

Athena SWAN Awards and Technological Universities in Ireland

Background

Under the Technological Universities Act 2018 two or more Institutes of Technology (IoTs) may merge to create a new Technological University (TU). The Higher Education Authority's (HEA) System Performance Report (2016) provides details of 'four consortia engaged with the process to become designated as technological universities': TU4Dublin; Technological University for the South-East (TUSE); Munster Technological University (MTU); Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA). Since the publication of this report, one of these consortia, TU4Dublin, has been legally established. The assessment of MTU's application for TU status is currently underway.

Advance HE recognises that members of the consortia engaged in the process to become designated as TUs are also highly engaged in the Athena SWAN application process. It is also clear that some IoTs that have not yet engaged with the Athena SWAN application process may wish to apply for an award before they become part of a TU.

Advance HE has welcomed the engagement of IoTs with Athena SWAN and wishes to continue to support and encourage the technological sector's work on gender equality. This document, which details the TU Legacy Award Process, is designed to put in place a procedure that recognises the gender equality work undertaken by IoTs to date, while maintaining the rigor of the Athena SWAN assessment process.

The TU Legacy Award Process

Purpose

The TU Legacy Award Process is designed to provide a mechanism for newly established TUs to achieve recognition for the gender equality work undertaken by legacy IoTs.

The procedures detailed in this document will be applied across the technological university sector in Ireland.

Timeframe of the TU Legacy Award Process

TUs wishing to avail of the TU Legacy Award Process should do so within six months of being legally established.

Where Advance HE grants a TU the right to use an Athena SWAN logo under the TU Legacy Award Process, the use of this logo is valid until the release of results in the Athena SWAN assessment round three years after the TU's formation. The expiry of the logo within this timeframe means that

the TU Legacy Award Process will not affect the Gender Task Force Gender Action Plan (2018) stipulation that ‘once a TU has been established, it shall be required to achieve a TU bronze award within three years’.

To provide an example: to comply with the timeframe set down in the Gender Action Plan, a TU formed in Feb-July 2019 would be required to apply for an Athena SWAN award no later than the April 2022 assessment round, and a TU formed in Aug 2019-Jan 2020 would be required to apply no later than the Nov 2022 assessment round. The TU Legacy Award logo would remain valid until the release of results at the end of the assessment rounds. Under the current Advance HE timeline for Athena SWAN results this would be September 2022 and April 2023 respectively.

Requirements of the TU Legacy Award Process

Where all members of a consortium hold a valid expanded (post-May 2015) Athena SWAN award

In this circumstance, the new Technological University may use the Athena SWAN **expanded award logo** if the following documents are submitted to, and approved in writing by, Advance HE:

1. A letter of endorsement (500 words max.) from the new TU President that includes acceptance of the Athena SWAN expanded charter principles and articulates personal commitment to action across the new institution and at department level.
2. An updated or merged SMART action plan.

If members of the consortium hold different levels of awards (i.e. one member holds a silver award, another a bronze), the award logo granted for use by the TU will be at the lower level.

TUs that fulfil these requirements would be eligible to submit departmental awards once they receive notification that their request to use the expanded logo has been approved by Advance HE.

Advance HE advises that a TU only progress with departmental applications once the institution’s structure has been determined. In line with the guidance in the Athena SWAN Charter Handbook, changes to the structure of an award-holding department (e.g. the merging or splitting of a department; staff restructure) during the period of award validity may mean that an updated submission is required.

Where all members of a consortium hold a valid original (pre-May 2015) Athena SWAN award

In this instance, the new Technological University may use the Athena SWAN **original award logo** if the following documents are submitted to, and approved in writing by, Advance HE:

1. A letter of endorsement (500 words max.) from the new TU President that includes acceptance of the Athena SWAN principles and articulates a personal commitment to action across the new institution and at department level.
2. An updated or merged SMART action plan.

If members of the consortium hold different levels of awards (i.e. one member holds a silver award, another a bronze), the award logo granted for use by the TU will be at the lower level.

TUs that fulfil these requirements would be eligible to submit departmental awards once they receive notification that their request to use the expanded logo has been approved by Advance HE.

Advance HE advises that a TU only progress with departmental applications once the institution's structure has been determined. In line with the guidance in the Athena SWAN Charter Handbook, changes to the structure of an award-holding department (e.g. the merging or splitting of a department; staff restructure) during the period of award validity may mean that an updated submission is required.

Where one or more members of a consortium hold a valid Athena SWAN award (either an original/pre-May 2015 Award/s or expanded/post-May 2015 Award/s)

In this case, the new TU may apply to Advance HE for approval to use a '**legacy logo**' that recognises the gender equality work of the TU's legacy member/s. In order to use a legacy logo, the following documents must be submitted to, and approved in writing by, Advance HE:

1. A letter of endorsement (500 words max.) from the new TU President that includes acceptance of the Athena SWAN expanded charter principles and articulates a personal commitment to action across the new institution and at department level.
2. A written overview (1000 words max.) detailing how the action plan/s of the legacy awardee/s will be implemented and used to shape the gender equality work of the new TU.

In the written overview, include:

- = reference to the execution of specific actions and initiatives in the legacy action plan/s in the new TU context;
- = an indication of how Athena SWAN, or gender equality work more broadly, will be resourced in the new institution;
- = information on the status of the legacy Self-Assessment Team/s (SAT), and preliminary plans for the recruitment of an SAT that will reflect the new institution;
- = information on how gender equality will be considered in the strategy and governance of the new TU.

TUs that fulfil these requirements would not be eligible to submit departmental awards until the institution has achieved an Athena SWAN bronze award through the traditional institutional application process.

As per the Athena SWAN Charter Handbook, a department may decide to apply for an award in the same submission round that the parent institution applies for its first institution award. While this is allowed, applicants must be aware that should the institution be unsuccessful in its application the department will be ineligible for an award.

Where members of a consortium hold Athena SWAN awards under different frameworks (original/pre-May 2015 and expanded/post-May 2015 charter)

Where all members of a consortium hold awards, but one of these awards is under the original charter, the new Technological University may apply to Advance HE for approval to use the Athena

SWAN expanded award logo. The following documents will need to be submitted to, and approved in writing by, Advance HE:

1. A letter of endorsement (500 words max.) from the new TU President that includes acceptance of the Athena SWAN expanded charter principles and articulates a personal commitment to action across the institution and at department level.
2. An updated or merged action plan that includes details of how SMART actions relating to the expanded charter framework will be applied across the new TU. A written overview explaining how the expanded charter principals will be embedded across the new institution should also be provided with the Action Plan (1,500 words max.).

In the written overview, include:

- = plans for the explicit inclusion and consideration of staff and students as directed by the expanded process (see expanded charter principals and handbook for details), particularly on the campus that holds an original award;
- = reference to where actions related to the expanded process will need to be altered or revised before implementation across the new TU, or why they may not be implemented across all TU campuses;
- = an indication of how Athena SWAN, or gender equality work more broadly, is being resourced across all campuses in the new institution;
- = information on the status of legacy Self-Assessment Teams (SAT) and information on how the membership of the new TU SAT will be determined;
- = information on how gender equality will be considered in the strategy and governance of the new TU.

TUs that fulfil these requirements would be eligible to submit departmental awards once they receive notification that their request to use the expanded logo has been approved by Advance HE.

Advance HE advises that a TU only progress with departmental applications once the institution's structure has been determined. In line with the guidance in the Athena SWAN Charter Handbook, changes to the structure of an award-holding department (e.g. the merging or splitting of a department; staff restructure) during the period of award validity may mean that an updated submission is required.

Where no members of a consortium hold an Athena SWAN award

TUs comprised of IoTs that have not successfully achieved an award by the results date after their legal formation should apply for an Athena SWAN institutional award using the standard procedure for institutional applicants in Ireland.

Submission of documents

Documents relating to the TU Legacy Award Process should be sent in one email to athena.swan@advance-he.ac.uk and victoria.brownlee@advance-he.ac.uk. Please indicate 'TU Legacy Award Process' in the subject line and address your email to the Athena SWAN Programme Manager for Ireland, Dr Victoria Brownlee.

Further information

TUs may not use the Athena SWAN logo in any branding or merchandising until the requirements set out above have been fulfilled, and written confirmation from Advance HE indicating the approval of the request has been received. A response from Advance HE may be expected within six weeks of receipt.

TUs may publish the Athena SWAN application form and action plans of their legacy members on the new TU website as they deem appropriate and without prior permission from Advance HE. Prior to publication, please see Advance HE's [Briefing for Equality Charter award holders – publishing submissions externally or on your staff intranet](#).

IoTs or TUs with queries about the TU Legacy Award Process should contact the Ireland Programme Manager, Dr Victoria Brownlee: victoria.brownlee@advance-he.ac.uk

Queries regarding the Gender Action Plan timelines for TUs or IoT applications for Athena SWAN should be directed to the HEA (gender@hea.ie).

Technological Universities and the Athena SWAN Ireland National Committee

Background

The Athena SWAN Ireland National Committee Terms of Reference state that committee membership is comprised of 'one representative from each HEI in the Republic of Ireland, selected by a formal nomination process'.

Nomination Process and Timeframe

In line with the committee Terms of Reference, new TUs will be expected to nominate a serving and alternative committee member within six months of formation. TUs should follow the procedure for nominating representatives outlined in the committee Terms of Reference, which stipulate that, when making nominations, HEIs should:

- = take into consideration the gender of their nominees, and where possible nominate a man and a woman;
- = provide one academic nominee and one nominee with experience of the institution's HR or Equality and Diversity policies and practices.

Nominations should be sent to the current Chair of the committee, as well as to the Ireland Programme Manager, Dr Victoria Brownlee: victoria.brownlee@advance-he.ac.uk.

To accommodate transitions involved in the merger process, TUs may send legacy IoT representatives to National Committee meetings that fall within the six months of the TU's legal formation.