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SUMMARY

The University of Warwick became a member of the Athena SWAN Charter in 2009. The Charter recognises and celebrates good employment practice for women working in Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine (STEM) in Higher Education and attempts to address gender inequalities within disciplines. Commitment to the Charter will assist the University in raising its Equality and Diversity profile internally and externally, and provides a framework on which to build on current good practice. Further information about the Charter can be found at: http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/html/athena-swan/

This is the first formal report on the University of Warwick Athena SWAN work since the successful submission for a Bronze Institutional award in 2010.

The report summarises the progress that has been made against the Action Plan that formed part of the University’s Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2010 (see Appendix 1 for a detailed account of progress made against the Plan). Some of the principal accountabilities originally identified in the Plan have now been accomplished or partially accomplished, and work is continuing to be progressed on some of the actions that were given a longer timeframe for achievement.

As a requirement of the Specific Duties under the Equality Act 2010, the University compiled a list of equality objectives for publication in the public domain by April 2012. It was resolved by the Equality and Diversity Committee, at their meeting on 8 February 2009, that to avoid the University having a number of Action Plans, covering in part, the same type of issues, that the Athena Action Plan, along with the Single Equality Action Plan would be amalgamated into one document which would in turn, form the University’s Equality Objectives 2012 - 2015:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/singleequalitiy scheme/

Attention will now focus on development of a new Athena Action Plan to be submitted as part of the University’s Silver Award submission in April 2013, and in supporting other STEM departments’ that are currently working or about to start work on their Athena SWAN submissions.
1. Introduction

1.1 Athena Steering Group

The original Athena Self Assessment Group, formed in 2009, was chaired by Professor Mark Smith, who held the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor, and the group membership included representatives from all STEM departments and key administration departments, such as Human Resources (HR), Research Support Services (RSS), The Learning and Development Centre (LDC) and the Student Careers and Skills Centre (SCS).

This Group was highly successful and instrumental in submitting the University’s application for the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2010. Additionally it supported the Department of Chemistry in their bid for an Athena SWAN Silver award, also achieved in 2010. The Physics Department automatically qualified for an Athena SWAN Silver award in 2010, in light of their successful Institute of Physics JUNO Champion award achieved in 2009. Physics, along with Imperial College were the first UK Physics departments to achieve the JUNO Champion award, which is due for renewal in 2012.

Following Professor Smith’s departure from the University at the end of 2011, the Athena SWAN Self Assessment Group subsequently split into two groups; the first, a high profile Athena Steering Group chaired by Professor Tim Jones, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science and Medicine), and the other is predominantly the original Athena Self Assessment Group, now called The Athena Network Group, and is co-chaired by Alison Rodger from the Chemistry Department and Sandra Beaufoy from HR.

The key aim of the Athena Steering Group is to review and develop strategies for the implementation of appropriate activities within the Athena agenda and to encourage the career development of women in STEM within the University of Warwick.

The Group oversees University-wide activities to ensure that Warwick does not disadvantage women within its talent pool, and considers new initiatives, issues of concern and monitors the career progression of women in STEM based Faculties.
The Group Membership consists of:

- Professor Tim Jones, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science and Medicine) – Chair
- Professor Pam Thomas – Chair of the Board of Faculty of Science
- Professor Peter Winstanley – Chair of the Board of Faculty of Medicine
- Professor Alison Rodger – Chair of the Athena Network Group
- Mr Michael Blair – Acting Deputy Director of Human Resources
- Mrs Leonie Walls – Human Resources Manager, Equality and Diversity
- Mrs Sandra Beaufoy – Human Resources Adviser, Equality and Diversity
- Mrs Caroline Peck – Project Officer (Athena SWAN)

The Terms of Reference of the Athena Steering Group include a vision statement as follows:

_The Athena Steering Group’s role is to take oversight of University-wide activities to ensure that Warwick does not disadvantage women within its talent pool, thus attracting and retaining the best staff and creating a working environment that enhances academic performance and general well-being. The particular focus of the Group is on STEM disciplines and their progress towards obtaining Athena SWAN awards. The Group reports to Senate via the Equality and Diversity Committee and directly to Steering._

The role of the group is to:

1. Address gender inequalities within Science and Medicine disciplines.
2. Consider innovative means of providing sustainable academic careers for women.
3. Construct and agree an Action Plan to assist the University achieve Athena Silver recognition (submission in April 2013).
4. Ensure actions identified in the Action Plan are undertaken within a given timeframe.
5. Assist and advise departments on prospective submissions for Athena status.
6. Highlight Athena initiatives and the Action Plan across the University.
7. Provide an Annual Report to the Equality and Diversity Committee on progress of Athena submissions.
8. Promote, through its focussed approach, the positive working culture and collegiate environment within the University.

One of the primary aims of the group is to support and encourage STEM departments within the University to apply for Athena SWAN Awards.

1.2 Athena Network Group

The Athena Network Group is an informal group which has representatives from all of the STEM departments, as well as staff from HR, RSS, LDC and SCS. This group has been the foundation of all of the submissions to date. The group meets on a regular basis, at least every 8 weeks, to up-date departments on current initiatives, progress on Athena work, scrutinise other department’s submissions and to encourage and support departments with their Athena work. Minutes of meetings of the Network Group are posted on the Athena web page: [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/athena/contact/minutes/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/athena/contact/minutes/).

Members of staff from Warwick have also attended Athena Meetings across the UK including the West Midlands Regional Athena Network (held at University of Nottingham), University of York, University of Wolverhampton and Loughborough University, as well as other diversity groups, such as the Russell Group Diversity Forum and the West Midlands Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network, where Athena has featured on the Agenda.

2. Summary of Warwick Athena Swan Submissions

The Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award, achieved in 2010, recognises the University’s good practice with regard to its staff and students within the STEM disciplines. Silver Athena SWAN Awards were awarded to the Departments of Physics (2010), Chemistry (2010). In April 2012, Warwick Medical School (WMS) was awarded a Bronze Athena Award. This has been described by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) as a ‘landmark achievement’, with WMS being the first Medical School in the UK to receive this award. The Department of Psychology has submitted for a Silver award *(subsequently awarded*...
Bronze) and WMG for a Bronze award (no award but invitation to resubmit) in the April 2012 round, the outcome shown in italics has just been announced.

The submission process for Athena SWAN Awards changed in 2010, with the introduction of a Bronze level award for departments who are signed up to the principles of Athena but have identified that they have some way to go to reach Silver Award level. A further change in 2011 meant that submissions could be made in either April or November. Renewal applications can only be submitted in the November round. Applications that fail in the April round have the option of re-submitting in November. An institutional annual charge of £1000 was introduced in April 2012 for HEIs signing up to the Athena Charter.

A key strategic objective for the Athena Steering Group includes supporting other STEM departments to apply for Athena awards and to formulate an institutional Athena SWAN Silver award for submission in April 2013.

The table below depicts the ten Warwick STEM departments’ eligible to apply for Athena Awards and details progress that each of those departments has made. All Warwick departmental submissions are to be sent in the name of the Head of Department, who also is required to write a letter supporting the application. It is advisable for all STEM departments to nominate someone to coordinate their submission. All awards are renewable after a three year period, but it is hoped that within that time period, departments’ will have sufficiently moved their action plans forward to be ready to submit for the next level of award.

**University Award: - Bronze Level (2010)** – one of the requirements for the University to progress to Silver level, is for more individual STEM departments to obtain Athena awards, as well as actions from the submitted University Action Plan being met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Coordinator</th>
<th>Level Awarded</th>
<th>Proposed Submission Date</th>
<th>Level of Award to be applied for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Alison Rodger</td>
<td>Silver (2010)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Silver (Nov 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMS</td>
<td>Annie Young</td>
<td>Bronze (2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Silver (Nov 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMG</td>
<td>Richard Moffat</td>
<td>Not awarded</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Bronze (re-submit Nov 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Award</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Faye Emery</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp Science</td>
<td>Sara Kavala</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>Laura Green</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Nav Patel</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>David Firth</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Physics Department was awarded the Institute of Physics JUNO Champion Award in 2009 which automatically qualified the department for an Athena Silver Award. This award could not be collected until the University achieved Bronze status.*

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*Staff collecting the University Athena Bronze award and Chemistry and Physics Departments’ Silver Athena Awards at a presentation ceremony in London: From left to right: Professor Mike Shipman, Professor Malcolm Cooper, Mrs Sandra Beaufoy, Professor Ann Caesar, Dr Miriam Gifford and Professor Alison Rodger.*

Departments who have already submitted for awards have established departmental groups that continue to meet regularly. Following Chemistry’s lead, STEM departments are tending to call these Groups ‘Welfare and Communication Group’, which encompasses Athena, Pulse, Communication issues etc. (Chemistry, Physics, WMS and WMG). Physics is currently
working on their renewal submission for their JUNO Champion award, which is due to be submitted in July 2012. Sandra Beaufoy attends all of the above meetings as the “external” member (with the exception of Chemistry as Alison Rodger is a member).

In September 2011, the National Institute of Health Research announced that for the next funding round for Biomedical Research Centres and Units (2015), any Medical School not holding an Athena Silver award would not be eligible to apply for funding.

Consequently a recommendation was made in May 2012 by the Athena Steering Group, supported by the University Equality and Diversity Committee, that all remaining STEM departments should immediately start work on their Athena submissions with a view to submitting in November 2012. As a result of this recommendation and in view of the potential funding requirement, the University has provided funds to appoint an Athena Project Officer for a period of one year to guide and assist STEM departments with their Athena submissions.

3. Good Practice Initiatives Implemented As Part Of Athena SWAN process

Working through the Athena process is an excellent way for a department to critically analyse its current procedures and policy implementation, not to mention the culture of the department. The process itself leads to better communication and staff engagement, giving individuals a channel to voice their ideas or concerns.

Sharing areas of good practice on issues such as departmental committee representation (gender balance), monitoring of fixed term contracts, monitoring gender breakdown of seminar speakers (to ensure adequate female role models) has been excellent between the STEM departments who have completed the Athena process.

The University in conjunction with those STEM departments have implemented a number of good practice initiatives:

i. Warwick Conference Support Awards - Contribution to Child Care Costs Associated with Conference Attendance

Small awards (of up to £100) are available to help support the extra child-care costs associated with attendance at conferences. This fund has been established in recognition that conference attendance by academics is important both for
individuals and for the wider Warwick community, yet it invariably involves an extra burden of child-care for those with young children.

ii. Returning Parents Network Group/Mentoring Scheme

This group has been formed to support returning parents ease back into their work role whilst at the same time combining the realities and practicalities of parenthood. In addition a Mentoring Scheme has been developed by LDC for parents not only to receive mentoring specifically aimed at individuals returning to work, but also to train them to become mentors themselves. The aim of the scheme is to offer new parents the support of a mentor who has first-hand experience of managing the issues involved in returning to work after the arrival of a child. HR have held consultations with the Group and have identified improvements in HR processes and standard letters to improve the back to work experience for staff returning from maternity, adoption and paternity leave. A checklist for line managers has been designed, which will be issued before the employee returns to work and will help to ensure that the employee feels welcome and part of the team immediately upon their return.

iii. Promotion

Promotion submission forms have been modified to ensure monitoring of staff being put forward (or not) for promotion is improved and to emphasise that adequate support should be provided to staff to help with career development and progression.

iv. Flexible Working Request Form

During the Athena submission process, it was identified that whilst many departments responded positively to flexible working requests, these were monitored locally within individual departments and therefore no central records were held of such arrangements. Therefore a new flexible working request form is being introduced which will assist with recording of flexible working requests centrally.

v. Equal Pay Review

An Equal Pay Review was undertaken in 2011 and the results published on the Equality and Diversity web pages:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/equal_pay_review_2011/

Separate reviews were undertaken for staff in grades 1A-8 and in grade 9.
vi. **Equality and Diversity Training**

Equality and Diversity training has been provided for staff throughout 2011/12 and a further training schedule is being planned for 2012/13.

Departmental Equality and Diversity representatives have been recruited for all departments. Representatives attend one meeting each term of the Equality and Diversity Network and are responsible for cascading equality issues to their colleagues within their departments.

STEM Departments are also encouraged as part of their departmental induction process to request that staff undertake the e-learning module ‘Diversity in the Workplace’, which encompasses information on the Equality Act 2010, types of discrimination and bullying and harassment.

vii. **Leadership Programme for Women**

LDC ran two focus groups for female academics and researchers in 2011 on the key issues facing women moving into leadership roles. The group investigated whether females felt there was a need at Warwick for a female-only leadership programme. The discussions held indicated that it was felt that there wasn’t any clear consensus on the value of a women-only leadership programme, and that the sample of staff that had been involved in discussions felt that the leadership programme already led by LDC was sufficient. LDC will continue to monitor this.

A full list of progress against the Athena Bronze Action Plan can be seen in Appendix 1.

A number of departmental initiatives have also been implemented within individual STEM departments and these can be viewed in the appropriate departmental submissions/action plans at:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/athena/submissions/

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4. **Benefits of undertaking the Athena SWAN process**

For the University and departments to understand and commit to putting together an Athena submission, the University, as an organisation, needs to ensure that the resources committed to the process add value and assist the organisational expectations to be met and improve the culture of its workforce. The aim is to ensure that all processes and policies are transparent, non-discriminatory and fair. The overall strategic benefit to the
University is optimising contributions from both early career researchers and established female academics. The other obvious benefits of the Athena process are:

i. To reflect on current practices, what is being done well and what can be improved – sharing this with other STEM departments and the wider University.

ii. Formalise many informal processes, e.g. flexible working arrangements, and gain recognition for current good practice

iii. Improved communication with staff responsible for collecting staff and student data – working together, so that information is available in the required format.

iv. Improved communication, not only between STEM departments, but between STEM departments and the administration.

v. Improved and targeted communication with regard to promotions, mentoring and funding opportunities.

vi. Increased visibility of female role models

vii. Raise awareness of gender inequalities

As a result of the benefits identified above, one of the University’s Equality Objectives is to share with non-STEM departments the good practice identified through the Athena process. It is therefore intended for HR staff to deliver ‘Windows in Warwick’ sessions in the new academic year to share the experiences of the STEM departments who have worked through the Athena process with non-STEM departments.

5. Benefits of undertaking the Athena SWAN process – Dean of Medicine’s View

As a relatively new Dean of Medicine, following through on an Athena SWAN submission has enabled me to understand the operational characteristics and culture of the School and to use the submission process as a mechanism to introduce and communicate change on how policies and procedures are implemented within the School. The process has been an excellent way to engage with staff at all categories and at all careers stages to understand how they view the School and to try to address some of the issues that affect them at various stages of their career progression. Processes and information have become more transparent, and staff encouraged to raise issues through the School’s Welfare and Communication Group (formed as part of the Athena process). We are learning to celebrate
Medical School successes, something that we were not very good at in the past, and to share best practice with other STEM disciplines at Warwick and elsewhere.

The Athena process is challenging and time consuming, but is becoming instrumental in a gradual culture shift within the Medical School. Although the Athena scheme is primarily to address challenges that women face in academia, the benefits of the scheme is relevant to both genders, and to the administration as well as to academics. Furthermore, if we want to ensure that our Student Experience is as good as we can get it, attitudes to women students need to be thought-through – and we will not get this right unless this is addressed first for staff.

Professor Peter Winstanley
Dean of Warwick Medical School

As a result of WMS achieving the Athena Bronze award, Warwick hosted a one day event to discuss how the Athena submission was approached and the challenges faced. The event consisted of a number of presentations, including one by Dr Tony Soteriou from the Department of Health, Sarah Dickinson and Peter Mason from the Equality Challenge Unit,
who administer the Athena process, plus presentations from Peter Winstanley, Alison Rodger, Julia Smith, Sandra Beaufoy, Sayo Owoso (MSc student perspective of process) and Annie Young who chaired the sessions. The event was extremely successful, with approximately 45 attendees from 22 institutions in attendance and feedback from attendees was extremely positive.

6. Challenges faced during the Athena SWAN process

A number of issues have been identified that need to be further addressed, some of which require appropriate funding, gradual improvement of processes or some imaginative initiative to move them forward. However some of the real challenges faced by the University and departments are listed below:

i. The Collection of Data

The collection of data was a significant issue when starting the Athena submissions for both the University and individual STEM departments. How data was collected and recorded did not always match the requirements of Athena and it was discovered that some data, such as the operation of flexible working patterns were not recorded centrally at all. This was primarily because flexible working is a local arrangement between the employee and their department. From those STEM departments who have worked on Athena submissions, it appears that flexible working certainly does exist and on the whole departments are very supportive of staff of both genders who request modifications of their hours to suit family circumstances, but that these occurrences are not formally recorded.

ii. Resource Commitment from Senior Management within STEM departments

Although signed up to the principles of the Athena SWAN process, some departments have not:

(a) considered the process as significantly important enough against other organisational requirements to give it priority or

(b) are reluctant to commit already over-stretched departmental resources to begin work on their Athena submissions.

In recognition of the progress made to date and the increasing focus on Athena SWAN, a recommendation was made by the Athena Steering Group in May 2012 to the Equality and Diversity Committee that: all Warwick STEM Departments should begin work on their Athena submission with a view to submitting in November 2012 and a further University Institution submission for a Silver Award in either November 2012 or April 2013 submission round.
iii. **Workload involved in putting together an award submission**

The Athena process is not just a case of completing a submission form, the process involves collection of quantitative as well as qualitative data and necessitates departments to examine the culture of their department and to reflect on good and bad practices. Areas of concern that are highlighted, must form part of the Action Plan using SMART objectives to resolve issues identified. Similarly good practice should be emphasised in the submission.

iv **Timely and Structured Departmental Athena Meetings**

Departments should ensure that Athena meetings are held on a regular basis with sufficient numbers of staff in attendance. The meetings should have an informal agenda and minutes of the meeting should be posted on departmental web pages. When Athena submissions are assessed, the review panel will look at the regularity of meetings and if it is considered that insufficient meetings have been held to engage in the Athena process properly then the submission may fail. Membership of Departmental Athena Groups should have a good gender balance and contain key personnel at different career stages.

7. **What is planned next?**

The University is planning to submit for an Institutional Silver Athena award in the April 2013 submission deadline. STEM departments, who have not submitted for an award have been told that they should be working on their submissions with a view to submitting in November 2012. Engineering and Life Sciences have already indicated that they intend to submit for a Bronze award. WMS intend to submit for Silver in November 2012 and Chemistry are aspiring to go for Gold. Central HR are working with all STEM departments, advising and guiding on the issues that need to be addressed, and have created a concise step-by-step framework to assist departments to get started on their submissions. An Athena Project Officer, Caroline Peck, has been employed on a fixed term contract until March 2013 to provide administrative support through the November submission round.

Work on the original Athena Action Plan is still ongoing, as can be seen in Appendix 1, and progress to date clearly indicated. Ongoing work and new actions will be added for the Silver submission.

*Sandra Beaufoy*

HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity

18 July 2012