



**Athena
Swan**

AdvanceHE

Transformed UK Athena Swan Charter: Information pack for universities

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Welcome

I am delighted to share this information pack with you. The transformed UK Athena Swan Charter takes forward the recommendations of the Independent Review established by Advance HE, significantly enhancing the Charter to bring about:

- + paradigm shift from prescription to autonomy and flexibility
- + a reduction in administrative burden, including a halving of data requirements
- + Advance HE moving from a focus on assessment or judging, to a developmental and supporting approach.

This is a very significant step in advancing gender equality, ensuring that the Charter centres the key dimension of positive and supportive cultures, and is inclusive of people of all gender identities and those facing intersectional inequalities.

I am grateful for the very positive part you have played in helping to shape these important enhancements. These documents will guide you through the changes.

We will continue to work with the Athena Swan Governance Committee and the higher education sector as a whole to ensure the Charter remains current and relevant, and meets the needs of all to drive forward gender equality in higher education and research institutes.

Alison Johns

Chief Executive, Advance HE



Introduction

In this document, participants will find all the information and materials you need to apply for an award under the transformed Athena Swan Charter. This includes:

- + the Charter Principles, which underpin Athena Swan and set out shared goals for gender equality
- + the Award Criteria, providing clear and transparent descriptions of each level of award
- + the application materials, including guidance on application forms, data requirements, word limits and consultation word limits, consultation and the departmental culture survey.

Advance HE is committed to supporting all Athena Swan participants to progress their gender equality goals, and we will provide additional developmental guidance and resources in the coming months.

For more information and access to our other Charter services and support, please [visit our website](#) or [get in touch with our team](#). We look forward to working with you.

The Athena Swan Charter Principles and senior leaders' commitment

Introduction to the Charter Principles

The first, and arguably most important, aspect of the Athena Swan Charter are the Charter Principles. These are the commitments that underpin Athena Swan and set out shared goals for gender equality that all participants agree to upholding. These Principles act as the foundation for the transformed Charter, with all other elements – including criteria, application and assessment – aligned to the commitments and values enshrined within it.

The updated Charter Principles have been revised to:

- + empower participants to join a global community through a shared commitment to tackle gender inequality and shared principles that align with local gender equality goals
- + support greater inclusivity for people of all gender identities and people facing intersectional inequalities
- + ensure that participating institutions, departments and directorates recognise and reward staff working on gender equality.

The Principles of the Athena Swan Charter articulate positive statements that participants demonstrate their support for. Acceptance of these Principles underpins the Athena Swan Awards, which act as a framework for sustainable change through which participants enhance their inclusivity and performance, with a particular focus on gender equality. The Awards recognise commitment and achievement in upholding the Principles and driving positive change.

Institutions, departments and directorates across the UK can use the Charter Principles to help focus and structure their gender equality work and to highlight their ongoing commitment to gender equality to their staff, students and wider community.

Guidance for participants

Any university, department or directorate interested in participating in the transformed Athena Swan Charter should first consider the Principles, and together with their senior leadership teams and communities decide if they agree to uphold these commitments.

Under the transformed Charter, each applying unit will commit to the principles; for example, the Vice-Chancellor will commit to the Principles on behalf of the university and the Head of Department will also commit to the Principles on behalf of a departmental applicant in that university.

Any university intending to submit an application for an Athena Swan Award must first submit confirmation from the Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) that they commit to the Charter Principles. You can find a [template letter](#) on our website, and once confirmed, you will receive a co-signed certificate which you can use to help promote your gender equality work to your community.

You can commit to the Principles at any time prior to submitting your application, though we encourage you to do this before you start preparing an application under the transformed Charter so that Advance HE can ensure you receive tailored support and guidance to prepare your award application.

Athena Swan Principles

In committing to the principles of the Athena Swan Charter, we recognise that we join a global community with a shared goal of addressing gender inequalities and embedding inclusive cultures.

Each institution, research institute, department and directorate has different gender equality challenges and development priorities. These priorities should be developed based on an understanding of the local evidence-base and national and global gender equality issues.

In determining our priorities and interventions, we commit to:

- 1 adopting robust, transparent and accountable processes for gender equality work, including:
 - a embedding diversity, equity and inclusion in our culture, decision-making and partnerships, and holding ourselves and others in our institution/institute/department/directorate accountable.
 - b undertaking evidence-based, transparent self-assessment processes to direct our priorities and interventions for gender equality, and evaluating our progress to inform our continuous development.
 - c ensuring that gender equality work is distributed appropriately, is recognised and properly rewarded.
- 2 addressing structural inequalities and social injustices that manifest as differential experiences and outcomes for staff and students.
- 3 tackling behaviours and cultures that detract from the safety and collegiality of our work and study environments for people of all genders, including not tolerating gender-based violence, discrimination, bullying, harassment or exploitation.
- 4 understanding and addressing intersectional inequalities.
- 5 fostering collective understanding that individuals have the right to determine their own gender identity, and tackling the specific issues faced by trans and non-binary people because of their identity.
- 6 examining gendered occupational segregation, and elevating the status, voice and career opportunities of any identified under-valued and at-risk groups.
- 7 mitigating the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks, and supporting flexibility and the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.
- 8 mitigating the gendered impact of short-term and casual contracts for staff seeking sustainable careers.

The Athena Swan award criteria

Introduction to the Award Criteria

The Athena Swan Charter provides a framework which supports participants to make sustainable change toward gender equality, with Awards recognising participants' commitment and achievement along this journey. The Awards build on the Charter Principles, and are defined with a set of clear and transparent Award Criteria.

The updated Award Criteria:

- + provide greater clarity and transparency on the expectations at each award level and what applicants must do to meet the award criteria
- + embed greater flexibility for applicants to focus on what is important within their context
- + support greater transparency and consistency of decision making at assessment.

Over the following pages you will find the details of the Award Criteria at each level and what applicants will be expected to demonstrate for each criterion when applying. The Criteria are designed to be flexible and developmental, supporting applicants through a journey of self-reflection, action and learning from success.

Transparent and consistent

These Award Criteria form the basis of how your award application will be assessed. The panel of experts assessing your application have been rigorously trained using the same detail and definitions provided over the coming pages, to ensure transparency and a shared understanding for both applicants and Reviewers. For more information about how your application is assessed, [please see our website](#).

Athena Swan Award Criteria

	High-level award criteria	Bronze	Bronze Renewal	Silver	Silver Renewal	Gold	Gold Renewal
A	Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant	X	X	X	X	X	X
C	Action plan to address identified key issues	X	X	X	X	X	X
D	Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities		X	X	X	X	X
E	Evidence of success addressing gender inequality			X		X	
F	Evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve					X	

Expectations underpinning the Athena Swan award criteria

Bronze applicants - University

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

- + evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
- + clear governance structure for EDI
- + formal processes for recognition and reward of EDI work
- + Self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students
- + processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies
- + processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies to include support staff and students of all gender identities

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

- + collected and analysed mandatory data
- + evaluated their culture
- + evaluated their policies
- + evaluated their approach to exploring intersectional inequalities (*through a narrative question*)
- + evaluated the inclusivity of their culture for staff and students of all gender identities (*through a narrative question*)
- + evaluated practices and policies for the inclusion and support of staff and students of all gender identities
- + identified and justified key priorities

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

- + SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas
 - + actions which will enable the applicant to evaluate intersectional inequalities in the future
-

Bronze Renewal applicants – University

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

- + evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
- + self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

- + collected and analysed mandatory data
- + evaluated their progress
- + identified and justified key priorities

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

- + SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

- + the previous Bronze action plan is underway or completed
-

Silver applicants – University

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

- + evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
- + clear governance structure for EDI
- + formal processes for recognition and reward of EDI work
- + self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students
- + processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies, including evaluation for intersectional inequalities
- + processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies to include support staff and students of all gender identities

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

- + collected and analysed mandatory data, including intersectional analysis
- + evaluated their culture
- + evaluated their policies
- + evaluated intersectional inequalities (*through a narrative question*)
- + evaluated the inclusivity of their culture for staff and students of all gender identities (*through a narrative question*)
- + evaluated practices and policies for the inclusion and support of staff and students of all gender identities
- + identified and justified key priorities

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

- + SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas
- + actions which address intersectional inequalities as identified through the applicant's priority areas, if relevant

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

- + the previous Bronze action plan is completed or superseded

Criterion E: Evidence of success addressing gender inequality

- + evidence of desired outcome/improvement against at least two priorities
 - + policies are considered to be effective and appropriate by staff/students, and/or, evidence of the positive impact of policies on staff/students
-

Silver renewal applicants – University

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

- + evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
- + self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

- + collected and analysed mandatory data
- + evaluated their progress
- + identified and justified key priorities

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

- + SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

- + the previous Silver action plan is underway or completed
-

Gold applicants – University

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

- + evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
- + clear governance structure for EDI
- + formal processes for recognition and reward of EDI work
- + Self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students
- + processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies, including evaluation for intersectional inequalities
- + processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising policies to include support staff and students of all gender identities

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

- + collected and analysed mandatory data, including intersectional analysis
- + evaluated their culture
- + evaluated their policies
- + evaluated intersectional inequalities (*through a narrative question*)
- + evaluated the inclusivity of their culture for staff and students of all gender identities (*through a narrative question*)
- + evaluated practices and policies for the inclusion and support of staff and students of all gender identities
- + identified and justified key priorities

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

- + SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas
- + actions which address intersectional inequalities as identified through the applicant's priority areas, if relevant

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

- + the previous Silver action plan is completed or superseded

Criterion E: Evidence of success addressing gender inequality

- + evidence of desired outcome/improvement against at least 3 priorities
- + evidence of longitudinal improvement, over the course of more than one award cycle
- + policies are considered to be effective and appropriate by staff/students, and/or, evidence of the positive impact of policies on staff/students

Criterion F: Evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve

- + evidence of how the applicant continually monitors and updates their policies and practice in order to remain innovative, intersectional, and inclusive of people of all gender identities, providing (where possible) examples of innovation
- + evidence that through their activity, good practice has been taken up by other departments/institutions/sectors

Gold Renewal applicants – University

Criterion A: Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

- + evidence of leadership and senior buy-in
- + self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students

Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

- + collected and analysed mandatory data
- + evaluated their progress
- + identified and justified key priorities

Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

- + SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas

Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

- + the previous Gold action plan is underway or completed
-

Athena Swan application materials

Introduction to the award application materials

Participants seeking recognition through Charter Awards of their commitment to, and achievements in, gender equality must submit an application for assessment by peer-review.

Over the following pages you will find guidance to help you prepare for your application, including:

- + details of the application forms and guidance to help you answer the application questions;
- + guidance on the mandatory data requirements;
- + guidance relating to word limits;
- + guidance relating to the departmental culture survey.

The application materials are designed to be flexible and developmental, supporting applicants' self-assessment and future gender equality work, with clear alignment to the Award Criteria so that applicants and Reviewers alike are confident about what is required at each level and why.

The updated application materials:

- + reduce the administrative burden through streamlined, shorter application forms and data requirements which have been more than halved;
- + enable greater flexibility for applicants to focus on their key priorities;
- + provide greater clarity and transparent alignment to the Award Criteria;
- + empower applicants to focus on the assessment of culture, through a standardised departmental survey, with flexible options for implementation;
- + embed greater inclusivity for all staff types, people of all gender identities and people facing intersectional inequalities.

We're here to help

As you prepare to submit your application, if you encounter any challenges remember that Advance HE is here to help. We have a wealth of strategic and operational experience in gender equality and can also connect you with a vast network of universities, research institutes and departments globally who have faced similar challenges in their own gender equality journeys. Get in touch!

Bronze university application form

Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

- + structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work

Recommended word count for Section 1: 2500 words

1 Letter of endorsement from the head of the university

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the university.

Guidance

The letter should highlight the key priorities and challenges within the university relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter should outline the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the university (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and evidence how the university's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the university.

2 Description of the university and its context

Please provide an introduction to the university.

Guidance

The description should provide an overview of the university. The description should highlight contextual factors that are particular to the university; for example, location, academic focus, discipline coverage, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institution's structure, relationship with departments or community partners). If relevant, outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Applicants should indicate which departments (if any) hold Athena Swan awards and at what level. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections and should not be duplicated in this section.

3 Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work

Please provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and university-level resources.

Guidance

Please describe the university's key management and committee structures, and the formal structures in place to carry out and support the university's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. Please describe the formal processes in place to distribute, recognise and reward EDI work.

The description should provide an overview of how EDI work is supported by and embedded within the governance structure of the university. Detail should be provided about how the university supports gender equality activity in sub-units across the institution (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates).

Detail should be included about how EDI work (including work relating to Athena Swan) is distributed, accounted for, recognised and rewarded; for example, in a workload allocation model, at appraisal, and/or through promotions and progression pathways.

4 Development, evaluation and effectiveness of institutional policies

Please describe the processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising institutional policies.

Guidance

The description should provide an overview of how the university ensures that institutional policies are fit-for-purpose, how they are evaluated, and how their effectiveness and impact are assessed.

This should include an overview of any consultative approaches (with staff, students or external stakeholders) which are used to inform these processes. The description should indicate how the university ensures that policies support an inclusive culture and do not negatively impact on people of particular gender identities, describing the university's use of Equality Impact Assessment where relevant.

5 Athena Swan self-assessment process

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the university's future gender equality work.

Guidance

An overview should be provided on the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work. This should be provided in a table showing the gender of SAT members, their professional/student role in the institution, and their role in the SAT. The SAT should be representative of the institution in relation to gender profile and staff type, grades and roles, and the team should have representation from across the institution.

A summary should be provided of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff and students. Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by gender. Where relevant, applicants should reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application.

An overview should be provided on how the university plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and (where appropriate) how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated.

Section 2: An assessment of the university's gender equality context

In Section 2 applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion B:

- + evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant

Recommended word count for Section 2: 3500 words

1 Culture, inclusion and belonging

Please describe how the university ensures their culture and practices support inclusion and belonging.

Guidance

In this section, applicants should consider the university's culture as it relates to gender equality and inclusion. This could include the university's values, traditions, leadership, practices and behaviours and other formal and informal structures and interactions that characterise the working and learning environment of the university, affecting all staff and students. Applicants should reflect on how the university actively considers gender equality and inclusivity within their culture, including how instances of negative practices or behaviours are addressed. Applicants should draw on their data including, where appropriate, survey and/or consultation findings from sub-units (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2.

The description should reflect on the university's current understanding of and capacity to identify and address intersectional inequalities for staff and students, drawing on the university's cultural, qualitative and quantitative evidence. If existing infrastructures and evidence-bases do not support the evaluation of intersectional inequalities, actions should be included in the action plan which will support the university to evaluate and address intersectional inequalities in the next award cycle. The university can choose to focus on the intersection of gender with any other characteristic; this prioritisation should be evidence-based, informed by the university's specific context and/or regional or national data and trends.

Applicants should consider the ways in which they actively strive (or could in future, through action) for the inclusion of people of all gender identities within the university's culture and practices. The provision of quantitative data is not required. Applicants should not be deterred if the university's demographic data indicate low rates of disclosure from eg trans or non-binary people, and are encouraged to consider how to embed inclusive practices and approaches within culture and activity.

Applicants should reflect on the university's approach to ensuring culture and practices are inclusive and supportive of people with caring responsibilities, and how the university strives (or could in future, through action) to mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the university supports flexibility for staff and students and supports the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.

2 Key priorities for future action

Please describe the university's key issues relating to gender equality, and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Applicants should reflect on their evaluation in previous sections (including of policies and culture), and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the university's key issues relating to gender equality. This should draw on the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2.

The university's evaluation should reflect on insights particularly as these relate to gender equality (e.g. the representation and progression of people of particular gender identities). To support their evaluation, applicants should consider any trends or issues across sub-units (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates), job families, contract types or functions, or grades. Applicants should consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. For the progression of professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff, applicants should reflect on the progression pathways available for PTO staff, drawing on evidence as appropriate to inform the identification of good practice and areas for improvement. Applicants should consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the identification of the university's key issues, between four and eight key priorities should be identified that the university seeks to address with future action. These key priorities must be appropriate to the university's context and be justifiable based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Applicants should consider how their priorities address intersectional inequalities.

If applicable, applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, the rationale for these changes should be presented.

Priorities should be specific and detailed, allowing the university to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple actions (these actions should be SMART). Applicants should cross-reference to the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 3: Future action plan

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

- + an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

3 Action plan

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

Guidance

Based on the university's evidence base and self-assessment, an action plan should be presented which addresses the university's key issues and priorities. The plan should cover ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross-reference the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant).

Applicants should provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues. While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, the action plan should balance these actions with proactive intervention which will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Actions, and their measures of success, should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Appendix 1: Culture survey data [where relevant]

Please present the results of the core culture survey questions for sub-units (eg academic department, PTO directorate or equivalent) where available, and if desired, the results of any additional survey questions or consultation.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Silver university application form

Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

- + structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work

Recommended word count for Section 1: 2500 words

1 Letter of endorsement from the head of the university

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the university.

Guidance

The letter should highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the university relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter should outline the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the university (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and evidence how the university's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the university.

2 Description of the university and its context

Please provide an introduction to the university.

Guidance

The description should provide an overview of the university. The description should highlight contextual factors that are particular to the university; for example, location, academic focus, discipline coverage, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institution's structure, relationship with departments or community partners). Outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Applicants should indicate which departments (if any) hold Athena Swan awards and at what level. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections and should not be duplicated in this section.

3 Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work

Please provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and university-level resources.

Guidance

Please describe the university's key management and committee structures, and the formal structures in place to carry out and support the university's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. Please describe the formal processes in place to distribute, recognise and reward EDI work.

The description should provide an overview of how EDI work is supported by and embedded within the governance structure of the university. Detail should be provided about how the university supports gender equality activity in sub-units across the institution (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates).

Detail should be included about how EDI work (including work relating to Athena Swan) is distributed, accounted for, recognised and rewarded; for example, in a workload allocation model, at appraisal, and/or through promotions and progression pathways.

4 Development, evaluation and effectiveness of institutional policies

Please describe the processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising institutional policies.

Guidance

The description should provide an overview of how the university ensures that institutional policies are fit-for-purpose, how they are evaluated, and how their effectiveness and impact are assessed.

This should include an overview of any consultative approaches (with staff, students or external stakeholders) which are used to inform these processes. The description should indicate how the university ensures that policies support an inclusive culture and do not negatively impact on people of particular gender identities, describing the university's use of Equality Impact Assessment where relevant. The university should consider how policies are evaluated for intersectional inequalities and impact.

The description should provide evidence of how institutional policies are considered by the staff and students utilising them; for example, whether they are considered effective and appropriate, and whether they have had a positive impact.

5 Athena Swan self-assessment process

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the university's future gender equality work.

Guidance

An overview should be provided on the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work. This should be provided in a table showing the gender of SAT members, their professional/student role in the institution, and their role in the SAT. The SAT should be representative of the institution in relation to gender profile and staff type, grades and roles, and the team should have representation from across the institution.

A summary should be provided of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff and students. Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by gender. Applicants should reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application.

An overview should be provided on how the university plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated (where appropriate).

Section 2: An evaluation of the university's progress and success

In Section 2, applicants should evidence how they meet Criteria D and E:

- + progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities has been demonstrated
- + success in addressing gender inequality has been evidenced

Recommended word count for Section 2: 2000 words

1 Evaluating progress against the previous action plan

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

Guidance

Please provide the most recent iteration of the action plan associated with the university's previous award. The action plan should be 'RAG' rated (rated 'red', 'amber' or 'green') dependent on progress.

Please provide an overview of the progress achieved in implementing the university's previous action plan. The description should focus on the methodology of action implementation, evaluation and iteration. Applicants should reflect on actions from the previous action plan which have been rated as amber or red, and any actions which were removed over the course of the award. Detail should be provided about how the university evaluated the success (or otherwise) of actions, and what factors (internal or external to the university) acted as barriers or facilitators to the university's implementation of actions and meeting of success measures. Where challenges to successful implementation were noted, applicants should outline what steps were made to respond to these, and how the action plan was adjusted. Applicants should describe the main learnings and outcomes from the evaluation of the action plan, and consideration should be given to how the university can apply the learning to ensure an improved implementation of the future action plan, and secure better outcomes or impacts.

2 Evaluating success against the university's key priorities

Please describe the university's key achievements in gender equality.

Guidance

The description should evidence how the university has achieved the desired outcome or improvement against at least two of their previously identified key priorities.

When describing success observed against the key priorities, applicants should refer to qualitative and quantitative data to evidence their statements where possible. Applicants should reflect on the main facilitators or factors that supported them to achieve success, and identify whether there are any aspects that could be translated to other areas to support success against the university's other key priorities.

Section 3: An assessment of the university's gender equality context

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion B:

- + evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant

Recommended word count for Section 3: 3500 words

1 Culture, inclusion and belonging

Please describe how the university ensures their culture and practices support inclusion and belonging

Guidance

In this section, applicants should consider the university's culture as it relates to gender equality and inclusion. This could include the university's values, traditions, leadership, practices and behaviours and other formal and informal structures and interactions that characterise the working and learning environment of the university, affecting all staff and students. Applicants should reflect on how the university actively considers gender equality and inclusivity within their culture, including how instances of negative practices or behaviours are addressed. Applicants should draw on their data including, where appropriate, survey and/or consultation findings from sub-units (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2.

The description should reflect on the university's current understanding of intersectional inequalities for staff and students, drawing on the university's cultural, qualitative and quantitative evidence. Where issues have been identified, actions should be included in the action plan which will support the university to address intersectional inequalities within this award cycle. The university can choose to focus on the intersection of gender with any other characteristic; this prioritisation should be evidence-based, informed by the university's specific context and/or regional or national data and trends.

Applicants should consider the ways in which they actively include people of all gender identities within the university's culture and practices. The provision of quantitative data is not required. Applicants should not be deterred if the university's demographic data indicate low rates of disclosure from e.g. trans or non-binary people, and are encouraged to consider how inclusive practices and approaches are embedded within culture and activity.

Applicants should reflect on the university's approach to ensuring culture and practices are inclusive and supportive of people with caring responsibilities, and how the university strives to mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the university supports flexibility for staff and students and supports the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.

2 Key priorities for future action

Please describe the university's key issues relating to gender equality, and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Applicants should reflect on their evaluation in previous sections (including of policies, progress and culture), and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the university's key issues relating to gender equality. This should draw on the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2.

The university's evaluation should reflect on insights particularly as these relates to gender equality (e.g. the representation and progression of people of particular gender identities) and should be intersectional wherever possible. To support their evaluation, applicants should consider any trends or issues across sub-units (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates), job families, contract types or functions, or grades. Applicants should consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. For the progression of professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff, applicants should reflect on the progression pathways available for PTO staff, drawing on evidence as appropriate to inform the identification of good practice and areas for improvement. Applicants should consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the identification of the university's key issues, between four and eight key priorities should be identified that the university seeks to address with future action. These key priorities must be appropriate to the university's context and be justifiable based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Applicants should consider how their priorities address intersectional inequalities.

Applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, the rationale for these changes should be presented.

Priorities should be specific and detailed, allowing the university to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple actions (these actions should be SMART). Applicants should cross-reference to the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 4: Future action plan

In Section 4, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

- + an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

1 Action plan

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

Guidance

Based on the university's evidence base and self-assessment, an action plan should be presented which addresses the university's key issues and priorities. The plan should cover ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross-reference the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant).

Applicants should provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues. While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, the action plan should balance these actions with proactive intervention which will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Actions, and their measures of success, should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Appendix 1: Culture survey data [where relevant]

Please present the results of the core culture survey questions for sub-units (eg academic department, PTO directorate or equivalent) where available, and if desired, the results of any additional survey questions or consultation.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Gold university application form

Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

- + structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work

Recommended word count for Section 1: 2500 words

1 Letter of endorsement from the head of the university

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the university.

Guidance

The letter should highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the university relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter should outline the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the university (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and evidence how the university's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the university.

2 Description of the university and its context

Please provide an introduction to the university.

Guidance

The description should provide an overview of the university. The description should highlight contextual factors that are particular to the university; for example, location, academic focus, discipline coverage, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institution's structure, relationship with departments or community partners). Outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Applicants should indicate which departments (if any) hold Athena Swan awards and at what level. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections and should not be duplicated in this section.

3 Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work

Please provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and university-level resources.

Guidance

Please describe the university's key management and committee structures, and the formal structures in place to carry out and support the university's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. Please describe the formal processes in place to distribute, recognise and reward EDI work.

The description should provide an overview of how EDI work is supported by and embedded within the governance structure of the university. Detail should be provided about how the university supports gender equality activity in sub-units across the institution (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates).

Detail should be included about how EDI work (including work relating to Athena Swan) is distributed, accounted for, recognised and rewarded; for example, in a workload allocation model, at appraisal, and/or through promotions and progression pathways.

4 Development, evaluation and effectiveness of institutional policies

Please describe the processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising institutional policies.

Guidance

The description should provide an overview of how the university ensures that institutional policies are fit-for-purpose, how they are evaluated, and how their effectiveness and impact is assessed.

This should include an overview of any consultative approaches (with staff, students or external stakeholders) which are used to inform these processes. The description should indicate how the university ensures that policies support an inclusive culture and do not negatively impact on people of particular gender identities, describing the university's use of Equality Impact Assessment where relevant. The university should consider how policies are evaluated for intersectional inequalities and impact.

The description should provide evidence of how institutional policies are considered by the staff and students utilising them; for example, whether they are considered effective and appropriate, and whether they have had a positive impact.

5 Athena Swan self-assessment process

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the university's future gender equality work.

Guidance

An overview should be provided on the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work. This should be provided in a table showing the gender of SAT members, their professional/student role in the institution, and their role in the SAT. The SAT should be representative of the institution in relation to gender profile and staff type, grades and roles, and the team should have representation from across the institution.

A summary should be provided of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff and students. Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by gender. Applicants should reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application.

An overview should be provided on how the university plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated (where appropriate).

Section 2: An evaluation of the university's progress and success

In Section 2, applicants should evidence how they meet Criteria D and E:

- + progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities has been demonstrated
- + success in addressing gender inequality has been evidenced

Recommended word count for Section 2: 2000 words

1 Evaluating progress against the previous action plan

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

Guidance

Please provide the most recent iteration of the action plan associated with the university's previous award. The action plan should be 'RAG' rated (rated 'red', 'amber' or 'green') dependent on progress.

Please provide an overview of the progress achieved in implementing the university's previous action plan. The description should focus on the methodology of action implementation, evaluation and iteration. Applicants should reflect on actions from the previous action plan which have been rated as amber or red, and any actions which were removed over the course of the award. Detail should be provided about how the university evaluated the success (or otherwise) of actions, and what factors (internal or external to the university) acted as barriers or facilitators to the university's implementation of actions and meeting of success measures. Where challenges to successful implementation were noted, applicants should outline what steps were made to respond to these, and how the action plan was adjusted. Applicants should describe the main learnings and outcomes from the evaluation of the action plan, and consideration should be given to how the university can apply the learning to ensure an improved implementation of the future action plan, and secure better outcomes or impacts.

2 Evaluating success against the university's key priorities

Please describe the university's key achievements in gender equality.

Guidance

The description should evidence how the university has achieved the desired outcome or improvement against at least three of their previously identified key priorities. Applicants should evidence how they have achieved longitudinal improvement over the course of more than one award cycle.

The key priorities for action previously identified by the university at Bronze and Silver levels should be outlined in this section in order to support the applicant's evaluation of longitudinal success.

When describing success observed against the key priorities, applicants should refer to qualitative and quantitative data to evidence their statements where possible. Applicants should reflect on the main facilitators or factors that supported them to achieve success, and identify whether there are any aspects that could be translated to other areas to support success against the university's other key priorities.

Section 3: An evaluation of the university's sector-leading activity

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion F:

- + evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve

Recommended word count for Section 3: 1500 words

1 Maintaining good practice and innovation

Please provide exemplars of good practice and/or beacon activities which demonstrate that the university is, and strives to remain, sector-leading.

Guidance

The description should include examples of how the university has been innovative in their gender equality work. The description should outline how the university continually monitors and updates their practices and policies in order to remain innovative and inclusive. This should take into account how the university is embedding an intersectional approach and ensuring the inclusion of and support for people of all gender identities. Applicants should consider how the university supports its subunits (eg academic departments, PTO directorates or equivalent), staff and students to advance gender equality work within their own units and networks.

2 Supporting others to improve

Please describe how the university has supported others to achieve success in gender equality.

Guidance

The description should outline how the university has supported others to improve, and how the university's activity has resulted in good practice being taken up by others. Applicants should consider their influence on, mentorship of, and support for others outside the university; for example, this could include other universities, organisations, industry partners, or professional bodies, within or beyond higher education.

Section 4: An assessment of the university's gender equality context

In Section 4, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion B:

- + evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant

Recommended word count for Section 3: 3500 words

1 Culture, inclusion and belonging

Please describe how the university ensures their culture and practices support inclusion and belonging.

Guidance

In this section, applicants should consider the university's culture as it relates to gender equality and inclusion. This could include the university's values, traditions, leadership, practices and behaviours and other formal and informal structures and interactions that characterise the working and learning environment of the university, affecting all staff and students. Applicants should reflect on how the university actively considers gender equality and inclusivity within their culture, including how instances of negative practices or behaviours are addressed. Applicants should draw on their data including, where appropriate, survey and/or consultation findings from sub-units (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2.

The description should reflect on the university's current understanding of intersectional inequalities for staff and students, drawing on the university's cultural, qualitative and quantitative evidence. Where issues have been identified, actions should be included in the action plan which will support the university to address intersectional inequalities within this award cycle. The university can choose to focus on the intersection of gender with any other characteristic; this prioritisation should be evidence-based, informed by the university's specific context and/or regional or national data and trends.

Applicants should consider the ways in which they actively include people of all gender identities within the university's culture and practices. The provision of quantitative data is not required. Applicants should not be deterred if the university's demographic data indicate low rates of disclosure from eg trans or non-binary people, and are encouraged to consider how inclusive practices and approaches are embedded within culture and activity.

Applicants should reflect on the university's approach to ensuring culture and practices are inclusive and supportive of people with caring responsibilities, and how the university strives to mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the university supports flexibility for staff and students and supports the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.

2 Key priorities for future action

Please describe the university's key issues relating to gender equality, and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Applicants should reflect on their evaluation in previous sections (including of policies, progress and culture), and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the university's key issues relating to gender equality. This should draw on the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2.

The university's evaluation should reflect on insights particularly as these relates to gender equality (eg the representation and progression of people of particular gender identities) and should be intersectional wherever possible. To support their evaluation, applicants should consider any trends or issues across sub-units (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates), job families, contract types or functions, or grades. Applicants should consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. For the progression of professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff, applicants should reflect on the progression pathways available for PTO staff, drawing on evidence as appropriate to inform the identification of good practice and areas for improvement. Applicants should consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the identification of the university's key issues, between four and eight key priorities should be identified that the university seeks to address with future action. These key priorities must be appropriate to the university's context and be justifiable based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Applicants should consider how their priorities address intersectional inequalities.

Applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, the rationale for these changes should be presented.

Priorities should be specific and detailed, allowing the university to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple actions (these actions should be SMART). Applicants should cross-reference to the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 5: Future action plan

In Section 5, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

- + an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

1 Action plan

Guidance

Based on the university's evidence base and self-assessment, an action plan should be presented which addresses the university's key issues and priorities. The plan should cover ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross-reference the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant).

Applicants should provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues. While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, the action plan should balance these actions with proactive intervention which will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Actions, and their measures of success, should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Appendix 1: Culture survey data [where relevant]

Please present the results of the core culture survey questions for sub-units (e.g. academic department, PTO directorate or equivalent) where available, and if desired, the results of any additional survey questions or consultation.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

University renewal application form

Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

- + structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work

Recommended word count for Section 1: 2500 words

1 Letter of endorsement from the head of the university

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the university.

Guidance

The letter should highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the university relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to the overall institutional strategy. The letter should outline the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the university (for example, any involvement in the self-assessment or particular actions) and evidence how the university's gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the university.

2 Description of the university and its context

Please provide an introduction to the university.

Guidance

The description should provide an overview of the university. The description should highlight contextual factors that are particular to the university; for example, location, academic focus, discipline coverage, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the institution's structure, relationship with departments or community partners). Outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Applicants should indicate which departments (if any) hold Athena Swan awards and at what level. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections and should not be duplicated in this section.

3 Athena Swan self-assessment process

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the university's future gender equality work.

Guidance

An overview should be provided on the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self-assessment work. This should be provided in a table showing the gender of SAT members, their professional/student role in the institution, and their role in the SAT. The SAT should be representative of the institution in relation to gender profile and staff type, grades and roles, and the team should have representation from across the institution.

A summary should be provided of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff and students. Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by gender. Applicants should reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application.

An overview should be provided on how the university plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and (where appropriate) how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated.

Section 2: An evaluation of the university's progress and issues

In Section 2, applicants should evidence how they meet Criteria B and D:

- + progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities has been demonstrated
- + evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant

Recommended word count for Section 2: 3000 words

1 Evaluating progress against the previous action plan

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

Guidance

Please provide the most recent iteration of the action plan associated with the university's previous award. The action plan should be 'RAG' rated (rated 'red', 'amber' or 'green') dependent on progress.

Please provide an overview of the progress achieved in implementing university's previous action plan. The description should focus on the methodology of action implementation, evaluation and iteration. Applicants should reflect on actions from the previous action plan which have been rated as amber or red, and any actions which were removed over the course of the award. Detail should be provided about how the university evaluated the success (or otherwise) of actions, and what factors (internal or external to the university) acted as barriers or facilitators to the university's implementation of actions and meeting of success measures. Where challenges to successful implementation were noted, applicants should outline what steps were made to respond to these, and how the action plan was adjusted. Applicants should describe the main learnings and outcomes from the evaluation of the action plan, and consideration should be given to how the university can apply the learning to ensure an improved implementation of the future action plan, and secure better outcomes or impacts.

2 Key priorities for future action

Please describe the university's key issues relating to gender equality, and explain the key priorities for action.

Guidance

Applicants should reflect on their evaluation of progress and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the university's key issues relating to gender equality. Applicants should consider whether and how the institution's gender equality issues have changed since their previous award. This should draw on the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2. The university's evaluation should reflect on insights particularly as these relate to gender equality (e.g. the representation and progression of people of particular gender identities).

Applicants should consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. Applicants should consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

To support their evaluation, applicants should consider how engagement with Athena Swan has developed over the award period in sub-units (such as academic departments and professional, technical and operational directorates), and any need to further embed Athena Swan Principles and activity across the institution in the future.

Based on the identification of the university's key issues, no more than 4-8 key priorities should be identified that the university seeks to address with future action. These key priorities must be appropriate to the university's context and be justifiable based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Applicants should consider how their priorities address intersectional inequalities.

Applicants should refer to their previously identified key priorities. If applicable, applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, the rationale for these changes should be presented.

Priorities should be specific and detailed, allowing the university to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple actions (these actions should be SMART). Applicants should cross-reference to the key priorities in the future action plan.

Section 3: Future action plan

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

- + an action plan is in place to address identified key issues

1 Action plan

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

Guidance

Based on the university's evidence base and self-assessment, an action plan should be presented which addresses the university's key issues and priorities. The plan should cover ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross-reference the key priorities as identified in the previous section.

For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant).

Applicants should provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues. While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, the action plan should balance these actions with proactive intervention which will effect change.

It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a "rationale" column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible.

Actions, and their measures of success, should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Appendix 1: Culture survey data [where relevant]

Please present the results of the core culture survey questions for sub-units (e.g. academic department, PTO directorate or equivalent) where available, and if desired, the results of any additional survey questions or consultation.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Athena Swan data requirements for university applicants

Bronze University

For first-time Bronze applications, three years of data should be presented where possible (where not possible, an explanation should be provided). In Bronze renewal applications, data should be presented covering the period since the previous application. Data presentation should include both numbers and proportions for ease of interpretation. Wherever possible, data should be disaggregated by gender, grade (for staff data), and sub-unit (eg academic department, PTO directorate or equivalent). Applicants should disaggregate their data by the sub-unit that is most helpful for their gender equality analysis and objectives, this, for example, could be by faculty or department.

Silver and Gold University

Where possible, data should be presented covering the period since the previous application. Where not possible, an explanation should be provided. Data for earlier periods can be included if desired; for example, to support the applicant's demonstration of longitudinal improvement. Data presentation should include both numbers and proportions for ease of interpretation. Wherever possible, data should be disaggregated by gender, grade (for staff data) and sub-unit (eg academic department, PTO directorate or equivalent). Applicants should disaggregate their data by the sub-unit that is most helpful for their gender equality analysis and objectives, this for example, could be by faculty or department. To support the university's intersectional analysis, applicants should give due regard to intersectionality wherever possible.

University data requirements

University applicants should present the following datasets where possible. Where not possible, an explanation should be provided and where appropriate an action included in the action plan to address this moving forward.

University data requirements	
1	Students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level
2	Academic staff by contract function
3	Academic staff by contract type
4	Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff by job family
5	PTO staff by contract type
6	Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to academic posts
7	Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to PTO posts
8	Applications and success rates for academic promotion.
9	Applications and success rates for PTO progression

These data should be presented in Appendix 2 and can be cross-referenced from the main sections of the application.

Word allocation guidance

Each award application has an overall word allocation, shown below. Word allocations are limited in order to help applicants retain a focus on what is most important, and to support review panels which assess up to 10 applications per panel.

Recommended word allocations are provided for each section. These are purely for guidance and applicants have the flexibility to use the overall word allocation across the application as they deem appropriate. At the beginning of every section, applicants should state how many words have been used in that section.

Bronze University	
Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality	2500 words
Section 2: An assessment of the university's gender equality context	3500 words
Section 3: Future action plan	
Appendix 1: Culture survey data ¹	
Appendix 2: Data tables ¹	
Appendix 3: Glossary ¹	
Overall word allocation	6000 words

Silver University	
Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality	2500 words
Section 2: An evaluation of the university's progress and success	2000 words
Section 3: An assessment of the university's gender equality context	3500 words
Section 4: Future action plan ¹	
Appendix 1: Culture survey data ¹	
Appendix 2: Data tables ¹	
Appendix 3: Glossary ¹	
Overall word allocation	8000 words

Gold University	
Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality	2500 words
Section 2: An evaluation of the university's progress and success	2000 words
Section 3: An evaluation of the university's sector-leading activity	1500 words
Section 4: An assessment of the university's gender equality context	3500 words
Section 5: Future action plan ¹	
Appendix 1: Culture survey data ¹	
Appendix 2: Data tables ¹	
Appendix 3: Glossary ¹	
Overall word allocation	9500 words

University Renewal	
Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality	2500 words
Section 2: An evaluation of the university's progress and issues	3000 words
Section 3: Future action plan ¹	
Appendix 1: Culture survey data ¹	
Appendix 2: Data tables ¹	
Appendix 3: Glossary ¹	
Overall word allocation	5500 words

¹ These sections and appendices should not contain any commentary contributing to the overall word limit.

What is included in and excluded from the word count?

The word count includes all body text throughout the application, including quotes from qualitative analysis and readable words in screenshots. It also includes any standalone text or prose included in tables, graphs, footnotes or references.

The following are not counted towards the word limit

- + data tables, figures and graphs providing they do not include standalone prose. These data should be presented in appendices 1-2 and can be cross-referenced from the main sections of the application
- + details of your self-assessment team when displayed as a table
- + action points within the body of the application and references to them
- + references; for example, to literature or benchmarking sources
- + your action plan, which should not include any commentary contributing to the overall word limit
- + your glossary of terms used in the application (appendix 3).

Any application found to have exceeded the word allowance may be rejected and not assessed by the peer-review panel.

Additional word allocation

The overall word allocation for your application can be increased in certain circumstances. The process relating to some common circumstances are listed below:

Covid-19 pandemic

In recognition of the impact of the pandemic on institutions, all applicants submitting in 2021 and 2022 are offered a 500-word extension to the application word limit to consider the impact of Covid-19. These words can be used to discuss practical impacts on the self-assessment process (eg format and timing of SAT meetings and/or membership; consultation methodologies; resourcing changes), on action plan implementation, or to address gender equality impacts of Covid-19. The additional words are available to all applicants during this period so there is no need to apply to the Equality Charters team for permission. Applicants are also not obliged to use the additional words if the self-assessment team determine that the application has not been impacted by Covid-19 or the extra words are not needed.

Organisational restructure

If an organisational restructure has recently taken place, applicants can avail of a 750-word extension to reflect on the impact of the restructure to their gender equality work in their application (eg arising from changes to their staff or student demographic profile, policies, or context). Applicants should email the Equality Charters team no less than one month prior to the application submission date to confirm this additional word allowance and ensure it is noted in our records.

Exceptional circumstances

Requests for additional word allowances to account for exceptional circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis. Any increase in the word allowance should always be used to explain how the special circumstances have impacted on or been taken into account with respect to the applicant's gender equality context or activity. Applicants should email the Equality Charters team no less than two months prior to the application submission date to agree and confirm this additional word allowance and ensure it is noted in our records.

Consultation with your community

To explore the gender equality context and identify priorities for action, all applicants are expected to undergo a self-assessment, led by a representative team and informed by staff and student communities. There are a variety of ways that staff and students can inform your self-assessment, including full or pulse surveys, focus groups, interviews, liaising with networks and unions, town hall meetings, and many more.

As you begin your application preparation, we encourage applicants to map existing opportunities to gather information and input from your communities – this will help you mitigate ‘consultation fatigue’. For example, you may already be collecting relevant evidence through an annual staff survey, the National Student Survey (NSS) or Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). If desired, you can include the results of consultation exercises such as these in Appendix 1 of your application.

Additionally, as you progress through your self-assessment, you might find that you require further exploration to help you understand the issues emerging from your assessment. For example, the departmental culture survey (discussed further below) will help you to evaluate culture in your institution or department and to identify your key gender equality issues. You might need to triangulate these findings with other forms of evidence or staff and student consultation in order to fully understand the issues and propose priorities for future action.

Using and supporting the departmental culture survey

We have created a survey for use by departmental applicants so that they may explore and assess their culture. To support flexibility, departmental applicants have a choice of running the full culture survey, or embedding the seven 'core' questions into existing surveys. As a minimum, the results of the core questions must be included in departmental applications under Appendix 1.

At university level, use of this culture survey is not mandatory, though you may wish to consider the themes and questions of that survey in your self-assessment to aid your analysis. To aid your assessment of culture across the university, we encourage you to review the results emerging from the departments which have run the survey. You should include these results (where available) in Appendix 1 of your application.

In some cases, to support the gender equality activity of departments and other sub-units, a university may wish to run a single survey exercise covering all units within the institution and provide the results of this survey to departments to inform their departmental Athena Swan application. If you wish to do this, please remember that departmental applicants will be expected, as a minimum, to present the results of the core survey questions relevant to their context; i.e. they must have access to survey findings disaggregated for their department. Departments will also need to make sure that disaggregated survey results are recent enough to inform their self-assessment effectively – ideally the survey should be run no more than a year prior to a department's application submission date.

For further details about the departmental culture survey, please see the [Guidance Pack for Departments](#).

We want your help

The departmental culture survey is a new addition to the Athena Swan Charter. To ensure it is as effective and supportive of applicants' gender equality work as possible, during 2021 and 2022, we will be reviewing, along with the Athena Swan Governance Committee, its use by early adopters. We are asking any applicant planning on using the survey (or its core questions) during this period to [register their interest](#) in taking part in the pilot exercise so that we can learn from their experience and feedback. This applies to departments intending to run the survey themselves, or to universities planning on running the survey centrally.

Glossary

Glossary of terms

Within individual institutions terminology may be used in different ways, with differing names given to units or practices. To support your engagement with the Athena Swan Charter framework, over the next pages, we have provided definitions for some of the terms we use.

All Athena Swan award applicants are encouraged to include their own glossary of terms in Appendix 3 of their applications. This can include any acronyms or institution-specific terminology used in the application.

We're here to help

If you are unsure about any terminology used in this document or the Athena Swan framework, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our Equality Charters team for more support.

Term	Definition
Academic staff	Staff responsible for the planning, direction and/or undertaking of academic teaching and/or research. This includes staff with teaching-only, research-only, and teaching and research contract functions.
Appraisal	Appraisal (sometimes called a performance review) is a process providing a formal opportunity for constructive dialogue and feedback on an individual's work, effectiveness and development.
Beacon activity	Activity which disseminates and promotes the uptake of innovative and impactful good practice to others.
Bullying	Bullying is behaviour from a person or group that's unwanted and makes you feel uncomfortable, including feeling frightened, less respected, made fun of, or upset.
Career break	A career break is a period of time out from employment or career. Career breaks are often taken by parents and carers, and can also be used to take time for personal or professional development.
Caring leave	A period of absence from work or study relating to a person's caring responsibilities. This includes maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave, parental leave, time off for dependents.
Casual contract	Contracts where staff deliver non-permanent or intermittent services, often in response to seasonal or fluctuating trends in the volume of work. This includes single assignment contracts, zero-hour contracts.

Charter Principle	The commitments that underpin the Athena Swan Charter and set out shared goals for gender equality that all participating institutions, departments and directorates agree to upholding.
Clinical staff	Staff who normally undertake clinical duties in addition to teaching and/or research activities. This includes academic Clinical Fellows, academic Clinical Lecturers, health professionals employed directly by your department/institution, academic staff employed directly by your department/institution who also carry out programmed activities outside the institution in a medical or healthcare setting.
Completion rate	The proportion of a student cohort successfully completing their studies. This is a useful dataset for analysis particularly for programmes that do not award classifications upon completion, for example PhD programmes.
Contract function	The main function of employment a staff member is employed to deliver, as set out in their employment contract. This includes teaching-only, research-only, teaching and research.
Contract type	The type of contract a staff member is employed on, including open-ended, permanent, fixed-term, atypical, casual.
Degree attainment	The awarding of degree classifications to students; for example, first-class honours, upper second-class honours, lower second-class honours, third-class honours/pass.
Department	A sub-unit within an institution that normally aligns with a particular academic discipline or professional area. Institutions may use other terms to describe these units, such as 'School'. Department is the term used by Advance HE to refer to academic sub-units eligible to apply for an Athena Swan award.
Directorate	A sub-unit within an institution that normally aligns with a particular professional, technical or operational area, and which may be made up of smaller units or departments. Institutions may use other terms to describe these units. Directorate is the term used by Advance HE to refer to professional, technical and/or operational sub-units eligible to apply for an Athena Swan award.
Diversity monitoring	The collection of data about staff and student identity characteristics to provide insights into the demographic diversity of a population.
Equality Impact Assessment	An evidence-based assessment tool to help institutions ensure that their policies, practices and decisions are fair, meet the needs of their staff and students and that they are not inadvertently discriminating against any protected group.

Faculty	A group of sub-units, often called departments, in related academic fields that are managed through an over-arching decision-making body or governance structure. Institutions may use other terms to describe these groupings, for example 'College'. Faculty is the term used by Advance HE to refer to groups of academic sub-units eligible to apply for an Athena Swan award. Faculty applicants use the same application materials as departments but should note additional considerations in the departmental guidance.
Flexible working	A working arrangement which gives some flexibility on how long, where, when and at what times employees work. Flexible working includes part-time working, term-time working, compressed hours, annual hours, flexitime, working remotely on a regular basis.
Gender	Gender can be considered to consist of three related aspects: gender roles, socially constructed norms and behaviours which are essentially based on stereotypes associated with the sex assigned at birth; gender identity, which is a person's internal perception of their identity; and gender expression, which is the way a person lives in society and interacts with others. These different aspects of gender have typically been understood as binary. However, gender does not represent a simple binary choice, it is more fluid and some people have a gender identity that cannot be defined simply by the use of the terms woman or man. A person's gender is self-determined by their internal perception, identification and experience. Therefore, a person's gender identity may not be the same as the sex the individual was registered as at birth. It may also change over time.
Gender identity	A person's internal perception of their identity. A person's gender is self-determined by their internal perception, identification and experience. Therefore, a person's gender identity may not be the same as the sex the individual was registered as at birth. It may also change over time.
Governance structure	The key management and committee structures, and other formal structures in place to carry out and support the organisation's activity.
Harassment	Harassment is bullying or unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect either of violating a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 if related to a protected characteristic.
Institution	An organisation, often made up of academic, research and/or professional, technical and operational sub-units. Institution is the term used by Advance HE to describe the organisational-level units eligible to apply for an Athena Swan award, namely universities and research institutes.

Intersectional inequality	Intersectionality is the understanding that social inequalities are not just summative, they are mutually constituting. For example, the disadvantage experienced by a Black woman is compounded by the inequalities she faces as a woman and as a Black person, and is distinct from the experiences of a Black man or a White woman. In the Athena Swan framework, applicants are encouraged to reflect on and address how their staff and students experience intersectional inequalities, particularly the intersection of gender and other characteristics.
Job family	A group of jobs with similar characteristics, which are engaged in similar work. Although the level of responsibility, skill or competence will differ, the essential nature of activities carried out is similar across the job family. Examples of job families include: research and teaching; operations and facilities; technical services; administrative, professional and managerial.
Non-binary	Non-binary is used to refer to a person who has a gender identity which is in between or beyond the two categories 'man' and 'woman', fluctuates between 'man' and 'woman', or who has no gender, either permanently or some of the time. People who are non-binary may have gender identities that fluctuate (genderfluid), they may identify as having more than one gender depending on the context (eg bigender or pangender), feel that they have no gender (eg agender, non-gendered), or they may identify gender differently (eg third gender, genderqueer).
Occupational segregation	The underrepresentation of certain groups (e.g. based on gender) in particular occupations or sectors. Occupational segregation is sometimes referred to as horizontal segregation. For example, the predominance of men in Estates roles and women in Catering roles, or the predominance of men in Computing and women in Education disciplines.
Performance review	Performance review (sometimes called appraisal) is a process providing a formal opportunity for constructive dialogue and feedback on an individual's work, effectiveness and development.
Progression	A process or processes through which existing members of staff can move to a higher job grade, sometimes involving the submission of a successful application to an advertised vacancy. Professional, technical and operational members of staff are often subject to progression pathways that differ from academic promotion.
Promotion	A formal process for existing members of staff to move to a higher job grade usually within a defined career track. Academic members of staff can often progress through a promotion pathway; for example, academic promotion between Lecturer and Senior Lecturer roles. Professional, technical and operational staff are often subject to different progression pathways (see progression).

Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff	Staff not employed on an academic contract function. This includes administrators, technical staff, non-academic professionals, maintenance staff.
Qualitative data	Non-numerical information often related to characteristics and qualities rather than trends and statistics. It can be collected using questionnaires, interviews, or observation, and is often presented in narrative form.
Quantitative data	Numerical information describing measurements or counts, often related to trends and statistics. It can be collected using census exercises, monitoring processes such as recruitment or promotion, or surveys featuring a rating scale. Quantitative data is often presented in graphical or tabular format.
RAG rating	<p>A rating system wherein items are rated 'red', 'amber' or 'green' dependent on progress. Advance HE recognises that the application of RAG ratings can be subject to different definitions. For the purpose of presenting the previous action plan, please use the following definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Red: No progress was made on this action. For example: The action was never undertaken; the action was started but was permanently discontinued; further work is needed to begin the action or to revise the approach. + Amber: Partial progress was made on this action. For example: the action has begun but is incomplete; the action was completed but the outcomes or impacts were not as predicted/desired; further work is needed to complete the action or to obtain the desired outcome or impact. + Green: Good progress was made on this action. For example: the action was completed with outcomes or impacts as (or very close to) predicted/desired; no further work is needed on this action.
Recognition	The Athena Swan framework encourages applicants to consider how gender equality work is recognised. This refers to how this work is formally acknowledged and accounted for through processes such as those relating to workload allocation, appraisal and progression.
Research institute	An organisation established to undertake research and development. Research institutes eligible to apply for Athena Swan awards must be independent of any higher education institution. Research institutes embedded within a university should participate through the departmental route.

Reward	The Athena Swan framework encourages applicants to consider how gender equality work is rewarded. This refers to how appreciation is formally shown through processes such as those relating to appraisal, progression and pay.
Self-assessment team	The term used by Advance HE for a team made up of staff and student (where relevant) members, who are representative of the unit applying for an Athena Swan award. They are responsible for carrying out an assessment of the unit's gender equality context, issues and priorities and planning and evaluating future action.
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. In setting their plans for future action, applicants are encouraged to include actions and measures of success which are SMART in nature.
Social injustice	Disparity and injustice in relation to the distribution of and access to wealth, health and well-being, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
Structural inequality	Structural inequality refers to the systems in which institutional policies and practices and individual behaviours are located, and how these systems interact with institutional culture, environment and other 'norms' compounded by history, culture and systemic privilege, to perpetuate inequality.
Trans	Trans and transgender are inclusive umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex (male or female) they were assigned at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, trans men and women, non-binary people and dual role people. Not all people that can be included in the term will associate with it.
University	An organisation established to deliver higher education and research which grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects. Universities may be made up of academic and/or professional, technical and operational sub-units (referred to within the Athena Swan Charter as departments and directorates respectively).
Whole life balance	The ability for workers to enjoy a reasonable balance between all aspects of their lives, so that the demands of work do not pose a challenge to gaining satisfaction from their life outside work, and aspects of their personal life do not pose a challenge to being successful in their work or career.
Workload allocation model	A tool or process used to ensure the allocation of work among staff is fair, reasonable and equitable.

