Oxford Research and Policy

Athena Swan Department Self-Assessment Record

Version 1.8

OXFORD RESEARCH & POLICY

Contents

OXFORD RESEARCH AND POLICY SWAN DEPARTMENT SELF ASSESSMENT RECORD

Introduction

This is one of a set of tools developed by Oxford Research and Policy to support university departments in their Athena Swan work.

- Ten Steps for a Department to apply for an Athena Swan Award
- The Athena Swan Department Application Checklist
- Athena Swan Department Self-Assessment Record
- Guidance for using the Athena Swan Department Self-Assessment Record
- The Good Practice Checklist (2022 edition)
- The Athena Swan Department Data Guide

NOTES

The Athena Swan Data Guide is work in progress. It should be available for Oxford Research and Policy clients later in 2022. The other tools are currently available as drafts.

Comments from users will be welcomed on the usefulness (or not) of any of the tools. If you do find them useful, please refer to their use in your Athena Swan award application.

The Record should not be distributed outside your department.

Oxford Research and Policy's terminology may differ from the Advance HE Athena Swan terminology.

The Swan Charter and Award Scheme

The Athena SWAN Charter and Award scheme was established in2005 to address the under-representation of women in STEM. The scheme expanded in 2015 to all university disciplines. The 2015 scheme guidance and application forms highlighted the need to consider women's careers given that their representation falls with increasing seniority in all academic subjects.

There are no specific references to women's careers in the Advance HE guidance. However Advance HE has stated:

> *"The progression and representation of women has always been central to Athena Swan and always will."*

The Department Self Assessment Record

The Department Self Assessment Record highlights the areas we feel are important for departments to consider in their Self Assessment. The assessment is a key part of the application process. It is up to departments to decide whether all the areas covered are relevant to them. Departments may also wish to add other areas that are important for them.

The 2021 Advance HE Athena Swan principles commit applicant departments to undertake an evidence-based, transparent self-assessment to give direction to their EDI priorities and interventions, to evaluate their progress and to inform the departments' continuous development.

We have produced this Self Assessment Record because staff in some university departments have told us they would welcome more direction on the areas to cover in their application.

The Self Assessment Record is designed to help departments in carrying out a thorough and honest self assessment before they complete their Advance HE Athena Swan award application.

Departments who have previously worked with Oxford Research and Policy on their Athena Swan applications will recognise much of what follows.

We have ordered the following in what we think is a logical order and one which will be somewhat familiar to departments who have completed any older Athena SWAN application forms

Throughout the following we have included references to the Application Checklist. We hope this will help departments decide what goes where on the new application form.

Advance HE expects departments to examine their demographic data and working practices in their application.

Advance HE asks applicants to consider the culture of the department, including areas such as handling of bullying and harassment, role models, workloads and core working hours.

The Advance HE guidance does not explicitly refer to valuing the contributions of all staff, the importance of good practice for all staff, or career progression and career development.

The Advance HE guidance doesn't mention keeping a record of the department self assessment, we do. Keeping a written record will help your successor SATs - it might be five years before another comprehensive self-assessment is carried out.

With a written record, your successor SAT will know what you have examined, what your conclusions were, and what lead you to identify the actions included in your action plan. We recommend that the completed self assessment record is retained as an official internal document.

We suggest that you complete the record of your assessment in reasonable detail (but bear in mind any word limits in the application form if you transfer materials from the Record to the application form).

Make clear any problem areas you find and highlight the good practice that the department has in place and gaps in practice that you may want to address in your action plan.

Once you have completed your Self Assessment Record you can transfer the actions/areas for action you have identified, to your action plan.

It is a good idea to have an action plan which includes a rationale column where you can include a summary of the reasons for each action that you include in your action plan, including relevant data. This is important, as not all actions are part of your top priorities, so this might be the only justification assessors will see (see **Application Checklist section 3.2).**

Department Priorities

There are new areas to cover in your self assessment (see **Application Checklist section 2)**

Section 2 of the Advance HE Application focuses on the self assessment/evaluation of the department's progress on their previously identified key priorities in its action plan.

Advance HE asks also applicants to identify between four to eight priorities.

It is for you to decide what those priorities are but having carried out your self-assessment, you should have a good idea.

A priority for the department might cover several actions in your action plan on the same theme, for example improving the representation of women in senior roles, or improving the support for returners from career breaks.

Some of your priorities might cover a single specific action, such as setting up department Athena Swan webpages.

Once you have identified your priority areas you need to decide how to present them in your action plan. It is probably sensible to group the actions together under each priority area. Not all your actions need to be part of a priority.

We suggest that you share your self-assessment with other members of the department and you might consider publishing it on the department intranet.

The Structure of the Department Self Assessment Record

The Record has 11 sections.

- The first three sections, the Head of Department letter, the description of the department and the description of governance and self assessment, do not strictly form part of the self assessment but provide a valuable introduction. They are both required documents to in include in your application (see **Application Checklist sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5**).
- Section 4 covers the data for the self assessment, with sub section for students, academics staff and professional, technical and organisational staff. It covers all the mandatory data btu also encourages you to consider additional data that you ought to examine.
- Sections 5 and 6 cover key career transition points for academic and research staff and PTO staff, respectively
- Sections 7 and 8 cover career development for academic and research staff and PTO staff, respectively
- Section 9 covers flexible working and career breaks
- Section 10 covers department organisation and culture
- Section 11 covers other areas important to the department

Advance HE's definition of culture is broad. Advance HE acknowledges that there is no prescribed way of defining, evaluating or assessing culture - what matters is what is relevant to your context. Advance HE suggests that definitions of culture are likely to have some kind of tangible framework and, as an example, their guidance adopts a five-dimension framework incorporating: Social Culture; Professional Culture; Hierarchical Culture; Physical Space; and Partnership Working. Advance HE acknowledge that there are other frameworks that may work better for you and may be more or less relevant for you. Our self-assessment record sets out an alternative approach to assessing culture, an approach that has worked well since 2005.

Intersectional inequalities are also highlighted in Advance HE's guidance but there is also acknowledgement that evidence-bases may not support evaluating intersectionality. At department level, numbers are unlikely to support the exploration of most gender intersectionalities: it is likely that only the gender-ethnicity intersection will have large enough numbers to support exploration.

Inclusion of people of all gender identities is highlighted in the Advance HE guidance - departments are encouraged to consider how to embed inclusive practices and approaches within their culture and activities.

1. Letter of endorsement from the head of department

See Application Checklist sections 2.1 and 2.2

Insert a signed letter of endorsement (on appropriate letterhead) from the head of the department.

If the head of department is soon to be succeeded, or has recently taken up the post, it's a good idea to include an additional short statement from the incoming head.

2. Description of the department

See Application Checklist section 1.2

Provide an introduction to the department including any relevant contextual information and data on the total number of academic staff, professional and support staff and students by gender.

3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and the Self-Assessment Process

3.1 Governance and recognition of EDI work

See Application Checklist Section 1.3

Provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and department-level resources.

3.2 Description of the self assessment process

See Application Checklist section 1.3

3.2.1 A description of the self-assessment team

See Application Checklist section 1.5.1

Who was involved in the self-assessment and in the preparation of the application? How were they appointed?

3.2.2 The self-assessment process

See Application Checklist section 1.5.2

Summarise how the SAT undertook the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, how the SAT has consulted with staff and students, how you decided on action priority areas, how you responded to panel feedback and how you communicated with staff and students.

3.2.3 Plans for the future of the self-assessment team

See Application Check list 1.5.3

Give details of how you plan to run your self-assessment team over the 5 year period of the Athena Swan award.

4.   Data for a Department application

Departments must present the obligatory data sets (in an appendix to their application). We encourage departments to consider/examine additional data sets to carry out a comprehensive self-assessment.

- For students the key areas to consider include the demographics of the cohorts at Foundation, UG, PGT and PGR levels, recruitment practices for students, and issues affecting the performance of any particular student groups.
- For staff key areas to consider include the demographics of the academics and professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff, proportions of staff on permanent and fixed term contracts, staff leavers, and data on recruitment and promotion/progression.

4.1   Student data, support and outreach

You will need to make decisions about whether it is practicable to explore intersectionalities. In all likelihood, numbers of students in many gender intersectional categories will be too small to warrant analyses. The exception may be the gender-ethnicity interface. If BAME students are well represented, you should explore whether there are any differences in gender balance by ethnic group. You will need to make decisions as to the appropriate level of disaggregation i.e. White and BAME or going into more detail, e.g., White, Asian, Black, Chinese, Arab, Mixed, Other ethnic groups. It is also sensible to confine the analysis to UK domiciled students to enable comparisons with local and national populations.

(i) Access or foundation courses

Examine data on foundation students by gender including numbers on course and completions. Consider what proportions of female and male students progress to UG courses in the department or elsewhere.

(ii) Undergraduate students by gender.

Examine data on undergraduate students by course and gender, on recruitment of undergraduate students and on the degree outcomes of undergraduate students. Consider also examining data on the graduate outcomes (the destinations) of your undergraduates. You could also consider the intersection of gender and ethnicity for UK and non-UK students, especially if you have reasonable numbers of ethnic minority students.

(iii) Postgraduate taught degree students by gender.

Examine data on postgraduate taught (PGT) students by course and gender, on recruitment of PGT students and on the completion rates and degree outcomes of PGT students. Consider also examining data on the graduate outcomes (the destinations) of your PGT students. You could also consider the intersection of gender and ethnicity for UK and non-UK students, especially if you have reasonable numbers of ethnic minority PGT students.

(iv) Postgraduate research degree students by gender.

Examine data on postgraduate research (PGR) students by research area and gender, on recruitment of PGR students and on the completion rates of PGR students. Consider also examining data on the graduate outcomes (the destinations) of your PGR students. You could also consider the intersection of gender and ethnicity for UK and non-UK students, especially if you have reasonable numbers of ethnic minority PGR students.

(v) Pipeline between undergraduate and postgraduate student levels.

Look at the overall pipeline between different student levels to assess whether there are any gender related issues that need addressing: examine the proportion of students who are female at UG, PGT and PGR levels.

(vi) Support given to students (at any level) for academic career progression.

Consider the support given to students at all levels (including pastoral care, EDI training), how minorities are cared for and training (including training around sexual harassment and gender violence). Consider what support is available for students at all levels to enable them to make informed decisions about their careers (including the transition to a sustainable academic career). Do you support student to participate in any gendered subject programmes, e.g. Women in Science and Engineering?

(vii) Outreach activities.

Bearing in mind your priorities in respect of attracting underrepresented groups to the department, look at outreach activities. Who is involved? How are contributions recognised? Who attends events? Are event outcomes evaluated?

4.2   Academic and Research Staff Data

As with the student data, if numbers permit then you should explore gender-related intersectionalities. The chances are that the numbers will not be great enough to explore intersectionalities except possibly the gender-ethnicity intersection, and then probably only at a high level of disaggregation.

(i) Academic and Research Staff

Examine academic and research staff data, in particular the numbers of men and women and the proportion of staff who are women. It is a good idea to examine the staff data broken down by grade/role and by career path/contract type. The proportion of women and men who are part-time should also be checked. Consider also examining the staff data by ethnicity and/or nationality

(ii) Academic and research staff on permanent and fixed-term contracts

Examine the data for staff on permanent and fixed-term contracts by career path/contract type.

(iii) Academic and research staff leavers

Look at the proportions of women and men who leave each year by career path/contract type

(iv) Academic and research staff recruitment

Examine recruitment data for academic and research staff by gender and year. Separately look at the data broken down by grade of post advertised. Combine the data for several years to make analysis more straight forward. Also consider examining the data by contract type.

(v) Academic and research staff promotion

Examine promotion data looking at the application rates and success rates by gender.

4.3   Professional, Technical and Operational Staff Data

As with the student and academic and research staff data, if numbers permit then you should explore gender-intersectionalities. The chances are that the numbers will not be great enough to explore intersectionalities except possibly the gender-ethnicity intersection, and then probably only at a high level of disaggregation.

(i) Professional, Technical and Operational Staff

Examine data for professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff in particular the numbers of men and women and the proportion of staff who are women (or men). It is a good idea to examine the staff data broken down by grade/role. If numbers are great enough, you could also look at the data by job family (technical, operational, administrative, etc). The proportion of women and men who are part-time should also be examined.

(ii) Professional, Technical and Operational staff on permanent and fixed-term contracts

Examine the data for PTO staff on permanent and fixed-term contracts. If numbers are great enough, the analysis could be carried out by job family.

(iii) Professional, Technical and Operational staff leavers

Look at the proportions of female and male Professional, Technical and Operational who leave each year by job family, if numbers permit.

(iv) Professional, Technical and Operational staff recruitment

Examine recruitment data for PTO posts including shortlisted candidates, and appointments (offer and acceptance rates). Look at data by gender and year and separately look at the data broken down by grade of post advertised. If appropriate, examine the data by job family.

(v) Professional, Technical and Operational staff progression

If relevant, examine data on PTO staff applying for promotion and comment on the application rates and success rates by gender.

Alternatively, or in addition, examine the application and success rates by gender of PTO staff applying for internal vacancies.

Look at data on regrading of roles

4.4   Other Data

Some sections below include suggestions of other data that you should consider collecting.

5.   Key career transition points: academic and research staff

(i) The recruitment process

Examine how the department's recruitment processes operate and how they ensure that women (and men where they are underrepresented) are encouraged to apply. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps. How do you plan to address any issues identified by your analysis of the recruitment data presented in section 4.2(iv)?

(ii) Induction

Review the induction system and arrangements and the support provided to all new academic staff at all levels. Consider both university and department induction. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps.

(iii) Promotion

Examine how the university and department promotion processes operate and how they ensure that all those ready for promotion are encouraged to apply. Comment on how staff are encouraged and supported through the processes. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps. How do you plan to address any issues identified in your analysis of the promotions data presented in section 4.2(v)?

6.   Key career transition points: professional, technical and operational staff

(i) The recruitment process

Examine how the department's recruitment processes for PTO staff operate and how they ensure that members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Identify any differences from the processes for academic staff recruitment. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and any weaknesses. How you plan to address any issues identified your analysis of the recruitment data presented in section 4.3(iv)

(ii) Induction

Describe the induction and support provided to new PTO staff, at all levels. Consider both university and department induction. Comment on the uptake of inductions and how its effectiveness is reviewed. Establish any differences between the induction of for PTO and academic staff differ.

Assess the good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(iii) Progression

Consider the progression pathways for PTO staff. Establish whether PTO staff can apply for promotion or if progression is only possible by applying for internal vacancies or by job regrading. If relevant, examine data on PTO staff applying for promotion and comment on applications and success rates. Comment on how staff are encouraged and supported through the process and/or the applying for internal vacancies. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps. Describe how you plan to address any issues identified your analysis of the promotions/internal applications/regrading data presented in section 4.3(v)below.

7.   Career development: academic staff

(i) Appraisal/development review

Consider the appraisal/development review processes for academic staff at all levels, including postdoctoral researchers. Look at the appraisal completion rates. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(ii) Support given to academic staff for career development and progression, including training

Consider and reflect on support given to academic staff, especially postdoctoral researchers, to assist in their career development and progression. Consider the training available to academic staff at all levels including what leadership/management training is available to staff. Look at the uptake of training by Academic and Research staff. Find out if are any mentoring and coaching schemes available to academic staff. Describe how career development for Postdoctoral Research staff is supported. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(iii) Support offered to those to develop their research

Look at the support given to staff who apply for funding and the support that is offered to those who are unsuccessful. Examine the application and success rates for research grants by number of applications and monetary value. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

8.   Career development: professional, technical and operational staff

(i) Appraisal/development review

Consider the appraisal/development review processes for PTO staff. Establish whether the system for PTO staff differs from that for academic staff. Look at the appraisal completion rates. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(ii) Support given to professional and support staff for career progression, including training

Consider and reflect on support given to PTO staff to assist in their career development and progression. Consider the training available to PTO staff. Describe the leadership/management training that is available to PTO staff. Look at the uptake of training by PTO staff. Assess the good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

9.   Flexible working and managing career breaks

Note: The intention is that academic and research and PTO staff are both considered in sections 9 and 10.

(i) Maternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave

(a) Maternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Rates

Look at the data for take up of maternity, adoption and shared parental leave split into academic and research and PTO staff. Consider examining the academic staff data by career path/contract type. Look at the return rates, and if you can, look at retention rates of staff over the 18 months following the return. Consider also looking at the length of time staff spent on leave.

(b) Cover for staff on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

Consider what arrangements are put in place to provide cover while staff are on leave. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(c) Support for maternity and adoption leave: before leave.

Consider what support the department offers to staff before they go on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

(d) Support for maternity and adoption leave: during leave.

Consider what support the department offers to staff during maternity, adoption or shared parental leave, including use of KIT and SPLIT days. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps.

(e) Support for maternity and adoption leave: returning to work.

Consider what support the department offers to staff on return from maternity, adoption or shared parental leave. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(f) Feedback on Maternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave

Consider staff feedback on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave. Establish any general issues raised around maternity, adoption and shared parental leave. Consider whether the feedback reveals any issues that need to be addressed through an action.

(ii) Paternity and parental leave and uptake.

Consider the arrangements for (short term) paternity leave and look at data on take up of paternity leave. Describe how parental leave is supported. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(iii) Support for childcare

Consider what is in place to support childcare. Describe the facilities the department has to allow mothers to breast feed and/or express milk. Establish whether the university has a Tax-Free Childcare scheme and a holiday club for children.

(iv) Flexible working.

Look at flexible working arrangements in place, for both formal and informal flexible working. Describe how flexible working is managed in the department. Establish whether flexible working is encouraged. Explore the forms of flexible working that staff use and whether staff can move from full-time working to part-time working and back to full-time working. Describe how the department supports staff who move from part-time to full-time working, especially after maternity/parental leave. Describe any arrangements in place for hybrid working. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

10.   Organisation and culture

See Application Checklist section 3.1

(i) Community, belonging, support and encouragement

Look at two aspects of the department: how EDI is embedded and what it's like to work in the department. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(ii) Health and wellbeing

Consider how the department supports the health and wellbeing of staff and students. Describe any institution or departmental health and wellbeing programmes for staff and students and their take up?

Describe the training department managers have on health and wellbeing? Describe any institutional programmes to support peri-menopausal and menopausal women? Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(iii) Training for managers

Consider the training that senior managers/line managers receive and how managers are updated on changes to university policies and procedures. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(iv) Bullying, harassment, grievance, and disciplinary processes.

Look at the department's approach to dealing with bullying, harassment, grievances and disciplinary action. Describe how the department monitors the consistency of application of policies for equality, dignity at work, bullying, harassment, grievance and disciplinary processes. Review the means by which instances of bullying, harassment or discrimination can be reported anonymously. Describe how the department monitors any instances of staff (or students) who have been subjected to, or witnessed any, instances of bullying or harassment. Describe the training that is in place to ensure everyone knows the standards of behaviour that are expected. Describe any initiatives to combat gender-based violence or discrimination in your institution. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(v) Representation of men and women in major administrative roles and departmental committees

Consider the data on the gender breakdown of those staff taking on major administrative roles and serving on departmental committees. Describe how administrative post holders are selected and how potential committee members are identified. Look at how the issue of 'committee overload' is addressed and how the department makes sure that junior staff gain experience of serving on committees/undertaking major administrative roles. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(vi) Participation on university committees

Look at the staff who serve on faculty and/or university committees and the selection of other staff to serve. Look at how gender equality is taken into consideration and how vacancies are publicised to staff. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(vii) Participation in professional activities external to the university

Look at staff participation in external professional activities and whether data are collected data on staff participation in external activities. Check that the department encourages staff to participate in external activities and that external duties are taken account of in measurements of workload. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(viii) Workloads and workload models

Look at how workloads are distributed to academic staff. Examine any workload allocation model in place to confirm that it is comprehensive and cover all tasks. Check which staff receive workload allowances, e.g. new starters, staff returning from career breaks. Check that staff agree workloads are

distributed fairly and in a transparent way. Check staff views on any "long hours" culture. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(ix) Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings

Think about the timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings. Check whether there are defined hours during which meetings should be held to help those staff with caring responsibilities and whether there is adherence to these hours. Check that (some) social events are held at times which make it possible for all staff to attend whether or not they have caring responsibilities. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

(x) Visibility of role models

Describe how the department builds gender equality into the organisation of events. Check that the department monitors the gender balance of speakers at seminars and other professional meetings and consider whether the department sets targets for proportions of female and male speakers, bearing in mind the gender balance in the discipline.

Consider the department's website, publicity materials and images around the department. Check that there are policies governing the gender balance of those shown in images on the website and in other materials. Check that these polices are adhered to, for example but checking whether thought is given to gender when selecting images to display in the department. Assess what good practice you have in place and identify any gaps and weaknesses.

11.   Other areas

See Application Checklist section 1.4

Consider other areas relating to gender equality that you feel are important to cover in your self-assessment. Look at any other work you are currently undertaking related to gender equality. Be careful not to just include general equality work which is not specifically related to gender equality. Work on other protected characteristics which does not look at the intersection with gender should not be considered. And also work on, say, decolonising the curriculum should not be considered unless you are looking at your curriculum through a gender lens.

In all cases, decide whether there are any gaps in good practice that need addressing through actions.