Athena SWAN – An Introduction
Athena SWAN Charter

- Recognizes the commitment to advancing women’s careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine (STEmM) academia.
- Managed by The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU).
- Funded by ECU, Royal Society, Biochemical Society, Dept of Health and Scottish Funding Council.
Athena SWAN Charter - Beliefs

• The advancement of STEMM is fundamental to the quality of life across the globe

• It is vitally important that women are adequately represented in what has traditionally been, and still is, a male dominated area

• Science cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of the whole population and until women and men can benefit equally from the opportunity it affords
Athena SWAN Charter – 6 Principles

To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action from everyone, at all levels of the organisation.

To tackle the unequal representation of women in science requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation.

The absence of diversity at management and policy making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine.
The high loss rate of women in science is an urgent concern which the organisation will address.

The system of short term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of women in science, which the organisation recognises.

There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career in science, which requires the active consideration of the organisation.
Athena SWAN – Benefits

• Process helps to improve the recruitment, retention and promotion of female academics.

• Review and establish best working practice to the benefit of all working in STEMM academia
Athena SWAN – Benefits

• Biomedical Research Unit/Biomedical Research Council and National Institute for Health Research funding linked to awards.

• RCUK funding recipients to provide evidence of commitment to (gender) equality and diversity.

• Play a role in helping Schools/Research Institutes to carry out teaching and research at highest level of international excellence and to maintain a competitive advantage.
The Athena SWAN Awards

**Bronze** department: identified particular challenges and planned activities for the future

Silver department: significant record of activity and achievement, demonstrating impact of implemented activities

Gold department: significant sustained progression and achievement, beacons of achievement in gender equality champions of Athena SWAN and good practice
Bronze Award

• A self assessment process
• Wide variety of data – e.g. student numbers, progression pipeline, demographics across Institute, recruitment, committee structure, turnover, promotion
• Staff consultation
• Analysis of good practice
• Identification of areas for improvement
• Action plan
Athena SWAN Coordinator – Role (School/RI)

- Coordinate and provide expert advice on applications
- Liaise with data providers in collating the required data
- Act as specialist and central coordinator for Athena SWAN and develop University network
- Assist with drafting and critical reading of applications
- Research and promote best practice activity to support academic female careers
Athena SWAN Role (University)

- Support implementation of Bronze Action Plan
- Research on funders announcements to identify priority areas
- Develop framework for all STEMM department applications
- Deliver presentations/training/focus groups relating to Athena SWAN and the promotion of women in STEMM academia
- Develop and maintain links with external HEI networks
Athena SWAN - Success

- Academic led
- Communication
- Engagement of all staff
- Senior Management buy in
- Drive change
- Demonstrate progress