

**From:** [John Vinney](#)  
**To:** [All Staff](#)  
**Subject:** An update from John Vinney  
**Date:** 04 September 2018 10:33:54  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)

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Dear Colleague,

In 2012, Bournemouth University made a commitment to advancing gender equality when we signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter and became a member. In 2015, we were delighted to be granted an Athena SWAN Bronze institution award in recognition of this commitment. The Athena SWAN Charter is led by the Equality Challenge Unit (part of Advance HE), which also has oversight of the Race Equality Charter that seeks to address racial inequalities in UK higher education.

The Athena SWAN Charter covers women (and men where appropriate) including staff academic roles in STEMM and AHSSBL, staff in professional and support roles and trans staff and students. It relates to representation, progression of students into academia, the journey through career milestones and the working environment for all staff.

Working towards a SWAN award and implementing the action plan has motivated BU to scrutinise data and examine policies, practices and cultural norms to make the working environment more equitable, flexible and productive for everyone. In addition, the SWAN work is important:

- It helps us to ensure BU has access to the whole population and the widest talent pool so we don't miss on opportunities for talented individuals to contribute ideas and skills which will support the future development of BU and society as a whole.
- In some research areas, future funding is or may be tied to an institution's commitment to Athena SWAN (such as the National Institute for Health Research and Research Councils UK).
- As a means of confronting existing exclusionary structures, processes and practices that contribute to continuing inequalities in Higher Education.

In developing solutions to gender inequalities, it is important that we aim to achieve long-term institutional culture change. In response to feedback, we have included inclusivity as one of BU's values. The BU2025 strategy reflects and underlines our commitment to enriching society. One of the most significant ways we can achieve this is by making a contribution towards addressing gender inequality, which is recognised as one of the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

We are preparing to re-apply for the Bronze Athena SWAN award in November 2018. The work to support this will help us to understand how gender inequality impacts on the life

and work of every member of the BU community, students, academic staff or members of professional staff. What we learn will inform the actions we take to tackle gender inequality, actions that will have a sustained and lasting impact on our culture.

To support our application, we are running a survey to garner feedback about your experiences and perceptions around key areas assessed via the SWAN process, as well as suggestions for improvements. These include flexible working and career breaks, childcare and the academic career framework. This is an important aspect of our vision for BU and we are committed to making progress – for that reason I encourage all staff to respond to the survey. Your answers will provide useful feedback for us as we work on our application. You can access the survey via this link: [SWAN survey](#). The survey is open until midnight on Friday 14 September.

You can find further details about the survey on [the Equality Challenge Unit website](#) and you can learn more about our current work at BU by reading the [latest Athena SWAN update](#).

If you require the survey in a paper or alternative format, please contact [diversity@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:diversity@bournemouth.ac.uk).

Best wishes,

John Vinney  
**Vice-Chancellor**

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