

Athena Swan Departmental Application Feedback

A panel was recently convened to review your Athena Swan application and details of the result and key feedback from the panel is shared below. Please note that the below feedback is not exhaustive and panel assessments are made “in the round”.

Institution and Department:	Imperial College London, Department of Earth Science and Engineering	
Level of award applied for:	Bronze	
Result:	Award Conferred	
Award round:	April 2021	
Overall comments		
<p>Overall, the Panel agrees that the application meets the criteria for a Bronze award. The self-assessment makes good use of a range of data, although the inclusion of additional qualitative data would help to provide further insight in some areas. The Department has good structures in place to support and progress its gender equality work, including the proposed co-Chairing of the SAT and the new Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Culture Committee, chaired by the Head of Department.</p> <p>The Panel commends the SAT on identifying and addressing challenges and opportunities particular to the Department and discipline. There are some areas in which the Panel recommends that further investigation is undertaken, for example, parental leave, and there are some instances where issues have been identified but there are no actions to address these (examples are provided below). The action plan is broadly SMART, however, the Panel suggests that the timescales of the ‘ongoing’ actions are reviewed in order to enable the SAT to effectively monitor progress and evaluate success. The Panel also recommends that the Department identifies its key priorities within the action plan.</p>		
Scores and key points of feedback against criteria		
A self-assessment of gender equality using quantitative and qualitative evidence (Bronze, Silver and Gold)	Score: 3 – Satisfactory. The criterion is adequately addressed.	
<p>The Panel agrees that the Department has undertaken a satisfactory self-assessment of gender equality, based on a good range of data, in particular quantitative data. The Panel notes that where data was unavailable to the SAT, they made a specific effort to obtain it. The Head of Department chairs the new Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Culture Committee, which shows the commitment of senior management to the gender equality agenda. The Department has begun to address some of the issues identified and is building effectively on the gender equality work being undertaken at institutional level. The Panel commends the allocation of a budget for EDI activities, however, it would be helpful to have more specific detail about how this is used.</p> <p>The Panel considers that the application could make better use of qualitative data, for example, it is unclear whether the staff survey included the option for staff to add comments. The inclusion of quotes from members of staff would help provide further insight into gender differences.</p>		
Identification of challenges and opportunities based on the self-assessment (Bronze, Silver and Gold)	Score: 3 – Satisfactory. The criterion is adequately addressed.	
Overall, the Panel considers that the self-assessment has enabled the Department to identify key		

challenges and opportunities. The Panel commends the focus on discipline-specific issues such as the uptake of relevant qualifications in schools and the need for associated outreach work.

However, there are some areas for improvement, for example, there are some gaps in the sections on maternity/paternity/parental leave. Further data and analysis might be helpful in identifying issues and developing greater support for those on or returning from parental leave, for example, it would be helpful to see data in relation to the uptake and effectiveness of KIT days. It is recommended that the Department considers formal involvement in arranging teaching cover and a phased return to teaching after parental leave, in order to allow time to focus on research.

There are also some areas where issues were identified in the data but then not clearly addressed, for example, it would be good to see an action around the anecdotal bias and harassment reported on p.24. The Panel notes that only 57% of staff felt confident about expressing their views and opinions without fear of negative consequences (section 5.6(i)). It would be helpful to disaggregate this data by gender, in order to see whether there are any differences in the views of men and women.

An action plan that builds on the self-assessment (**Bronze, Silver and Gold**)

Score: 3 – Satisfactory. The criterion is adequately addressed.

The Panel considers that the action plan is generally SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) and contains realistic targets which will enable the Department to progress its gender equality work. However, the Panel recommends that the timescales are reviewed; there are currently a number of actions which are 'ongoing', which would benefit from the identification of clear deadlines or milestones to enable the SAT to review progress and success. The Panel also suggests that the Department identifies key priorities, considering the urgency and importance of actions.

The Panel notes that some actions and outcomes could be more clearly linked, for example, 3.1 is a good objective, but the outcomes of 3.1.1-3.1.3 are unclear. The Panel also recommends considering the impact of the proposal to hold interviews during one working day (3.1.4) on different types of applicant. Some actions, for example, those in section 4.6, could benefit from the inclusion of baseline data and quantifiable targets in order to more effectively measure success.

The Panel also suggests that the following actions are reconsidered: Action 3.1.5 does not contain a tangible success measure; the rationale for action 1.3.2 is unclear within the narrative on p.62; the Panel considers that the self-reporting tool proposed in action 3.2.3 will only go so far, and suggests that those organising outreach activities (e.g., open days) should also record engagement details.

Key Next Steps

The Panel recommends that the SAT identifies priority areas of the action plan and further considers the timescales, as suggested above. The Panel suggests that further support for those taking parental leave is considered as a priority.

Good Practice Example

The introduction of SAT Co-Chairs with staggered start dates to support continuity.

The Tranquillity Room which provides a quiet space for individuals, including parents