

Towards Gender Equality using Athena SWAN at the University of Sheffield

Dr Heidi Christensen,

Senior Lecturer in Dept of Computer Science, Sheffield, UK

Departmental Director of Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity (ED&I)

What is Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network)?

Awards for organisations (whole universities as well as individual departments)

Recognises good practice in higher education towards the "advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all"

Established in 2005; initially only focusing academic careers of women in STEMM but in 2015 this was broadened out to all academic disciplines and to include admin and support staff

Organisations sign up to a *charter* thereby committing to ten principles

The Athena SWAN ten principles





- 1. We acknowledge that academia cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of all.
- 2. We commit to advancing gender equality in academia, in particular, addressing the loss of women across the career pipeline and the absence of women from senior academic, professional and support roles.
- 3. We commit to addressing unequal gender representation across academic disciplines and professional and support functions. In this we recognise disciplinary differences including:
 - the relative underrepresentation of women in senior roles in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL)
 - the particularly high loss rate of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM)
- 4. We commit to tackling the gender pay gap.
- 5. We commit to removing the obstacles faced by women, in particular, at major points of career development and progression including the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career.
- 6. We commit to addressing the negative consequences of using short-term contracts for the retention and progression of staff in academia, particularly women.
- 7. We commit to tackling the discriminatory treatment often experienced by trans people.
- 8. We acknowledge that advancing gender equality demands commitment and action from all levels of the organisation and in particular active leadership from those in senior roles.
- 9. We commit to making and mainstreaming sustainable structural and cultural changes to advance gender equality, recognising that initiatives and actions that support individuals alone will not sufficiently advance equality.

All individuals have identities shaped by several different factors. We commit to considering the intersection of gender and other factors wherever possible.



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Leaky Pipeline



The pipeline in my Department









Lots of reason, but it starts young ...

University of Sheffield Department of Computer Science

Athena SWAN Bronze Award

Charter for women in science April 2013

ISC

Awarded to

Department of Computer Science University of Sheffield

Our Athena SWAN journey

- 2013: Bronze Award
- 2016: Silver Award

David Ruebain Chief Executive Equality Challenge Unit



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ancing women's careers in STEMM academi

The Athena SWAN process



The Athena SWAN submission!!!



Self-assessment process: Collecting numbers of staff consultations (e.g., focus groups, questionnaires)



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Computer Scientists and Engineers like numbers

- The self-assessment process has provided:
 - ED&I team, and the Department as a whole, has gained a much better understanding of the problems & issues
 - Quantitative evidence \rightarrow the numbers are not looking good!
 - Qualitative evidence \rightarrow we need positive action to change things



3 years worth of action plan is following: "developing pipeline numbers", "key career transitions", "career development", "flexible working", "culture and communication"



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Computer Scientists and Engineers like to be systematic

- Buy-in from the whole of the Department - not just the ED&I director's job (ie, me!) to implement things
- Long-term perspective (and expectations) - we didn't schedule everything in the first 6 months





• "demonstrating evidence for impact" was difficult!



Good practice for improving pipeline numbers (recruitment, retainment, environment etc)



Inclusive and diverse representation of the Department – online, in admissions material, at open days etc



Transparent processes – workload allocation model, promotion criteria



Recruitment – inclusive shortlisting and 'active' headhunting; recruit junior staff and 'grow' talent in-house



Environment – core meeting hours to allow for school drop-off/pick-up; departmental social events; women student society;

Good practice for the process

- It's important to have buy-in from the top (head of Department etc)
- It's important to have easy access to (reliable) pipeline numbers
- It's important to have a diverse assessment and ED&I team (all pipeline stages; all family&carer setups; disabilities; ethnicity etc)

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Thank you very much – any questions?

