

What is Athena SWAN?

The Equality Challenges Unit's Athena SWAN Charter was established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research. In May 2015 the charter was expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), and in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students. The charter now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.

The Athena SWAN Charter covers women (and men where appropriate) in:

- academic roles in STEMM and AHSSBL
- professional and support staff
- trans staff and students

In relation to their:

- representation
- progression of students into academia
- journey through career milestones
- working environment for all staff

Gender equality is one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



Why is SWAN so important?

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:

- To widen the talent pool by ensuring BU has access to the *whole* population in order to avoid a wastage of skills and missing out on opportunities for talented individuals to contribute key ideas, research and teaching to the future development of the University and society as a whole.
- In some research areas future funding is already / is likely to 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.

BU SWAN Steering Group – 25 June 2018

This was the third meeting of the SWAN Steering Group, chaired by Dr Sonal Minocha. Apologies were received from Prof Keith Phalp and Elaine Warriner. All other members were present (Jim Andrews, Julie Northam, Dr James Palfreman-Kay, Karen Parker, Frances Hawkhead).

The group are keen to ensure the institutional SWAN submission is informed by feedback from as many staff as possible. As such, it was agreed to launch a survey for colleagues to provide information about their experiences of parental leave, flexible working, workload planning, academic promotion, etc.

The SAT asked the Steering Group to ensure those leading departmental SWAN work are given sufficient time to produce the submissions, as per the workload planning policy. The Steering Group agreed this is essential and Jim Andrews will discuss this with the Deans.

The group approved the documentation aimed at streamlining the preparation and submission process for departmental SWAN applications.

BU2025 KPI – SWAN

There will be a specific Athena SWAN KPI in the BU2025 plan that monitors the number of departments that are considering/applying/achieved a departmental SWAN award.

SWAN support for departments

We are aiming to standardise processes and to provide a better level of support for submission leads. So far we have produced:

- SWAN application guidelines including links to relevant BU policies, good practice, links to resources, advice on what to include in each section, how to present data, etc.
- Timeline for submissions clearly setting out: i) when departments need to notify BU they will be making submissions; ii) when data will be provided; and iii) the review and approval process prior to submission.
- We are working with data owners across BU to agree a data calendar. This will reduce the number of *ad hoc* data requests for data owners and ensure those leading submissions know when to expect data.
- We are also working on a departmental submission template, pre-populated with standard BU information.

All documentation is available from: <I:\OVC\Public\Dignity, Diversity and Equality - James Palfreman-Kay\Athena Swan>

Welcome to new SAT members

Welcome to new members of the BU SWAN SAT:

- Prof Edwin van Teijlingen
- Prof Sine McDougall
- Dr Sean Beer
- Dr Phillipa Gillingham
- Prof Richard Stillman
- Dr Chris Pullen
- Prof Sam Porter
- Dr Lois Farquharson

This has improved the gender mix of the SAT and brought a greater diversity of experiences into SAT discussions.

A full list of SAT members can be found here: [I:\OVC\Public\Dignity, Diversity and Equality - James Palfreman-Kay\Athena Swan](#)

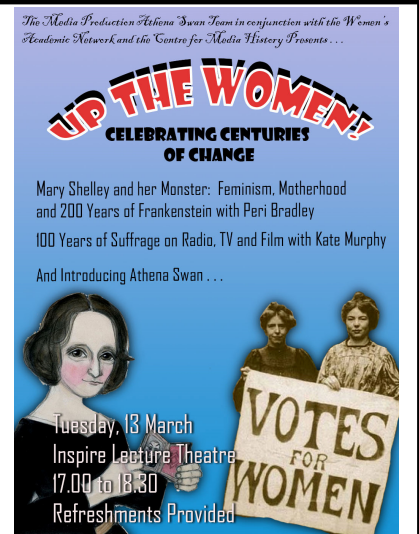
The deadline for the institutional submission is November 2018. The SAT has been scrutinising data and making recommendations to the Steering Group. We are now starting the draft the submission.

Congratulations to the Department of Media Production

Congratulations to the Department of Media Production who submitted their SWAN application, led by Dr Kate Murphy, in May 2018. This work has been strongly championed by Dr Christa van Raalte, Head of the Department of Media Production.

Thank you to everyone involved for doing such a stellar job over the past year to raise awareness of gender equality in the department, put together a robust action plan and ensure the submission was as strong as possible.

The outcome will be known in the autumn.



Interesting articles

[What does it take to make an institution more diverse?](#)

[People who look like me](#)

2nd WAN international seminar - 'Reclaiming the Academy: scholarship, gender and consumerism'

On the 23rd of May the Women's Academic Network held their second international seminar 'Reclaiming the academy: Scholarship, gender and consumerism'. Our international keynote speakers were Prof Maggie Berg (Queen's University, Canada) and Prof Barbara Seeber (Brock University, Canada). Notably, Maggie and Barbara are the acclaimed authors of the extraordinary book *The Slow Professor: Challenging the culture of speed in the academy*. The audience was deeply absorbed by both their keynote speech and workshop, which outlined why 'slowness' in academia is vital to university life. We were dismayed to hear of the bizarre attacks made upon their work, in which sexism and gender oppression were clearly implicated, echoing one of the presentations on the silencing of women's voices by our old colleague, Prof Heather Savigny (De Montford University). Yet Maggie and Barbara's work speaks with the authority of deep scholarship and conviction and, as such, is generating great support globally. It has inspired research at BU among WAN members, along with international conference presentations and a forthcoming keynote speech for a DAKAM women's studies conference in Turkey in December 2018 by Prof Sara Ashencaen Crabtree; and finally, a planned ESRC research bid.

The seminar was well attended by a mixed audience of internal and external academics and PGR, where we, WAN co-convenors, warmly welcomed the support of our good male colleagues in the capacity of presenters and participants. We heard some excellent presentations, culminating in an evocative social dreaming session by Anne-Marie Cummins and Dr Lita Crociani-Windland (University of West of England). Thanks to our friend, Dr Ian Davies, colleagues and students from BU Music provided a superb finish to the day with beautiful singing and musical accompaniment and the whole event supported by the invaluable help of Sarah Cronin in OD.

The evaluations by participants were (gratifyingly) completely outstanding, encompassing without exception the two highest points of appreciation. Comments related to the excellence of the programme, the relevance of the topic to the audience and the warm collegiality experienced throughout the day. The only criticisms received was that maybe next time a 2-day event rather than 1 (noted, thanks) and that the rather ferocious air-conditioning needed taming (agreed).

Upon reflection the topic of the seminar appeared to hit a strongly vibrating chord in individual participants resonating with growing concern permeating the sector about the morphing and future of academia. For instance, it is disquieting to note from the research literature that the UK appears to be in the vanguard of adopting corporate values, systems and processes that have been critiqued in the literature as damaging to the ethos, the practices and environment of academia – not only harmful to academics in all ways but also to students in terms of their motivations towards and engagement with their studies, owing to the policy vectors influencing a flawed understanding of the purpose of academia, if viewed as purely instrumental. Yet we note that the HEI trends towards quasi-business models lags behind the realisation of actual business and entrepreneurial industries that the target-driven corporate model in fact damages innovation, commitment, creativity – and ultimately the health of employees. The gulf between privatised business models and academia are great and need to be recognised as such, as celebrated academics such as Stefan Collini and Frank Furedi make very clear. Writing in the Times Higher Education, the brilliant sociologist, Laurie Taylor (the caustic creator of the satirical 'University of Poppleton') sought to remind us a few years ago that just as good actors hold their allegiance to the concept of the 'stage', so too do academics owe theirs to that of 'academia' – not to any particular establishment.

This seminar was thus both timely and significant in allowing the topic to develop through inter-related themes and enabling us to recognised shared concerns and identify a corpus of collegial interest that bodes well for future research collaboration focusing on the threats towards, the defence of and the recreation of what academics *really* value together with the role of what flourishing university cultures contribute to society.



Changes to BU maternity/paternity/adoption policies

One of the main objectives with the SWAN work at BU in 2018 is to enhance the BU maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave policies, procedures and practices.

HR undertook a review of BU's policies compared with those in place at other universities,. In response to this review BU has agreed to enhance the benefits payable to staff for maternity, paternity and adoption leave. The relevant policy documents have been updated and details will be available to all staff very soon.

This is an excellent outcome and demonstrates BU's commitment to supporting and valuing staff who are parents. Enhanced parental leave and pay is linked to better recruitment and retention. Research by Troeger (2018), for example, found that the universities with the best maternity leave policies were better able to retain qualified women who went on to become professors and receive higher pay.

In addition, the SWAN work has resulted in a change to how the costs for maternity leave cover will be considered in future. From now on, where maternity leave cover is required, faculties and services will cover the cost but any budget overspend will not count against the faculty/service. It has also been agreed that financial reasons will not be a permitted reason not to provide maternity cover.



SWAN staff survey – launched July 2018

BU achieved an institutional bronze Athena SWAN award in 2015 in recognition of its achievements to date and commitments to working towards gender equality. We must reapply for the award in November 2018. The resubmission requires BU to undertake an assessment of gender equality in the institution, including quantitative (staff and student data) and qualitative (policies, practices, systems, arrangements, etc.) evidence and to identify challenges and opportunities to achieve gender equality.



We would like all BU staff to have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions as part of the resubmission. To enable this we have launched an Athena SWAN Survey. All staff are invited to take part and provide information about their experiences and perceptions, as well as suggestions for improvements, around key areas relating to gender equality.

The survey can be accessed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GSBTX5N>. The deadline is Friday 7 September.

Event – women entrepreneurs and innovators

All staff are invited to a free, exciting one day conference on contemporary opportunities and issues in women entrepreneurship and innovation run by the Business School on Wednesday 18 July.

The conference programme will have leading academics, entrepreneurs and practitioners present cutting-edge research and insights on women entrepreneurship and innovation.

The conference takes place in FG06, Fusion Building, Talbot Campus. For more information and to register, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/women-entrepreneurs-and-innovators-at-the-frontier-insights-from-research-and-business-tickets-46927605732>.