

Executive summary of the changes in the Athena SWAN process from May 2015

The following document outlines the changes to the Athena SWAN process. In May 2015 ECU launched an expanded charter which is now open to all disciplines including Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law (AHSSBL).

STEMM Departments can continue to use the old forms until November 2016.

ALL Departments using the new forms MUST read the new Post-May 2015 guidelines and process guidance documents.

(<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources/>)

The core of the process remains unchanged but restructuring of the form removes repetitive elements and allows for a better flow of the departmental narrative.

The extended Charter now has 10 principles.

(<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/about-athena-swan/>)

Key differences:

Data

Professional and Support Staff: Submissions must now include data for professional and support staff (PSS), expanding the focus beyond just Academic and Research Staff for a holistic approach. At bronze level data must be provided on PSS numbers and also support for flexible working, organisation and culture sections. For Silver, PSS data must be included throughout including induction, promotion etc.

Consultation is now ESSENTIAL before submission (surveys, focus groups, etc).

REF submissions: Numbers eligible and submitted by gender with comparison to RAE 2008 data.

Research Grants: Application and success rates by gender as well as support for submission and, if unsuccessful, for future applications.

Workload models: Workload models and leavers data essential.

Visiting and honorary staff data to be included.

Zero hours contracts alongside open ended and fixed term contacts.

Role models: Visibility of role models including diversity in publicity, gender representation in events and seminar speakers.

Student data is to be grouped together by type i.e. all UG data, numbers, admissions, attainment are all in one section.

Intersectionality: Interaction of gender and ethnicity to be considered.

UCEA codes: Staff grades and position titles e.g. Professor, Reader, etc. must be mapped to UCEA codes (E&D to provide).

Transgender: inclusion of transgender staff and students (at institutional level only).

Head of Department responsibility: Specific requirement that HoD has responsibility to ensure that the information presented is an honest reflection of the Department.

Other areas for consideration:

Word limit: The word limit can now be used across the document, rather than strict limits for each section. Words can be distributed across the sections as appropriate.

Action plans must show evidence of prioritisation and show both aspiration and innovation.

Self-Assessment Team meetings: SAT must meet at least 3 times per year. Small central SAT with larger working groups with specific areas of focus is recommended.

Innovation: Innovative and inventive practice requested.

Progression pipeline between undergraduates and postgraduates is required.

Flexible working: More information required around flexible working and managing career breaks.

Definition of caring responsibility has been extended to include both child and adult dependants.

Workload models:

- Time spent on Athena SWAN activity must be included in workload allocation models.
- Significant SWAN workloads (e.g. Leadership of the process) to be linked to promotion criteria.

HR Policies and Processes

Recruitment: Application, long and shortlisted candidates as well as appointees broken down by gender must be included.

Maternity leave support specifically covers before, during and after maternity leave/ returning to work. For Silver level data on those still in post 6, 12 and 18 months post return is required.

HR policies: Demonstrate consistency of HR policies including bullying, harassment and grievance procedures. Illustrate differences between policy and practice and how staff with management responsibilities are kept up to date with HR knowledge e.g. Training and workshops.

Support for transition from part time to full time after Career Breaks.

ECU Processes

Award validity: Awards are valid for 4 years with 4-year action plans.

Renewals: Pre-May 2015 members wishing to renew applications under the new criteria will be treated as new applications. No progress log on old action plan required HOWEVER this evidence is still required to demonstrate impact.

Appeals process: Disagreement with the panel decision alone is insufficient grounds for appeal. Must be procedural unfairness or manifestly unreasonable decision.

Right to remove Awards: ECU retains the right to remove an award if evidence of inclusion of false or misleading information is provided which is independently verifiable; or if information comes to light establishing that the applicant no longer satisfies the requirements of the award.