career, professional and personal development courses, which are promoted by email in the Department on a termly basis. The new HRIS system will enable us to maintain training records and thus monitor the take-up of training. The survey indicates that we need to do more to promote awareness of the provision available, and this will be addressed as part of our action plan.

Action plan – 6.2.3

- (iii) **Support for female students** – *describe the support (formal and informal) provided for female students to enable them to make the transition to a sustainable academic career, particularly from postgraduate to researcher, such as mentoring, seminars and pastoral support and the right to request a female personal tutor. Comment on whether these activities are run by female staff and how this work is formally recognised by the department.*

Support for graduate students within DPAG is provided through the DGS. Further support can be obtained from Student Doctoral Training Advisor (SDTA) programme, where students are grouped with a PDRA outside of their research group. These small groups of ~10 people are allocated by the DGS to enable student interaction with an advisor outside their field and gain a wider perspective of the Department. The students prepare presentations for meetings with their SDTA each term.

There are several support networks available to students in the University including the Springboard women's network, OxFEST who also run a mentoring scheme, and the Oxford University Student Union who offer counselling and a student advice service. In addition, students are provided with college advisors who provide both advice and pastoral support when needed.

The Department organises a range of programmes aimed at supporting graduate students. These include:

- A poster competition for graduates at the end of their first year, providing an opportunity for the students to present their research and meet other members of DPAG.
- DPAG HR regularly informs students and their supervisors about training courses that are being run by the University and MSD.
- Graduate Studies routinely alerts students to seminars and encourages them to attend.
- The Department provides £500 during the course of study for students to attend national/international conferences, often topped up by their college.
- The Department pays for all Biomedical Science students to be members of the UK Physiological Society, enabling students to attend scientific meetings at a significantly reduced cost.
- Graduate coffee mornings, which cover a variety of topics from induction to the Department, to career and teaching opportunities.

We recognise that the Department could provide more gender specific support. During graduate students' induction day, we dedicate a section to Athena SWAN and encourage the students to participate in OxFEST and Springboard courses.

3. Organisation and culture

a) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

- (i) **Male and female representation on committees** – *provide a breakdown by committee and explain any differences between male and female representation. Explain how potential members are identified.*

There are seven primary committees advising the HoD, shown in Figure 9.

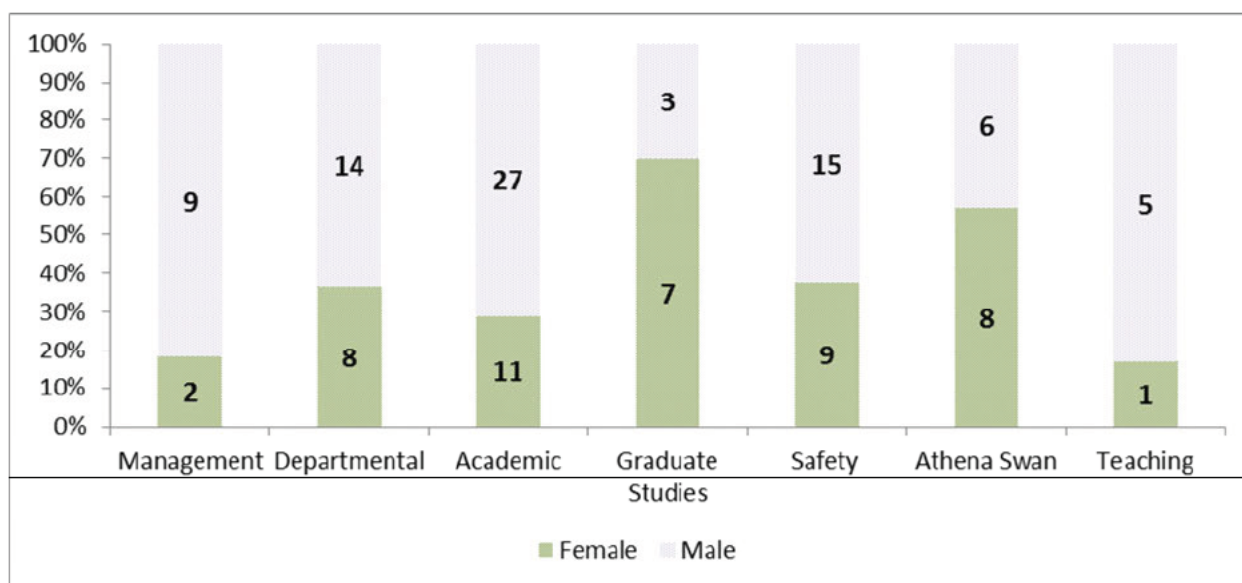


Figure 9. Gender profile of committees in the Department

- **Management Committee** (chair: HoD - male) has an ex-officio membership of the science theme leaders, plus the director of undergraduate and DGS. These are senior academics and are appointed by the HoD as individuals who are interested in leading the development of their scientific themes or the teaching responsibilities of the Department. The committee advises the HoD on strategic matters and is where major executive decisions are debated.
- **Departmental Committee** (chair: HoD) comprises all the administrative section heads together with representation from academic staff, fellows, PDRAs, RAs and graduate students. It meets once a term to oversee the services and general environment of the Department.
- **Academic Committee** (chair: HoD) includes all PIs within the Department. It meets twice a term and discusses matters of major strategic importance.
- **Graduate Studies Committee** (chair: DGS - female) has a membership that is proposed by the DGS to ensure the right level of seniority and that all areas of DPAG research are represented. There are also two graduate representatives who attend the meetings. This membership is ratified by the Management Committee. The committee has delegated authority to manage graduate studies matters, including our admissions process and allocation of studentships.
- **Safety Committee** (chair: Departmental Safety Officer - female) has a delegated authority to manage certain health and safety matters, and advises the HoD in relation to others. Its membership is drawn from both the administrative and academic staff.
- **Athena SWAN Committee** (co-chair: Statutory Professor – female) advises the HoD on matters relating to gender balance in the Department together with broader issues relating to equality and diversity. It has taken responsibility for preparing the Department's Athena SWAN application.
- **Teaching Committee** (chair: Director of Undergraduate Studies – male) balances the teaching and examining workload across the staff of the Department in liaison with the Medical Sciences Teaching Centre and HoD.

The Management Committee has been running for 18 months. It replaced a number of topic-based committees (research, education, etc.) and is an attempt to have a more holistic approach to running the Department. Its membership, including gender balance, has been the subject of some discussion at the Athena SWAN committee and revision of this is an action point within our plan.

Action plan – 3.4

For the Departmental Committee, members are selected from a number of different constituencies. In the case of other committees, a membership is first suggested by the relevant committee chair. This is discussed with the individual, with the HoD and any other interested parties before being brought to the Management Committee for approval. The HoD takes responsibility for identifying committee chairs with a relevant expertise for those committees where the chair is not the HoD. We consider gender balance while taking care not to over-burden the relatively small number of senior women.

At any one time, there are also a number of transient committees in existence. Of these, the most influential are our appointment committees where we always require a member in the scientific discipline for which the post is advertised as well as a mixed female/male membership. In nearly all cases, the committee will comprise of the HoD, other departmental staff, two college

representatives (normally Head of College and the senior tutor) and one external to the Department with experience in the relevant scientific discipline.

- (ii) **Female:male ratio of academic and research staff on fixed-term contracts and open-ended (permanent) contracts** – *comment on any differences between male and female staff representation on fixed-term contracts and say what is being done to address them.*

Almost all academic staff (the exception being the occasional more junior departmental lecturer), both teaching and research are appointed on permanent contracts, with confirmation of tenure after successful completion of their five-year probationary period. Of the staff shown in Figure 3, 100% (37) of the academic staff and senior fellows have contracts to retirement. In research posts 100% (129) of DPAG researchers and fellows are on fixed term contracts compared to 96% in MSD. This is reflective of the nature of research posts at Oxford.

- b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.*

- (i) **Representation on decision-making committees** – *comment on evidence of gender equality in the mechanism for selecting representatives. What evidence is there that women are encouraged to sit on a range of influential committees inside and outside the department? How is the issue of ‘committee overload’ addressed where there are small numbers of female staff?*

The committee within the Department that gives most concern in relation to gender balance is our Management Committee. A review of its composition is part of our action plan.

Action plan – 3.4

The influential committees that sit over the Department’s committee structure have a mixed membership. It is partly ex-officio, and partly determined by election, with the electorate typically including both academics and fixed-term fellows. The HoD has encouraged and signed nominations for females to be part of these committees.

There are two members of DPAG who are ex-officio members of the Medical Sciences Board (1F – Kay Davies/1M). Composition of the Board as a whole: 2F, 12M. There are two elected members of University Council (1F – Kay Davies/1M). Composition of Council as a whole: 10F, 15M. Kay Davies also sits on the University’s Personnel Committee, two REF Committees, and the Honorary Degrees Committee. Her responsibilities at a departmental level have been reduced to reflect these additional responsibilities.

The potential for committee overload is greatest amongst our academic staff where we have a deficit of women. This is addressed in two ways. First, we try to avoid unnecessary committees. Second, we try to bring more junior members on to committees wherever possible. Despite these two factors, senior women are more frequently asked to serve on appointment and re-appointment committees because of the seniority required for these roles. Individuals only serve on these committees when it is within their capacity to do so, following discussion with the HoD.

- (ii) **Workload model** – *describe the systems in place to ensure that workload allocations, including pastoral and administrative responsibilities (including the responsibility for work on women and science) are taken into account at appraisal and in promotion criteria. Comment on the rotation of responsibilities e.g. responsibilities with a heavy workload and those that are seen as good for an individual's career.*

Fellows, PDRAs, RAs and graduate students essentially have full time research commitments. Their workload is either managed by themselves (Fellows), or by their research group leader. Individuals wishing to pursue a career in science are encouraged and supported to take on teaching commitments and administrative or pastoral duties that will give them valuable experience and strengthen their CV. For departmental teaching, there is a comprehensive system to ensure that feedback from undergraduates is available to all teachers on a course.

In almost all cases, academic staff have a contractual duty to take part in the teaching, examining, and administration of the Department. Teaching is co-ordinated centrally for all pre-clinical departments and within the Department the responsibility for managing workload is passed down to the six theme leaders. The lecture list is circulated to all staff. Theme leaders take into account the teaching areas to be covered, research commitments and research funding (as a yardstick of activity) along with other commitments that academics may be undertaking that are of indirect benefit to the Department – e.g. editing a journal, outreach, membership of national grants panels or administration for the Division or University.

Officerships in the Department with more substantial responsibilities, for example DGS, Director of Pre-Clinical Studies and Departmental Safety Officer are appointed on a rotational fixed-term basis.

Finally, workload planning takes account of individuals' circumstances, talents and interests. We have some senior academics who prefer to take a heavier teaching and administrative role in lieu of being less research active. Following review meetings with some junior academics, the HoD and their mentor have identified the need for additional support in order to progress their research and support them in their career. Where appropriate, the HoD has reduced their administrative responsibilities and through a College teaching buy-out paid for substitute college teaching. Our survey shows that the majority of staff consider their workload to be reasonable and allocated fairly and transparently.

One of our action points is to introduce PDR for employees. This will give us more feedback on Workload.

Action plan – 1.1

- (iii) **Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings** – *provide evidence of consideration for those with family responsibilities, for example what the department considers to be core hours and whether there is a more flexible system in place.*

Core hours are considered to be Mon-Fri, 10am – 4pm.

However, the nature of academic work allows considerable flexibility, and the HoD does not prescribe any fixed hours for research group leaders – apart from fixed teaching duties and committee meeting dates/times.

Working hours within a research group are managed by the group leader. The nature of research is such that experiments can be started to afford flexibility and PIs are encouraged to agree all reasonable requests for flexibility. There have been no disputed issues raised with the HR department over the last three years. Committees avoid meeting during school holiday periods – including half-terms. All major committees meet within the core hours.

Our main departmental seminar is from 1 – 2pm on a Friday.

Some of our social gatherings are during evenings – e.g. Christmas party (we also have a lunchtime event), retirement dinners, research theme dinners. Our approach to inclusivity is to give as much notice as possible for such events so that childcare arrangements can be made.

- (iv) **Culture** – *demonstrate how the department is female-friendly and inclusive. 'Culture' refers to the language, behaviours and other informal interactions that characterise the atmosphere of the department, and includes all staff and students.*

As an academic community, we attach considerable importance to inclusiveness. Our Department has a very international composition and one which turns over fairly rapidly. We need to be very aware of the potential for loneliness and unhappiness that can result from being far from one's own culture. We have good, recently refurbished, common room facilities which we subsidise by ~£60k per year to provide an attractive environment for informal interaction.

We organise weekly coffee morning meetings for academic staff, PDRAs and students. The idea is to help people to get to know one another across research groups, rather than simply within research groups, in a way in which experiences and concerns may be shared.

The HoD is aware of the importance of engaging staff with their department, and that to achieve this, it is necessary for individuals within the Department to feel empowered and able to effect change. Fundamentally, for almost all matters, it is more important that people are engaged and doing things than it is for all the things to be done exactly as the HoD might wish.

Two positive examples are: i) the recent establishment of a common room and social committee with participation from junior members of the Department; and ii) the establishment by the graduate students of a departmental newsletter.

Our students and RAs are involved in managing some thematic seminars. The Cortex Club is a recently formed group where students across the University's science departments meet several times termly. The format ranges from smaller debates to large discussion sessions with capacity audiences led by internationally prominent speakers. A senior professor from the Department sits on the committee to provide guidance. Up to 75 students attend and the Department provides some financial support.

We propose to increase the visibility of female scientists in the Department by ensuring a gender balance in seminar series and portraiture and establishing a named lecture and prize.

Action plan – 3.1

Two instances of bullying and harassment were reported to our trained harassment advisors since 2009. This was not reflected by our survey, in which 24% of staff responded that they had witnessed bullying and harassment of others in the Department. We will act as a matter of urgency to raise awareness of how to report cases of harassment, and make it clear to all staff that it is an issue that the Department takes extremely seriously.

Action plan – 3.3

- (v) **Outreach activities** – *comment on the level of participation by female and male staff in outreach activities with schools and colleges and other centres. Describe who the programmes are aimed at, and how this activity is formally recognised as part of the workload model and in appraisal and promotion processes.*

DPAG is particularly strong in the breadth of its Outreach and public engagement activities. In a data gathering exercise 13 women and 17 men reported involvement in a range of Outreach activities during the last three years, so women are well represented in these activities. The cutting-edge research at DPAG attracts considerable media interest as overviewed in the following table.

Public Engagement Activities	Female	Male
National TV, radio, newspaper features, popular science books	5	7
Local TV, radio and newspaper features, public lectures, Science Festivals, University Open Days or events linked to national charities	13	10
Outreach Activities		
Talks, research projects, and lab visits for school children, summer schools, teacher conferences, curricula development and school governing bodies	13	9

DPAG has done much to support the careers of distinguished academics, who play an important role in public engagement. Most notably: Fran Ashcroft, winner of the L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science Award in 2012 and author of popular science books including 'The Spark of Life', has participated in host of public engagement activities, including national radio and newspaper coverage. Kay Davies has given a number of national TV and newspaper interviews and a wide range of public lectures. Denis Noble has given over 50 plenary lectures in 20 different countries, many of which were triggered by interest in his book, 'The Music of Life'. While we encourage all Outreach activities, in our action plan, we have outlined plans to improve communication about these and to ensure recognition of Outreach activities in our workload allocation.

Action plan – 5

4. Flexibility and managing career breaks

a) *Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.*

- (i) **Maternity return rate** – *comment on whether maternity return rate in the department has improved or deteriorated and any plans for further improvement. If the department is unable to provide a maternity return rate, please explain why.*

The University has a very generous maternity leave scheme, which enables eligible staff to take up to 52 weeks' leave (26 on full pay, 13 on Statutory Maternity Pay, and 13 unpaid). Once a member of staff notifies the HR department that she is pregnant, a health and safety risk assessment is carried out, and an individual maternity plan is drawn up.

Over the last three years, there have been 11 occasions where maternity leave has been taken with one member of research staff taking two periods of leave: 10 PDRA's (nine at grade 7 and one at grade 8) and one RA. All have returned to work, except for one PDRA, whose family moved abroad. A recent UL recruitment exercise has appointed a female who will be taking maternity leave in the very near future.

The University provides four subsidised nurseries and some places at private nurseries; and a salary sacrifice scheme and a nursery voucher scheme are available to staff parents. It is not known how many members of the Department use the University nurseries. DPAG does not subsidise any nursery places, and it will be a part of our action plan to investigate the need for sponsoring such places, as well as making information about childcare provision more widely and easily available.

Action plan – 3.5 // 6.2.2

- (ii) **Paternity, adoption and parental leave uptake** – *comment on the uptake of paternity leave by grade and parental and adoption leave by gender and grade. Has this improved or deteriorated and what plans are there to improve further.*

During the past three years five members of staff (one academic member of staff, three PDRA's and one RA) have taken ordinary paternity leave. One male PDRA has taken adoption leave. There have been no applications from members of staff to take parental leave formally during this time, although informal arrangements to take family leave do occur.

- (iii) **Numbers of applications and success rates for flexible working by gender and grade** – *comment on any disparities. Where the number of women in the department is small applicants may wish to comment on specific examples.*

There have been two formal applications for flexible working. One was successfully arranged for a PDRA; another, for a member of the administrative and support staff, was withdrawn after other family arrangements were made. There are many informal arrangements made within research groups. Women returning from maternity leave often stagger their return to full-time work, for example; and parents are supported to fit their working days around the need to drop children off at school or nursery etc. The University policy on issuing car parking permits makes family and childcare matters a priority in order to aid this flexibility. However, the information about

procedures for applying for flexible work could be better disseminated, and this will be addressed in our action plan. This will include posting further information on our intranet including a family friendly section.

Action plan – 6.2.2

b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

- (i) **Flexible working** – *comment on the numbers of staff working flexibly and their grades and gender, whether there is a formal or informal system, the support and training provided for managers in promoting and managing flexible working arrangements, and how the department raises awareness of the options available.*

The majority of our staff makes use of informal flexible working and, as many of the requests for flexible working are made on an informal basis, it is hard to measure uptake and success rate. We acknowledge that more should be done to support and train managers in promoting and managing such arrangements, and this will be addressed in our action plan. Details of how to request flexible working will be posted on our intranet, and we will gather data for resulting requests systematically by grade and gender.

Action plan – 6.2.2

Several members of the Department live a considerable distance away. In these instances their workload and working practices have been reviewed and adjusted where possible to accommodate this. One striking example is where an academic member of staff lives over 100 miles away and can split time between working from home and in the Department to support both family life and career aspirations.

A small number of staff has been appointed or elected to work on a part-time basis. In 2011 this was 10 staff in total, two male academics and eight researchers (6F/2M). We will continue to offer where appropriate.

- (ii) **Cover for maternity and adoption leave and support on return** – *explain what the department does, beyond the university maternity policy package, to support female staff before they go on maternity leave, arrangements for covering work during absence, and to help them achieve a suitable work-life balance on their return.*

Members of staff who are pregnant meet the HR Manager to make plans for their maternity leave. They discuss health and safety issues, work through the University's maternity plan, and if appropriate consider the possibilities of sharing the leave with their partner. The use of Keep in Touch days is discussed, and the right to be considered for flexible working on return from maternity leave. The possibilities of using accrued ordinary leave to help ease the returning member of staff back to work are also discussed. Some members of staff prefer to extend their maternity leave by taking the ordinary leave immediately after the paid maternity leave ends; others use it to work a shorter week for the early months after returning. Information about childcare, the salary sacrifice scheme and nursery vouchers, and directions to government websites giving information about the various benefits for parents are also discussed.

Funding for maternity leave depends upon the terms and conditions of the grantors concerned. Some will not fund such leave, but will provide funding for alternative cover. Some allow a grant to be put in abeyance during the leave. The Department always funds maternity leave if the grantor does not, and each case is considered on an individual basis to ensure maximum benefit to the member of staff while considering the needs of the Department. Plans are made to cover teaching and other commitments for academic staff going on maternity leave.

Two recent examples are: one PDRA intends to take the full year off work. She is funded by the [REDACTED] The Department will fund her maternity leave and she has been involved in recruiting her cover, and will provide handover. Another member of staff [REDACTED] is planning to take all her accrued ordinary leave immediately before her maternity leave. [REDACTED] return from maternity leave, and plans will be made to ensure that her teaching and administrative workload is reduced and gradually built up over a measured period of time.

The Department supports parents with young children in a number of ways. They are given a high priority in allotting car parking permits in line with University policies. Working hours are flexible, to allow for school and nursery pick up/drop off. Families are encouraged to attend departmental events such as the summer garden party. We plan to launch a 'Parents-net' forum on the DPAG intranet, to enable members of staff to exchange information about nurseries and child minders, babysitters and play-schemes etc.

Action plan – 6.2.2

E. Any other comments

Please comment here on any other elements which are relevant to the application, e.g. other SET-specific initiatives of special interest that have not been covered in the previous sections. Include any other relevant data (e.g. results from staff surveys), provide a commentary on it and indicate how it is planned to address any gender disparities identified.

F. Action plan

Provide an action plan as an appendix. An action plan template is available on the Athena SWAN website.

The Action Plan should be a table or a spreadsheet comprising actions to address the priorities identified by the analysis of relevant data presented in this application, success/outcome measures, the post holder responsible for each action and a timeline for completion. The plan should cover current initiatives and your aspirations for the next three years.

The action plan does not need to cover all areas at Bronze; however the expectation is that the department will have the organisational structure to move forward, including collecting the necessary data.