

Athena SWAN Feedback – April 2020 round

Department application feedback

Please note that the below feedback is not an exhaustive appraisal of every point made in the submission and that Athena SWAN Charter panel assessments are made “in the round”.

Institution and department name:	University of Oxford, Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics
Level of award applied for:	Silver
Overall comments	
<p>The panel commend the department on this Silver application, which clearly meets the criteria for both a Bronze and Silver award. In terms of the Bronze criteria, the department have undertaken a thorough self-assessment of gender equality, using both qualitative and quantitative data from staff and students to successfully analyse and reflect on where they are in terms of gender equality, as well and where they want to be; the panel highlight the use of mini case studies throughout as effective. Challenges and opportunities from the data are identified, and these feed through into an action plan which is generally SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). The department demonstrates a clear understanding of future challenges and opportunities. The clear explanation of the institutional context in which the department operates is helpful, as well as the detail on the unusual context of the department itself in having no undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. Further, the panel commend the way the department honestly responds to identified issues, e.g. training, induction. The panel agree that the criteria for a Bronze award have been met. In terms of the Silver criteria, the department consistently demonstrates that they have taken action in response to previously identified challenges and can evidence the impact of those actions, particularly around the increased positive experiences and perceptions of staff and students. The application demonstrates how the department has responded to feedback and made positive changes as a result. The panel are unanimous in their decision to recommend a Silver award be conferred.</p> <p>The panel highlight a number of good practice examples, which demonstrate the department's commitment to improving gender equality, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ex-officio</i> self-assessment team (SAT) members have formal responsibility in job descriptions (the panel encourage the department to think of ways through which volunteer SAT members might have their contributions recognised and rewarded); • The Head of Department leads the anti-bullying and harassment campaign; • Coffee morning specific to professional and support staff (PSS) led by Head of Administration; • Raising the profile and celebrating PSS through the departmental newsletter; • Comprehensive range of consultation methods used; • Use of rainbow lanyards; • Introduction of staff and student running, yoga and board game groups in response to consultation; • Mandatory bullying and harassment training for all, championed by the Head of Department; • Core hours of 10am-3pm; • Speaker gender balance is within remit of seminar series' organisers; and • Increase in gender neutral imagery. <p>In terms of impact from actions, the panel identified several examples, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased feeling of integration across sites due to specific activities and social events (p.11); • Improved SAT gender representation due to AS talks being given in different forums (p.12); • Pilot scheme to identify, support, and mentor female applicants at Titular Associate Professor level which improved female senior representation (pp.35-36); • Relunched PDR with in-house training and guidance, leading to increased uptake (p.45); • Improved PSS manager confidence in providing career support, as well as increase in PSS planning career development as a result of improved support and awareness for staff (p.56); • Responding to feedback from Parents Focus Group by filling information gaps, leading to increased awareness of where to find information (p.58); and • Increase in understanding paternity and shared parental leave by targeted communications, as well as increased inquires to HR about taking leave (p.62). 	

Whilst the panel commend the diversity of SAT membership, they comment that all *ex-officio* SAT members are female PSS – the department is encouraged to reflect on this.

The panel encourage the department to think about how they can champion and promote their experiences of improving gender equality and best practice initiatives to the wider community, as well as developing beacon activities which build on the momentum of success. The regular monitoring and evaluation of actions, along with plans to continue consulting with staff and students, will help the department embed a reflective self-assessment cycle to enable progress and impact to be measured over time, helping to demonstrate significant and sustained progression and achievement.

Result

Silver

Good Practice Example

Action to create funder guidance to raise awareness of what different funders permit in terms of maternity and parental leave and cover.