

UK Charters Membership & Eligibility Policy

OPS/06

Date issued:	April 2023
Date reviewed:	December 2024
Author:	Assistant Director, Equality Charters
Policy Owner:	Assistant Director, Equality Charters
Next review date:	April 2025

Advance HE Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

Advance HE's charitable objects illustrate our clear commitment to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Encouraging EDI in the workplace as a core organisational value, underpinning internal practice in order for people to feel welcome valued and supported.

At Advance HE, we are committed to creating an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity, and a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. We are committed to ensuring that all stakeholders are treated fairly and are not subject to discrimination on any grounds.

CONTENTS

1	Purpose	4
2	Scope	4
3	Definitions	4
4	Membership & Charters Participation	4
5	Termination of Membership & Charters Services	5
6	Award Validity & Eligibility to Apply	6
7	Related Documents	6
8	Version Control	7

Advance HE UK Charters Membership & Eligibility Policy

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy outlines those eligible to apply for an Athena Swan or Race Equality Charter award within the UK.
- 1.2 The Policy also explains what happens if an award holder ends membership with Advance HE, or no longer includes the Athena Swan or Race Equality Charter service within their membership package.
- 1.3 This Policy covers:
- Which Advance HE members have access to Charters services.
 - How the validity of Charters awards is affected by terminating Advance HE membership or choosing not to include Athena Swan and/or the Race Equality Charter in a membership package.
 - The prerequisites for applying for a Charters award at institution-level and sub-unit level.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The Charters awards and services covered by this Policy are:
- UK Athena Swan Awards including all levels (e.g. Bronze, Silver, Gold) and all types (e.g. University, Research Institute, Department, Professional, Technical and Operational Directorate)
 - UK Race Equality Charter (REC) awards including all levels (e.g. Bronze, Silver) and all types (e.g. University, Research Institute)
 - All benefits associated with UK Athena Swan and/or Race Equality Charter membership (e.g. resources, dedicated advice and guidance, webinars, events, and networking opportunities)
- 2.2 Applications for Athena Swan Ireland awards and other international Charters awards (including, but not limited to, SAGE Athena SWAN) are not within the scope of this Policy.

3 Definitions

Institution	Any university or independent research-institute (including small and specialist institutions).
Sub-units	Any department or directorate of a university that wishes to apply for a distinct charter award; this includes academic departments, colleges, schools, faculties or similar; as well as professional, technical, and operational directorates and departments.

4 Advance HE Membership & Charters Participation

- 4.1 Membership to Advance HE's Athena Swan or Race Equality Charters is only available to institutions paying for the relevant Charter service as part of their membership package.
- 4.2 International Access membership does not include Charters services.

- 4.3 Access to an Athena Swan or Race Equality Charter award through a reciprocal agreement (including, but not limited to, converting an award from the Institute of Physics' Juno Project) is only available to those whose membership package includes the relevant Charter service.
- 4.4 As part of an Advance HE membership package that includes Charter services:
- Universities and Research Institutes can apply for institution-level Charter awards for free.
 - Sub-units wishing to apply for an Athena Swan award will be liable to pay an application fee for each application. The fee for the current academic year will be listed on the Advance HE website.
 - Institutions will be asked to nominate contacts who Advance HE will communicate with in relation to the institution's Charters membership.
 - Members will have access to a range of associated benefits (e.g. dedicated advice and guidance, networking opportunities, events, and webinars); these will be communicated through your nominated contacts.

5 Termination of Advance HE Membership or Charters Services

- 5.1 Charters awards are part of a progressive framework.
- 5.1.1 Applicants set out a gender or race equality action plan that will cover the duration of their award and are expected to evaluate progress against this action plan in order to renew or upgrade their award.
- 5.1.2 Members also commit to upholding the relevant charter principles, which are published on the Advance HE website.
- 5.2 If an institution terminates their Advance HE membership or chooses not to include Athena Swan and/or the Race Equality Charter in its membership package, it will be deemed to have ended its commitment to reporting progress on its action plan and upholding the charter principles.
- 5.3 As a result, once their membership has ended (usually at the end of the financial year), all awards belonging to the institution, or its sub-units will cease to be current (regardless of the awards' original expiration dates).
- 5.3.1 The institution is responsible for communicating the change to its sub-units who are award holders or working towards applications.
- 5.4 In addition, if an institution terminates Advance HE membership or chooses not to include Athena Swan and/or the Race Equality Charter in its membership package, the following will apply once membership has ended:
- The institution and its staff will no longer have access to associated member benefits.
 - The institution and its sub-units will no longer be permitted to use the Athena Swan or Race Equality Charter award logos.
 - The institution and its sub-units will no longer be listed in the online register of Charter members or be promoted by the Charters team.
 - The institution and its sub-units will no longer be eligible to apply for new awards or reciprocal awards.

6 Award Validity & Eligibility to Apply

- 6.1 Awards are granted for five years (as long as membership is retained throughout this time), after which a further application is required.
- 6.1.1 In exceptional circumstances, an extension may be granted.
- 6.2 Universities or Research Institutes wishing to apply for an Athena Swan or Race Equality Charter award must:
- Have signed up to the relevant Charter principles.
 - Have no outstanding membership fees.
 - Notify Advance HE of their intention to apply using the process outlined on Advance HE's website.
- 6.3 Sub-units wishing to apply for an Athena Swan award must:
- Have signed up to the relevant Charter principles.
 - Belong to an institution that has signed up to the Charter principles, holds a valid Athena Swan award, and has no outstanding membership fees.
 - Notify Advance HE of their intention to apply using the process outlined on Advance HE's website.
- 6.4 Sub-units may decide to apply for an award in the same submission round that its parent institution applies for its first institutional award.
- 6.4.1 Applicants must be aware that should the institution be unsuccessful in its application, the sub-unit will be ineligible for an award.
- 6.4.2 If a parent institution loses its award (i.e. is unsuccessful in renewing its award), any sub-unit awards will remain valid until their expiry date, but no renewals or new awards can be conferred until the institution successfully applies for an award.
- 6.5 No single sub-unit can be covered by more than one award.
- 6.5.1 A sub-unit award is invalidated if it is subsequently included in a successful submission for another sub-unit. For example:
- A departmental award is invalidated if the department is subsequently included in a successful faculty submission.
 - A faculty award is invalidated if a department included in the faculty submission, successfully applies individually.
- 6.6 The criteria, application and assessment processes for an award are available to members via the Advance HE website.

7 Related Documents

- 7.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Advance HE's Membership Terms & Conditions.
 - Other Charters policies.
 - Applicant information packs.

8 Version Control

Version	Date Issued	Amendments
1.0	April 2023	This is a new Policy which draws on content from, the now superseded, Equality Charters Guide to Processes.
1.1	December 2023	Reformatting and accessibility.
1.2	December 2024	In line with Athena Swan guidance documentation, amendments to reflect that no single sub-unit can be covered by more than one award.