

ATHENA SWAN ACTION PLAN 2025 SUBMISSION

<u>Rationale</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Planned actions</u>	<u>Key outputs/Milestones</u>	<u>Timeline (start date)</u>	<u>Staff / Team Lead</u>	<u>Success criteria</u>
Priority 1: Creating an Inclusive and Transparent Recruitment Process						
<p>Quantitative recruitment data shows a higher number of male applicants than female applicants in the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences (FABSS) and the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE). Therefore, the planned actions are designed to increase the number of female applicants in these areas.</p> <p>In contrast, for Professional Services and the Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing, the focus will be on attracting more male applicants to improve gender balance across these faculties.</p>	1.1	Conduct an internal assessment of the updated recruitment process and systems, incorporating feedback from both successful and unsuccessful candidates to reflect their lived experiences. This includes reviewing the consistency of job descriptions, flexibility for part time or Job share and grading to ensure no adverse impact on female applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms Of Reference for evaluation and project group. Focus group meetings. Evaluation report completed with recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2026 July 2026 – Jan 2027 Paper with report to UEB April 2027 followed by implementation of recommendations within related policies – Aug -Nov 2027 	HR Director AD EDI	<p>A comprehensive evaluation of the recruitment process and systems will help identify any potential gender biases and allow us to implement meaningful changes, creating a more inclusive and equitable recruitment experience for all candidates.</p> <p>The success will be measured by a positive shift in responses to the question on the fairness of the appointment/recruitment process in the staff survey, with an increase from 55% in 2024 to 60% by 2029, indicating that staff feel decisions about appointments are made fairly.</p>
	1.2	Establish a dedicated working group, reporting to the EDI working group, to explore alternative recruitment processes. This will involve identifying best practices, testing innovative recruitment methods, and offering recommendations to enhance inclusivity in recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated working group established and actively reporting to the EDI working group. A comprehensive report with recommendations for improving inclusivity in recruitment, presented to the EDI Working group and paper to University Executive board (UEB 	<p>Jan 2026,</p> <p>Report produced by June 2026 to EDI Working group and paper to UEB August 2026</p>	Director EDI Professional Practices	<p>Success will be demonstrated by the integration of the report's recommendations into the University's recruitment policy, establishing a more inclusive recruitment practice. This will aim to enhance candidate diversity and achieve a 5% increase in female applicants in underrepresented areas by 2029, with 2022-23 data as the baseline.</p> <p>By exploring alternative recruitment processes and new candidate sourcing methods, the University will develop a more inclusive, effective, and data-driven strategy. Success will be measured by positive responses to recruitment-related questions in the staff survey 2029, indicating improved perceptions of inclusivity and fairness.</p>
	1.2.1	Implementing and embedding a new Talent Acquisition Model to support gender and racial equality.	Model developed.	Jan – Sep 2027	HR Director	Long-term integration of the model into HR policies and talent strategies. Contributing to an Increase by 5% in applications, interviews, and hires from underrepresented gender and racial groups (Intersectionality), from baseline data as of 2022/23.
	1.3	Review and update all recruitment materials, including job descriptions, to ensure the use	Section on Inclusive language for recruitment material included in the recruitment policy.	August 2027	HR Director	HR and recruiting managers will regularly review and update all recruitment materials and job descriptions to ensure the use of

		of inclusive language, incorporating gender-neutral and culturally sensitive terms.				inclusive language, with progress tracked through a checklist or audit. Success will be measured by the establishment of an inclusive recruitment practice, with the goal of increasing candidate diversity. This will include achieving a 5% increase in female applicants from underrepresented areas by 2029, using 2022-23 data as the baseline for comparison.
	1.4	Ongoing monitoring of the composition of shortlisting and interview panels will be conducted to ensure gender diversity, in line with the recruitment and selection panel structure guidelines.	To produce quarterly reports to the Gender Equality Action Plan delivery group.	On-going	Head of HR systems Chairs of EDI committees	The target is for 80% of all recruitment panels to include at least one female member, reinforcing the University's commitment to inclusivity by 2029.
	1.5	Evaluate the involvement and impact of recruitment fairs/events (both internal and external) in promoting/fostering inclusivity and gender neutrality.	Produce guidance on Inclusive external recruitment events.	March 2027- August 2027	Director External Engagements Chairs EDI Committees.	Recruitment events will be used to position the University as an employer of choice. At least 80% of job seekers and recruiters will provide positive feedback on the inclusivity and gender neutrality of these events, as measured through surveys or interviews. Tracking the progress of diverse candidates, particularly women, after attending recruitment events will demonstrate an increase in successful candidate progression. This will contribute to the goal of a 5% rise in female applications in underrepresented areas by 2029.

Priority 2: Equitable and transparent Promotions Policy

Quantitative data indicates a higher number of male staff than female staff in the higher grades (SPOT-(grade outside national salary bands) and UW11). In contrast, there is a greater proportion of female staff in the lower grades, creating a solid pipeline for progression and promotion to higher grades, particularly within professional services. However, the cultural staff survey revealed that 51% of female staff felt that promotion and progression	2.0	Develop and implement a succession planning strategy for senior and critical positions, ensuring gender equality and representation. This will involve using data to strengthen the pipeline of female talent for advancement. The Strategy will also include offering part-time, job-sharing, and flexible working options to support employees with caregiving responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up TOR and project group. Produce a high risk and senior/critical role register template. Template produced for Strategic succession planning based on the High Risk and Critical Role Register for each Faculty and Directorate that includes gender and race reports. 	July 2027 Dec 2027 July 2028	Faculty Deans Professional service Directors GEAP HROD	By the end of 2029, 80% of faculties and directorates will have a strategic succession plan for high-risk and critical roles that promotes inclusive and diverse recruitment, selection, and talent management activities. All faculties and directorates will provide and communicate clear and accessible guidance to staff on progression routes and how to create a compelling case for consideration. This will be measured by a positive response rate to related questions in the staff survey in 2029. Regular tracking and analysis will be conducted to monitor an increase in female representation in leadership/senior academic roles.
---	-----	--	---	--	--	---

decisions were not made fairly. This highlights the need for action to address this imbalance and ensure a fair and transparent process for all staff.						With the goal being to increase female staff in senior academic and leadership roles by 5% in underrepresented areas by 2029 (using 2022/23 data as baseline) with progress monitored through quarterly reports to the Gender Equality Action Plan delivery group.
	2.1	Develop a clear and transparent promotion policy for Professional Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up TOR and working group (include Diversity staff network members). Policy developed 	March 2026	HR Director	Achieve a 1% annual increase in the promotion/progression of female and global majority staff into senior roles, starting from the 2023 (for progression 2026) baseline data.
	2.2	Review the guidelines for Academic progression and monitor and report on progression rates for both gender and ethnicity (intersectionality) staff on an annual basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines reviewed and baseline data recorded. 	Jan 2027 Jan 2026		<p>Increase the percentage of positive responses to the promotion/progression question in the staff survey from 51% in 2024 to 56% by 2029.</p> <p>Ensure that 59% of promotion/progression applications in 2029 explicitly recognise equality, diversity, and inclusion work, up from 53% in 2024 in staff survey.</p>
The quantitative data highlights an underrepresentation of female staff at the Reader and Professor levels. However, there is a strong pipeline, with a higher proportion of female lecturers and senior lecturers, as well as a slightly greater number of female principal lecturers compared to their male counterparts. This presents a clear opportunity to focus on supporting and accelerating the progression of female staff into senior academic roles.	2.3	Maintain ongoing monitoring, promotion, support, and oversight of the conferment process, along with regular reviews of the application pathways and procedures.	Increase in the number of females applying for conferment and being successful in their applications.	Annual Conferment cycle	HR Director	Achieve a 5% increase in the number of female staff at Reader, Associate Professor, and Professor levels by 2029, using 2023 data as the baseline for benchmarking.
Priority 3: Supporting Career development:						
Quantitative data shows there is a strong pipeline of female staff in lower grades that could be moved/promoted to higher grades.	3.0	Actively promote the Aurora development programme and monitor the career progression of its participants.	Case studies of successful participants as role models to promote the programme.	Annually	Head of Organisational Development (OD)	<p>Enrol at least 10 staff members onto the Aurora programme, ensuring a minimum of 30% participation from global majority staff.</p> <p>Establish a database of Aurora programme alumni to serve as role models and mentors.</p>

The actions are designed to empower those female staff at lower grades with the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to compete for senior roles.	3.1	Continue promoting the 'Women in Wolves' training programme and track participant uptake.	Increase in number of female staff completing the training programme year on year.	Annually after Aurora submissions	Head OD	Increase participation in the 'Women in Wolves' training programme year on year. Gather feedback from participants to assess programme impact and identify areas for improvement. Report on programme participation and outcomes to relevant stakeholders annually.
	3.2	Create a soft skills training programme for female staff in lower grades, covering self-promotion, confidence, and marketing, with work-shadowing opportunities. Track participant progress and development.	A successful training/workshop programme developed and delivered annually.	March 2027 Then annually.	Head OD	10 participants enrolled in the first year. 100% of participants have access to at least one work-shadowing opportunity. Feedback from 100% of participants to measure confidence and skill development. At least 80% positive feedback on programme effectiveness.
	3.3	To promote and encourage female staff to participate in the annual 'Reverse Mentoring' programmes, both as mentors and mentees.	Increase in female staff participating in the programme.	Annually	Head OD AD EDI	A minimum of 10 female staff successfully participate in each reverse mentoring programme, with tangible evidence of the benefits gained from their involvement, via feedback in annual evaluation reports.
	3.4	Track and participation of female staff in corporate training programmes. To analyse and create actions to address areas of concern.	Quarterly reports produced for the Gender Equality action plan delivery groups.	On going	Head OD	Achieve a 1% annual increase in the number of female staff completing training, with the baseline for benchmarking set using data collected in September 2025.
Data indicates that female staff outnumber male staff on research-only and research-and-teaching contracts. However, findings from the Staff Survey highlight a lack of progression and development opportunities as a key challenge.	3.5	Evaluate the effectiveness of the new appraisal system, assessing its impact on female staff with teaching and research contracts.	To produce a report.	Jan 2027	Head OD	We will collect qualitative and quantitative feedback from female staff with teaching and research contracts through surveys or focus groups. Success would be indicated by at least 70% of respondents in staff survey in 2029 feeling that the appraisal system is fair, transparent, and supportive of their professional development/career.
	3.6	Assess, track, and report on the number of female staff (and those eligible) applying for and successfully securing professional fellowships, such as those through the Kudos scheme.	Annual report produced.	Sept 2025 then annually	Directorate of Students and Education	Increase in the percentage of female staff applying and those successfully securing professional fellowships year on year, with the baseline data to be collected by September 2026.

Priority 4: Embedding gender equality.

Integrating gender equality into Faculties and Directorates to ensure a more inclusive and balanced organisational culture.	4.0	Faculties and Directorates to create their own action plans, aligned with University AS action plan, informed by localised data analysis.	SMART action plan developed.	Sep 2025	Faculty Deans Directorate Directors	At least 80% of Faculties and Directorates having completed their SMART action plans within six months.
	4.1	To support and increase the number of school submissions for Athena Swan Awards.	7 schools supported by the central EDI team in submitting for Athena Swan Award.	tbc	Chairs EDI Committees Faculty Deans	5 schools' applications submitted and gaining an AS bronze award and 2 schools a silver award.
Raising the Athena Swan profile to integrate gender-related issues into the University's core culture and practices.	4.2	Organise a schedule of events branded as Athena Swan and Gender equality.	Minimum target of 3 events per academic year.	July 2025	GEAP EDI team	Achieve a 10% increase in understanding and awareness of gender equality, as evidenced by positive responses in the staff survey, rising from 58% to 68% by 2029.
	4.3	Produce an annual report detailing the progress of the Athena Swan action plan.	Reports produced and communicated to all staff as well as being uploaded onto the EDI webpages.	July 2026 and then annually.	AD EDI	
Mandatory Gender Pay gap reporting.	4.4	Undertake a Gender pay analysis annually.	To produce an annual gender, pay gap report (focus on intersectionality).	March 31 st Annually	Head HR systems AD EDI	Year on Year reduction in the mean and median gender pay gaps for all ethnic groups (base rate for benchmarking 2023 pay gap data)
To create an inclusive rewards and recognition strategy that ensures all staff are acknowledged and valued for their contributions, fostering a diverse and equitable workplace.	4.5	Develop a comprehensive strategy for inclusive rewards and recognition.	A fully implemented inclusive rewards and recognition strategy that acknowledges and celebrates the diverse contributions of all staff members.	March 2026	HR Director	A fully implemented inclusive rewards and recognition strategy, with at least 80% of staff reporting satisfaction with the fairness and inclusivity of the system in the staff survey 2029, and a 5% increase in female staff being recognised for their contributions compared to baseline data after implementation of strategy.
In response to staff survey results, about workload allocations address any disparities identified in the survey feedback.	4.6	To review workload allocations to ensure fairness, equity, Inclusivity and transparency in relation to gender equality.	A report produced for the Gender Equality Action plan delivery group to consider.	Sep - 2026	Chairs EDI Committees	Achieve a 5% increase in the percentage of female staff expressing confidence and responding positively about workload allocation in the annual staff survey, rising from 47% to 52% by 2029.
High concentration of senior fixed-term staff may indicate missed opportunities for permanent roles	4.7	Audit fixed-term contracts at higher grades (e.g. UW8+) annually, with a focus on the Faculty of Science and Engineering.	Annual report produced for Gender Equality delivery group and University Executive Board.	Annually starting from Jan 2026	HR/Faculty Deans/	Reduction in high-grade fixed-term contracts where not justified; increase in conversions to permanent roles.
Higher proportion of female staff on part-time roles may reflect structural inequality	4.8	Investigate gender disparities in part-time working, particularly among female staff on permanent contracts. Use findings to inform flexible working policy.	Report produced from Investigation with recommendations for the flexible working policy.	Research by July 2026 and policy update by November 2026.	AD EDI/HR/GEAP	Clear evidence base for flexible working strategy; improved gender balance where appropriate; positive staff feedback.
Priority 5: Creating an empowering, supportive and Inclusive culture.						
The Women's Staff Network and the AS SAT have highlighted concerns regarding the University's	5.0	Evaluate the impact of the flexible and hybrid working policy, guidance, and processes, considering factors such as timetabling and childcare support.	An evaluation report with recommendations produced.	Jan 2028	HR Director	Incorporation of recommendations into flexible working practices.

approach to supporting flexibility in the workplace.	5.1	Create a system to track and monitor staff uptake of flexible working arrangements.	Annual reports produced and analysed to identify any negative trends and issues.	Oct 2025	Head HR Systems	<p>Increase in the uptake of flexible working following the first annual report, once the reporting system is established.</p> <p>Increase in positive response rates to the question on managers and departments enabling flexible working in the staff survey, from 70% of male staff and 72% of female staff to 75% or higher by 2029.</p>
<p>The AS SAT recognised the need to examine the impact on female staff returning from maternity leave.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised by several staff members regarding the policy and support for those undergoing fertility treatment.</p>	5.2	Track leavers' data and the experiences of staff leaving the University thru exit interview questions/survey. As well tracking and monitoring staff returning from maternity leave, focusing on changes in working patterns, promotions, and workloads.	A detailed report documenting the experiences of staff returning from maternity leave, with specific insights into changes in working patterns, promotions, and workloads. The report will include recommendations for improvement based on staff feedback.	Jan 2026	Head HR systems HR Director DEAP	<p>Increase by 5% in the percentage of female staff and students having confidence on working practices that support them on their return to work from maternity leave thru the staff survey in 2029 (baseline 2024 staff survey)</p> <p>At least 80% of staff returning from maternity leave are surveyed about their experiences.</p>
	5.3	Review the Maternity, Paternity, Pregnancy, and Adoption policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group established to review by engaging with wider staff across the University. A comprehensive review of the Maternity, Paternity, Pregnancy, and Adoption policies, including a report outlining any recommended changes or improvements to ensure they are inclusive, supportive, and aligned with best practices. 	<p>July 2025</p> <p>Jan 2026</p>		<p>Clear trends identified in working pattern adjustments, promotion opportunities, and workload distribution.</p> <p>Amended Maternity and Pregnancy policy developed and launched.</p> <p>Increase of 5% in staff reporting satisfaction with the revised policies in a follow-up staff survey in 2029.</p> <p>Increased clarity and accessibility of the policies, as evidenced by a 5% rise in staff awareness and understanding (measured via a staff survey).</p>
To document, monitor, and offer support to staff regarding incidents of sexual harassment.	5.4	Continue to raise awareness of the Incident Reporting Tool for sexual harassment.	Quarterly reports from the Incident reporting tool produced for the Gender Equality Action Plan delivery group to analyse	On-going	EDI team	<p>Achieve a 5% increase in the percentage of female staff expressing confidence and positivity towards the incident reporting tool in the staff survey by 2029, alongside an increase in its uptake.</p> <p>Also, achieve an increase in the sense of belonging among female staff and students, with the percentage of all staff feeling a sense of belonging rising from 60% to 65% by 2029, as measured in staff surveys.</p>
	5.41	Collaborate with the safeguarding team to develop a comprehensive sexual harassment framework.	Framework developed and promoted.	October 2025	EDI & Safeguarding team.	At least 80% of staff are aware of the framework, as indicated in staff survey 2029.
	5.5	Identify patterns or trends in reports from female staff and analyse the representation of female staff in the affected areas. Data be cross referenced where a department has lower representation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report identifying patterns or trends in sexual harassment reports from female staff, 	March 2026 – Feb 2027		An annual analysis of female staff representation in departments with higher reported incidents of sexual harassment,

		women or GM staff/ linked in with the number of incident reports from these areas?	<p>highlighting any recurring issues or specific areas of concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An analysis of female staff representation in departments with a higher incidence of reported sexual harassment, including any departments with lower representation of women or gender minorities. Cross-referenced data linking the number of incident reports to departments with lower female or gender minority staff representation, identifying potential correlations between staff demographics and reported incidents. Recommendations for targeted interventions or support based on the findings, aimed at improving the work environment in affected areas. 			identifying potential correlations, is completed with a focus on at least 70% of departments.
The Women's Staff Network has proven to have a positive impact, and it is important to continue providing support to sustain its effectiveness.	5.6	<p>The Central EDI team will maintain ongoing support for the Women's Staff Network.</p> <p>The network will be involved in shaping issues and decisions that affect its members.</p>	Consistent engagement and collaboration between the Central EDI team and the Women's Staff Network, ensuring resources, guidance, and advocacy are provided to support the network's initiatives and growth.	On-going	EDI team	<p>A well-established and effective Women's Staff Network, holding a minimum of three meetings annually and at least two conferences or events per year. With increase in membership annually.</p> <p>WSN office bearers represented on decision-making committees and working groups, with a 100% inclusion rate in relevant bodies.</p>
The need for accessible and appropriate breastfeeding rooms has been highlighted by members of the Women's Staff Network as an important issue that requires attention and action.	5.7	Assess and review the availability and usage of breastfeeding facilities.	<p>Set up a working group with Women's staff network.</p> <p>A comprehensive report evaluating the availability, accessibility, and usage of breastfeeding facilities across the organisation, including feedback from staff. The report will provide recommendations for improvement based on identified gaps or low uptake and suggest measures to encourage increased use of these facilities.</p>	<p>Apr 2026</p> <p>Jan 2027</p>	HR /AD EDI WSN	<p>Implementation of recommendations from the review, with clear communication of changes to all staff.</p> <p>A measurable increase in awareness and usage of breastfeeding facilities, reflected in positive feedback from the Women's Staff Network.</p>
Guidance on menopause has been requested by members of the Women's Staff Network to provide better support and	5.8	Develop comprehensive guidance on supporting menopause in the workplace, ensuring it addresses key issues and offers practical support for staff.	A detailed menopause support guide published and made accessible to all staff, outlining policies, resources, and support options available in the workplace.	July 2025		<p>The guidance is published and communicated to all staff.</p> <p>At least 70% of staff report awareness of the guidance in the staff survey 2029.</p>

information for staff experiencing menopause-related challenges.						
Addressing disparities in response rates, especially in areas with low response rate from global majority female staff.	5.9	Establish and conduct focus group meetings with Asian, Black, and Mixed female staff to gather insights and address specific concerns.	Regularly scheduled focus group sessions, with documented feedback and recommendations to inform future actions and policies. Paper to UEB on outcome of focus groups.	March – August 2025 October/November 2025	WSN & Global majority staff network	Achieve a 5% increase in positive response rates from global majority female staff in the 2029 staff survey, specifically in questions where their response rates were previously lower than those of other groups.