Athena Swan Toolkit

1) INTRODUCTION

This toolkit provides broad guidance to academic schools and professional services directorates planning to apply for Athena Swan awards under the transformed charter. This guidance covers Bronze, Silver and Gold application requirements as well as renewals.

The Athena Swan Charter provides a framework which supports participants to make sustainable change toward gender equality, with Awards recognising participants' commitment and achievement along this journey. The Charter is managed by Advance HE.

Please use this as a supplementary tool in conjunction with the Athena Swan Handbooks and Application forms. Specific requirements for different levels of application and/or for requirements specific to schools or professional services directorates are signposted throughout. To access the Athena Swan handbook and wider resources and the online networking group Join Advance HE Connect here.

The Advance HE Connect Group for Athena Swan includes recordings of webinars providing information and guidance for applicants. These can be accessed in the "Resources" section of the Connect group.

The University also supports Communities of Practice (CoP) which consist of a group of people with a common sense of purpose who agree to work together to share information, build knowledge, develop expertise and solve problems. The primary purpose being learning. There is currently a Data Analytics CoP as well as scope too initiate new CoPs that might support yourselves and others in work such as Athena Swan.

Throughout this toolkit you will find **best practice tips** which make recommendations based on what has previously worked well in achieving a successful submission.

Academic school applicants
All academic schools are eligible to apply for an Athena Swan award. Advance HE refer to academic school applications as departmental applications. You should refer to their guidance for departments and use the departmental application template.

Professional and Technical Operations Applicants
Please note, the Athena Swan Charter refers to Professional and Technical Operations. In a Queen Mary context, this refers to all staff who are on "non-academic" contracts, this includes: professional services staff, technicians, estates and facilities operational staff.

Professional services directorates at Queen Mary can now also apply for an Athena Swan award as their own unit. Advance HE are currently piloting this new award route and the EDI Team at Queen Mary are here to support any PS Directorates who wish to undertake an application.

Award Levels
The Athena Swan Charter has three awarding levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold. The first application must be made at Bronze level, after this you are able to progress to Silver and Gold or choose to renew at the same award level. The criterion for the different levels is outlined below.

For Silver and Gold and all renewal applications, you are required to provide clear demonstration of progress against your previously identified priorities, this means demonstrating that you have undertaken the actions you committed to in the previous application.

For Silver applications and beyond, you must also evidence impact and success in addressing gender inequality through implementation of your previous action plan and additional actions where relevant.

At Gold level there is an additional requirement to demonstrate that you have undertaken sector-leading activity to progress gender equality, including supporting other others to improve.

The Athena SWAN Handbooks provide details of the underpinning expectations for each award criteria.

Best practice tip: It is recommended that you follow the criteria and underpinning expectations and answer these clearly and explicitly to have the best chance at a successful application. Athena Swan panels will assess applications against these measures.

	High-level award criteria	Bronze	Bronze Renewal	Silver	Silver Renewal	Gold	Gold Renewal
A	Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant	X	X	X	X	X	X
C	Action plan to address identified key issues	X	X	X	X	X	X
D	Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities		X	X	X	X	X
E	Evidence of success addressing gender inequality			X		X	
F	Evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve					X	

2) PLANNING

Suggested timeline
The suggested timeframe for a high-quality submission is between 12 - 18 months. This includes initial organising and planning stages through to submission. Please refer to the Gantt chart at the end of this document for more detail on recommended timelines for an Athena Swan submission.

Signing up to the Athena Swan Charter Principles
The Athena Swan Charter Principles are provided in the Athena Swan handbook

Any applicant intending to submit an application for an Athena Swan Award must first submit confirmation from the Head of School or Directorate that they commit to the Charter Principles. This letter should be printed on your School/Directorate's headed paper and returned to Athena.Swan@advance-he.ac.uk. You can find a template letter on the Advance HE website, and once confirmed, you will receive a co-signed certificate which you can use to help promote your gender equality work to your community.

You can commit to the Principles at any time prior to submitting your application. Applicants are encouraged to do this before they start preparing an application so that they are familiar with the principals and aims of Athena Swan.

Intention to submit

You must submit your intention to submit an application to Advance HE prior to submission. This should be done following Advance HE's deadlines which requires applications to confirm intention to submit 2 months before their application deadline. You can find the deadlines here.

3) ESTABLISHING YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT TEAM (SAT)

Advance HE Guidance available in the Athena Swan handbook

Each applicant applying to the Athena Swan Charter must have a Self-Assessment Team (SAT) in place to collectively manage the application. This is important in relation to sharing workload and ensuring diverse perspectives and consultation.

The SAT must be representative of the School/Directorate in relation to gender profile and staff type, grades and roles. You must also incorporate student voice either through membership or consultation groups. In line with the Athena Swan Principles, you should also consider intersectionality here.

Applicants are not required to provide data on the characteristics of individual SAT members. Further guidance is provided in the *Athena Swan handbook.*

Best practice tip: It is good practice to ensure recognition for student involvement in this work. Previously, this has been done by rewarding students with gift vouchers to remunerate their time and engagement in this work.

The SAT should be established as part of the School/Directorate's governance structure and reporting lines should be illustrated. Furthermore, Schools/Directorates are also expected to have the structures in place to implement their action plan post-award and ensure continued focus on gender equality work, for example an EDI Committee or working group.

You must have an Athena Swan Lead who will be responsible for driving the application and managing the submission within the deadline.

Best practice tip: It is important to consider workload allocation alongside assigning the role of Athena Swan Lead. Good practice is to consider how Athena Swan fits into annual planning to thus inform workload allocation.

Best practice tip: It is valuable to establish a specific role of a Data Lead within the SAT. Data analysis is a significant part of the application and it is essential you have identified resource to undertake this. You may want to include additional specific roles to support the various aspects of the

application process. It can also be useful to create a role description for the Data Lead role, and any other key roles you include in your SAT. The EDI Team can provide guidance here.

Best practice tip: It is also recommended to establish subgroups to manage specific aspects of your application.

Examples of previous subgroups include:
- Data subgroup
- Academic Staff
- Students
- Professional and Technical Operations/Professional Services
- Writing subgroup

Please speak with the EDI Team if you would like guidance on roles and subgroups for your SAT.

4) DATA ANALYSIS

The mandatory data requirements are outlined in the [Athena Swan handbook](#)

Data requirements
The table below outlines the minimum required quantitative data for Athena SWAN applications. In first-time Bronze applications, three years of data should be presented where possible (where not possible, an explanation should be provided). In Bronze renewal, Silver and Gold applications, data should be presented covering the period since the previous application, usually five years.

Advance HE asks that, where possible, applicants provide data collected within a year of the submission date. Award panels expect to see the most recent data you have access to while also recognising that self-assessment teams need time to analyse and reflect on data. Therefore, your application should include the most recent data available from HR and Planning teams. Depending on the timing of your submission, the most recent data will usually be the previous academic year.

This checklist has been provided to support the collection of quantitative data, it does not include the requirements for qualitative data or suggestions for analysis. Please use this as a supplementary tool in conjunction with the [Athena SWAN Handbook and Application forms](#). All of mandatory data is available directly from the Queen Mary data dashboards or via HR directly as outlined in the tables below, links are provided.

Your Data Lead (of Athena Swan lead if you do not have a Data Lead) is responsible for obtaining the mandatory data and leading the data subgroup in undertaking data analysis to identify key trends which will inform your narrative and action plan. The EDI Team will support the Data Lead to ensure they have access to all of the required data and understand the requirements of the Athena Swan application. Please contact the EDI Team at the earliest opportunity when you are preparing your application to request your data.

Information on data collection and presentation is included below. The tables below provide more information on each of the data requirements and indicate where the data can be obtained. Please note, the data requirements are different for academic school applications and professional and technical operations applicants.

Sex and gender

Mandatory data for Athena Swan must be disaggregated by grade (for staff data) and by sex. Data dashboards at Queen Mary report on sex therefore these should be used for the mandatory Athena Swan data.

Applicants can also choose to provide data and analysis on gender identity where available, for example, in local qualitative data collection exercises such as surveys can include a question on gender identity. If you choose to collect data gender identity, there are important considerations that need to be made, such as the response options given and the way in which the question is asked. The EDI Team can provide further guidance here and Advance HE provide guidance here.

Access to data

Data dashboards at Queen Mary have different access levels:
- o Gold dashboards: only specific people have access
- o Silver: people in certain roles have access
- o Bronze: everyone has access

Please note: This access level does not correspond to the Athena Swan application level you are applying to.

Athena Swan leads and EDI Leads will be given Gold access. In order to gain access, the individual's Head of Department or Department Manager should email the relevant data team to request permission for access. The data team will then check with the EDI Team to confirm the individual's access.
- Student data: planning@qmul.ac.uk
- Staff data: Simon Gwynne (s.gwynne@qmul.ac.uk), Bhagirathi Shah (bhagirathi.shah@qmul.ac.uk)

Academic School Applicants:

These mandatory data requirements are the same across all Athena Swan application levels.

1) Students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level
Data note: This requirement covers student numbers at UG, PGT and PGR level for your School. These should be disaggregated by sex and by course where possible.
Where to access: Student Headcount data dashboard
2) Degree attainment and/or completion rates for students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level
Data note: This covers attainment data and/or completion rates for all students within your School. At UG and PGT level this can be assessed through degree result. At PGR level this is more complex and we suggest Schools use data on completion rates to indicate attainment.
Where to access: Data on degree attainment and PGR completion can be found via the EDI Awards and Continuations dashboard (*Please note updates to this dashboard are currently paused due to the changes with HESA reporting, please contact the EDI Team for data on academic year 2022/23)*
3) Academic staff by grade and contract function
Data note: The requirement here is to provide data on academic staff disaggregated by pay grade and also by contract function.
Contract function refers to the main function of employment a staff member is employed to deliver, such as teaching-only, research-only, teaching and research. It is good practice to provide data on the academic pipeline by sex, disaggregating staff numbers by academic role and sex e.g. Professor, Reader etc.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your School, you can also access this via the HR Staff Profile data dashboard (Gold Access)

4) Academic staff by grade and contract type
Data note: The requirement here is to provide data on academic staff disaggregated by pay grade and also by contract type.
Contract type refers to the type of contract a staff member is employed on, including open-ended, permanent, fixed-term.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your School, you can also access this via the [HR Staff Profile data dashboard (Gold Access)](#)

5) Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff by job family
Data note: The requirement here is to provide data on professional services staff within the School by job family.
Job family refers to jobs with similar characteristics, which are engaged in similar work. For PTO staff at Queen Mary, this could refer to operational and facilities staff; technical staff; administrative staff, professional and managerial staff.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your School, you can also access this via the [HR Staff Profile data dashboard (Gold Access)](#)

6) PTO staff by contract type
Data note: The requirement here is to provide data on professional services staff disaggregated by contract type.
Contract type refers to the type of contract a staff member is employed on, including open-ended, permanent, fixed-term.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your School, you can also access this via the [HR Staff Profile data dashboard (Gold Access)](#)

7) Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to academic posts
Data note: The requirement here is to show data on applications, shortlist and appointments for academic posts specifically.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your School

8) Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to PTO posts
Data note: The requirement here is to show data on applications, shortlist and appointments for professional services posts specifically.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your School

9) Applications and success rates for academic promotion
Data note: The requirement here is to show data on applications and success rates for academic promotion at different levels of the academic pipeline e.g. lecturer to senior lecturer, senior lecturer to reader and reader to professor.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your School

10) Applications and success rates for PTO progression
Data note: The requirement here is to demonstrate data on applications and success rates for professional services staff progression. This is more complex than the requirement for academic staff promotion as professional services don't have a clear promotions pathway.
Advance HE guidance states that where you do have data on professional services staff who have progressed to a new role, you should include this, for example data on internal recruitment and promotion. Where you have information on any relevant formal career pathways this should be included.
Whilst Advance HE do accept data on regrading of roles in this section, this looks at the role independently and not the individuals performance therefore Queen Mary steer is that this is not an accurate measure of PS progression.
Qualitative data can be gathered to understand PS staff's experience of progression.
Where to access: We do not currently have a clear metric to measure applications and success rates for professional services staff progression. Please speak to the EDI Team for guidance.

Professional and Technical Operations Directorate Applicants:

1) Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff by job family
Data note: The requirement here is to provide data on professional services staff within the directorate by job family.
Job family refers to jobs with similar characteristics, which are engaged in similar work. For PTO staff at Queen Mary, this could refer to operational and facilities staff; technical staff; administrative staff, professional and managerial staff.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your Directorate. You can also find this data via the HR Staff Profile data dashboard (Gold Access),

2) PTO staff by contract type
Data note: The requirement here is to provide data on professional services staff disaggregated by contract type.
Contract type refers to the type of contract a staff member is employed on, including open-ended, permanent, fixed-term.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your Directorate. You can also find this data via the HR Staff Profile data dashboard (Gold Access),

3) Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to PTO posts
Data note: The requirement here is to show data on applications, shortlist and appointments for professional services posts specifically.
Where to access: The EDI Team will provide this data for your Directorate.

4) Applications and success rates for PTO progression
Data note: The requirement here is to demonstrate data on applications and success rates for professional services staff progression. This is more complex than the requirement for academic staff promotion as professional services don't have a clear promotions pathway.
Advance HE guidance states that where you do have data on professional services staff who have progressed to a new role, you should include this, for example data on internal recruitment and promotion. Where you have information on any relevant formal career pathways this should be included.
Whilst Advance HE do accept data on regrading of roles in this section, this looks at the role independently and not the individuals performance therefore Queen Mary steer is that this is not an accurate measure of PS progression.
Qualitative data can be gathered to understand PS staff's experience of progression.
Where to access: We do not currently have a clear metric to measure applications and success rates for professional services staff progression. Please speak to the EDI Team for guidance.

Snapshot date

At Queen Mary, staff data provided from the HR Data Analytics team uses an annual snapshot date of 31 October, therefore for each year the data shown represents the data as on that date. There are two snapshot dates for student data, 1 December and 1 March annually.

We seek to provide a single source of truth across all data at the institution, thus ask that you use the data provided centrally from HR (staff data) and Planning (student data) for Athena Swan applications. If you have additional data held locally that you feel adds important information to your narrative, you can reference this in the narrative. If you do so, please clarify the different sources of data. If you have any queries about the data provided on the dashboards, please contact the EDI Team.

Additional data
The EDI and HR Team can provide additional data for Athena Swan applications where there is clear rationale. For example, reporting on numbers of staff taking and returning from parental leave may provide important insights and inform action planning. Whilst this is not mandatory data requirement for Athena Swan, applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the department supports flexibility for staff and students.

The transformed Athena Swan Charter now requires applicants to support greater inclusivity for people of all gender identities and people facing intersectional inequalities. There is no requirement to provide quantitative data on intersectional inequalities or gender identity, but this should be done in your narrative and evaluation must be evidence based. Guidance is provided in the Advance HE Handbooks.

At Bronze level, applicants must have evaluated their approach to exploring intersectional inequalities in their narrative. Any additional data to demonstrate intersectional analysis is not mandatory
Benchmarking of data is recommended but is no longer mandatory under the Transformed Charter however it is useful to include where relevant and possible to inform your analysis. Applicants might consider benchmarking against data sources relevant to their discipline, for example academic societies and reports as well as using higher education sector specific data such as Advance HE's statistical reports.

Presentation of data
Data must be disaggregated by sex and should be disaggregated by grade (for staff data wherever possible). It is mandatory that your data presentation includes both numbers and percentages for ease of interpretation. Graphs and tables must be clearly labelled and presented consistently.

GDPR and data analysis
Data Protection (GDPR) is one of the mandatory training programmes for staff, with the frequency being during induction and annually. Athena Swan Leads should ensure members of the Self-Assessment Team have completed this training.

Advance HE do not provide specific guidance on how to present small numbers, however they do request that approaches are consistent throughout the application. Small numbers (i.e. below 5) can be included within an application as Athena Swan panels are subject to data sharing agreements. Where a successful application is shared publicly however, it must be redacted following Advance HE guidelines to ensure confidentiality and to be compliant with GDPR regulations. The EDI Team can provide guidance here.

Advance HE guidance also recommends that consideration is made around handling small numbers in your data analysis. We advise that Self-Assessment Teams (SAT) include a statement within their SAT Terms of Reference confirming that data analysis shared within the SAT is for the purposes of Athena Swan only and will be reviewed in line with the principles of Athena Swan. Where numbers are small (i.e. less than 5), data analysis should not be shared beyond the SAT membership and confidentiality must be maintained within this group, recognising individuals may become identifiable.

Culture survey

Guidance on the culture survey can be found on pages 62-64 of the Advance HE Handbook (for School applicants) and page 58 of the Advance HE Handbook (for Professional Services Directorate applicants).

Undertaking a culture survey is a mandatory part of the Athena Swan application. The Queen Mary all staff survey has been designed to include the core questions required for Athena Swan submissions. Therefore, Schools/Directorates can use these results and will not need to run an additional survey. Please note, that breakdowns of responses where numbers are smaller than 5 are not shown. You can find guidance here on how to use the Culture Amp platform to access and analyse the Queen Mary Staff Survey results.

The table below demonstrates which questions align to the core Athena Swan questions as set by Advance HE. These have been confirmed as appropriate matches with Advance HE:

Advance HE Athena Swan Core Questions	Queen Mary Staff Survey Questions
My contributions are valued in my department	*I receive appropriate recognition for good work at Queen Mary* *We acknowledge people who deliver outstanding service here*
Department leadership actively supports gender equality	*Department leadership actively supports gender equality*
The department enables flexible working	*In our department, we are genuinely supported if we choose to make use of flexible working arrangements*
I am satisfied with how bullying and harassment are addressed in my department	*I am confident that appropriate action would be taken in my department, based on a report of bullying and/or harassment.*
My line manager supports my career development	*I am given opportunities to develop skills relevant to my career interests*
My mental health and wellbeing are supported in my department	*My mental health and wellbeing are supported in my department*
My department has taken action to mitigate the adverse gendered impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on staff	*No match: Advance HE have confirmed it is not a requirement to ask this question. If applicants wish to consult staff, separately, on their response to mitigate the gendered impact of the pandemic, then they can choose to do so*

For Professional Services Directorate applicants, there is more flexibility given to the collection of qualitative data on culture. Use of the culture survey provided by Advance HE is not mandatory for directorate applicants, however, you may wish to use this or consider the themes and questions from this survey in your own self-assessment.

Advance HE stipulate that ideally culture surveys should be run no more than a year prior to the application submission date in order for the findings to be relevant and meaningful.

The culture survey must as demographic and diversity monitoring questions to enable you to effectively analyse the results from a gender equality perspective. As a minimum, you must capture data on sex and role of respondents (e.g. academic, professional service staff) to enable analysis of

differences between these groups. As mentioned earlier in this toolkit, you may also wish to capture additional demographic information here such as ethnicity and gender identity.

Advance HE does not stipulate a minimum threshold for engagement however any instances of low response rate should be discussed and action taken to address this.

5) WRITING

The [Advance HE Handbook](#) provides guidance on what is expected in each of the narrative sections of the application. This also includes guidance on considering the accessibility of your application and the format in which it should be submitted. The guidance also confirms the word counts permitted for each section. It is essential that you remain within the permitted word count. Using crisp prose and avoiding repetition across sections will help to achieve this.

Best practice tip: To assist with remaining within the word count and to avoid repetition or duplication of information that may be applicable to more than one section, you can add reference points to signpost to other points in the application where further information is provided.

The guidance on word counts also outlines what is and what isn't included in the word count as well as anything that is not accepted in the application, for example URL links. Panel members will only review information within the application and will not follow any URL links and therefore they are not permitted in the application.

It is important that your application follows a single narrative and is accessible and easy to read and understand. Whilst you may be preparing sections separately, for example via subgroups or by multiple authors, it is essential to review the document as a whole and ensure it reads with one consistent voice.

It is also essential that your narrative speaks to your action plan. The actions you identify will be informed by your self-assessment and analysis and this must be apparent in the narrative. This is an important aspect of ensuring you meet the criteria and underpinning expectations of action planning to address identified key issues.

Best practice tip: To ensure the panel can clearly see how your action plan seeks to address the key issues you have identified, you can add references to specific action points within the narrative. For example, if you are discussing the underrepresentation of women at senior levels, add the references to the action(s) you have identified to address this issue.

6) ACTION PLANNING

Guidance on developing your action plan can be found on pages 52 of the [Advance HE Handbook](#) (for School applicants) and page 27 of the [Advance HE Handbook](#) (for Professional Services Directorate applicants).

The EDI Team can advise on templates for your action plan. A suggested template is included at the end of this document.

A core requirement of the Athena Swan Charter is the provision of a SMART action plan. SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound. The example action plan in the appendix of this document provides examples of SMART action plans from Queen Mary's Institutional Award, achieved March 2022. You can also access helpful guidance on SMART action from [Advance HE here](#).

Your action plan should include current and planned actions and must cover the five-year period following your submission.

It is expected that applicants undertake regular monitoring of action plans between submissions and awards. This is essential to ensure your action plan is being implemented and enables you to effectively monitor progress and impact, essential evidence for your next submission. The EDI Team can provide guidance on effective methods to do so.

It is good practice to cross-reference your Athena Swan action plan with other action plans in your area, for example your EDI Action plan and Staff Survey action plan. This enables actions to be embedded and progressed effectively within your area. Where Schools and Directorates are required to provide updates on their local EDI Action Plan to Queen Mary's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (EDISG), it is good practice to use this opportunity to review and update your Athena Swan action plan as a holistic exercise.

7) SUBMISSION

Mock Panels
At Queen Mary we provide mock panels for all Athena Swan applicants prior to submission. This provides the chance to have your application reviewed in full by internal colleagues with experience working on and reviewing Athena Swan applications. These should take place no later than one month before your submission deadline to allow sufficient time to act on feedback from the panel. Your EDI contact will schedule this for you, it is your responsibility to ensure a full draft of your application is ready for this date.

Assessment and results
Athena Swan applications are assessed by peer-review panels made up of experts who are leading gender equality work in their own institutions. The panel review submissions against the core criteria and underpinning expectations. These must all be met to achieve a successful award.

Advance HE aim to give results and feedback within twelve weeks from the submission of your application.
The panel will recommend one of the following outcomes:

- **Award Conferred:** an application achieves a score of at least '3 -satisfactory' for each criterion, so the award is conferred (this is no change to the previous outcome).

- **Award with Conditions:** Where an application has received a score of '2 – narrowly missed' for up to two award criteria (if all other scores are ≥2), the Panel will recommend that an application does not yet meet the criteria for an award and that conditions need to be met for an award to be conferred.

  Applicants will be asked to confirm, within eight weeks of the notification of their panel outcome, how the conditions will be addressed. Subject to approval by Advance HE, the award will be conferred, and the applicant can action the conditions throughout the duration of the award. There is no requirement to revise the original application, however an applicant can do so if they feel necessary. If an applicant plans to publish their application, they should either revise the application to address the conditions, or append the completed conditions request form outlining how the applicant is addressing the conditions.

- **Revisions:** Where an application has received a score of '1- poor' for any criterion or three or more scores of '2 – narrowly missed', the applicant will be required to complete revisions. This single revisions process replaces the current major or minor revisions processes. Applicants will be invited to resubmit at any point within a six-month window for re-assessment by the Chair and a Lead Reviewer.

8) What's next?

Once you've had notification that your application was successful and you have successfully received your award, it's important to celebrate your success and share the good news. It js common practice at Queen Mary to share the news of Athena Swan award successes in our E-Bulletin and local newsletters. You may also want to consider a celebratory event to share the success, raise awareness of the action plan and to thank those involved in the submission.

We aim to publish successful applications on our Athena Swan Awards webpage. Applications will need to be redacted for public viewing to ensure they are GPPR compliant. Advance HE provide guidance on redacting applications. Please speak to the EDI Team for more information.

You will receive detailed feedback from the panel on your application and it is important to reflect on this and to use it to inform your next steps. In your next application you will be asked to comment on how you used this feedback to inform your approach.

It is important to remember that achieving an Athena Swan Award is not the end of the work! Now that you have confirmation of your award, it's time to begin implementing your action plan.

You will first need to review your Self-Assessment Team to ensure you have the right governance in place to support implementation of the agreed actions. In order to keep momentum and effective delivery of your actions, it is essential that you establish mechanisms to hold yourself accountable and to monitor success and impact during your award cycle. The tips below provide suggestions on how to do this effectively. Whilst you may not be thinking about your next submission at this point, these tips will help significantly to collate the important information needed next time you put together an application and are required to reflect on your progress against your action plan.

The EDI Team can provide guidance and advice on best practice in delivering action plans and monitoring progress and impact.

Best practice tip: Some successful applicants have decided to re-establish their Self-Assessment Team into an action group responsible for overseeing the implementation of the action plan. Others have disbanded their Self-Assessment Team and added responsibility to oversee the implementation of their Athena Swan action plan to their local EDI Committee. Both of these options work well, it will depend on your own local contexts as to how you choose to do this.

Best practice tip: Establishing a regular reporting cycle for your action plan is essential in ensuring the work is successfully implemented. For example, establishing an annual reporting cycle as part of the schedule of business for your EDI Committee or relevant group will embed this work and enable you to deliver on your commitments. This reporting cycle should also include reporting on impact and progress. Collating this information over the 5-year award period will provide much of the essential groundwork for your next application.

TASK	18 months prior to submission	1 year prior	6 months prior	5 months prior	4 months prior	3 months prior	2 months prior	1 month prior	SUBMISSION DEADLINE	Post submission
Initial planning and preparation										
Inform EDI Team of intention to submit	▓									
Sign up to the Athena Swan Charter principles	▓									
Assign Athena Swan Lead	▓									
Assemble Self-Assessment Team (SAT)										
Recruit members to Athena Swan SAT		▓								
Establish subgroups within SAT		▓								
For Renewals & Silver/Gold applications										
Review previous action plan & identify progress made	▓	▓								
For Silver and Gold: Gather evidence of impact since previous application & action plan	▓	▓								
For renewals: RAG rate against previous action plan (for renewals only)			▓							
Data gathering and analysis										
Ensure access to relevant data dashboards (Athena Swan Lead)		▓								
Data gathering of mandatory data			▓							
Data analysis - identify key insights			▓							
Request any additional data from HR / EDI			▓							
Complete graphs and tables for application				▓	▓					
Writing										
Begin drafting narrative sections				▓	▓					
Finalise draft						▓				
Action planning										
Draft list of actions - in response to findings from self-assessment			▓	▓	▓					
Identify priority action areas				▓	▓					
Finalise action plan						▓	▓			
Review and prep for submission										
Mock panel with EDI Team (HR)								▓		
Receive feedback from mock panel and make final edits for submission								▓		
Submit									▓	
Results received										
Results received from Advance HE (approx.. 3 months)										▓
Redacting and publishing application (once results and feedback received)										▓

Appendix 2: Action plan example template (example taken from Institutional Athena Swan Silver renewal application 2022)

Ref & page #	Objective and rationale	Action/Outputs	Timeline *start dates and other timeline details*	Responsibility	Committee providing oversight	Success measure
Priority Area One: Investing in Gender Transformation and Catalysing Impact						
1.1 Pg 21 Pg 47 Pg 62 Pg 75 Pg 82 Pg 141 Pg 152	Deliver our People, Culture & Inclusion Enabling Plan Our Mission, as outlined in our 2030 Strategy, is to be 'the most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere', where students and staff flourish, reach their full potential and are proud to be part of the University. Our PCIEP exists to deliver our EDI KPIs around representation of women and BME staff.	a) Evaluate monthly progress against our plan via PCIEP Steering Group. b) Provide accountability for delivery of PCIEP via governance (Strategic Programme Board and EDI Steering Group). c) Strengthen and update the PCIEP as part of the annual planning round process (January), which reviews progress and approves priorities for forthcoming 12-18 months. d) Appraise Council, our Governing Body, of progress on PCIEP biannually, including a deep dive in May each year and publication of our EDI annual report.	a) Monthly (ongoing) b) February 2022 then every six months (August and February) until mid-point check in 2025 c) January 2023 (then annually) d) Every six months	VP PCI	Strategy Programme Board EDI Steering Group	2030 Strategy EDI KPIs for Junior: Middle: Senior grades By 2026 Representation of women: 53:50:45 Representation of BME staff: 43:37:33 By 2030 Representation of women: 50:50:50 Representation of BME staff: 40:40:40
Priority Area Three: Professional Services staff - readdressing gender imbalance with PS Staff and improving career progression and development						
3.1 Pg 28 Pg 105	Understanding the training needs of our male staff Our self-assessment raised concerns that men are less likely to engage in training at Queen Mary, and that our existing offer is less likely to meet their needs. We are committing to further exploring these concerns, with an evidence-led approach, to address inequities.	Use Learning Management System to more thoroughly analyse data once at least one year of data has been collected.	Jan-22	Head of OPD	PS Career Development Working Group	2030 Strategy • EDI KPIs for Junior: Middle: Senior grades • By 2026: Representation of women: 53:50:45; Representation of BME staff: 43:37:33 • Feedback indicates an increased satisfaction with internal career progression for (women) PS staff; Staff Survey: in 2019 45% agreed "I feel supported at QM in my plans for my future development".
		Pilot related workshops Leading and Supporting Career Development (for managers) and Introduction to career planning for PS (one year).	Jan-22			
		Create a tool to support PS staff develop their own career development plan with their line managers based on an understanding of the requirements to reach next grade.	Jun-22			
		Investigate models for staff to gain required skills for progression (E.g. formalised secondments, apprenticeships).	Apr-23			