

Athena SWAN Silver Departmental Award Application Template

Name of Institution: University of Manchester

Year: 2010

Department: School of Chemistry

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Date of University Bronze SWAN award: 2008

Applications at Silver level should demonstrate what the department is doing in addition to university-wide policies to promote gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline.

At the end of each section state the number of words you have used.

Click [here](#) for additional guidance on completing this template.

We recognise that not all institutions use the term 'department', and that there are many equivalent academic groupings with different names. If in doubt, contact Athena SWAN staff in advance to check whether your department, or equivalent, is eligible to apply.

It is preferable that the contact person for the application is based in the department.

Letter of endorsement from the Head of Department

An accompanying letter of endorsement from the Head of Department should explain how SWAN plans and activities contribute to the overall university strategy.

The letter is an opportunity for the Head of Department to confirm their support for the application and to endorse and commend any activities which have made a significant contribution to the achievement of the university and departmental mission.

The letter should not exceed 500 words.

Athena SWAN Silver award form v2

www.athenaswan.org.uk

1 A pen-picture of the School

The School of Chemistry was formed by the amalgamation of the two Departments of Chemistry at the creation of the new University of Manchester in 2005. An extension to the southernmost building was built to accommodate all teaching activities and some additional research laboratories. The northernmost building was vacated but some Chemistry staff were re-housed in the Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre. We also have staff in the Photon Science Institute and both buildings are new, purpose built and state-of-the-art but approximately one kilometre apart.

Chemistry has a traditional male-orientated academic history spanning well over 100 years. As a legacy, the number of female academics is below the national average. We have committed to Investors in People in order to improve the quality of our management and have previously introduced a number of initiatives to support that which have stood us in good stead in terms of identifying best practice for SWAN Silver. Using the results of an internal survey we have further improved these to encourage the development of female staff.

We have a very stable academic workforce but are quite heavily restrained by finances which will slow down the appointment of new staff, crucially regulating the rate at which we will be able to increase the proportion of female permanent academic staff. We remain positive, however, that the increasing appointment of female postdoctoral researchers should be achievable in the shorter term, due to higher turnover.

To achieve Silver, we are focusing our efforts on line managers and their duties. Thanks to clear and prescriptive guidelines, we hope they will be empowered to carry out Performance and Development Reviews for their staff coupled with clarity over their roles and engagement in the Schools planning process. **284 words**

2. Gender data

Provide data on the following areas, and comment on their significance and how they have affected action planning. Data should be provided over a three-year period to enable comparisons to be made and trends over time identified. The purpose of asking for this data is to identify what you are doing to create a pipeline for future appointments in your discipline, how you are attracting new staff and what you are doing to retain staff and promote them. The data also enables us to get a snapshot of the department. If you are unable to provide any of the data please comment on the reason for this.

We recommend that you use graphical illustrations to highlight the trends emerging from the data, in addition to providing the statistics and analysis. Make sure that the data is clearly labelled. Please put the data into a PDF document.

There is a maximum of 200 words for the commentary on each section (i - xvi).

Student Data

- (i) **Numbers of males and females on access or foundation courses** – comment on the data and describe any initiatives taken to attract non-traditional groups of women to the courses.

Foundation courses for Chemistry are administered by the Faculty although we do provide tuition. Consequently we have no input to the admission process; once they have successfully completed the course they will automatically enter Chemistry. We do however provide support to our widening participation office who is actively working to encourage a diverse range of students onto these courses.

We will look in the future to working closer with the Faculty to ensure that we have a better view and input to the foundation students coming to Chemistry. **88 words**

- (ii) **Undergraduate male and female numbers** – full and part-time – comment on the female: male ratio compared with the national picture in your discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance or negative trends and the impact to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

We are encouraged by this year's increase in female UG student numbers and by comparison with the Russell Group average, but compared to all HEI Chemistry students there is room for improvement. The figures however are not significantly different from the 60:40 male:female ratio that we have experienced for over ten years. This may be because our main student recruitment focus is our Open Day programme featuring individual 1:1 interviews which are inevitably held predominantly by male academic staff. We ensure that our student guides for all prospective students are gender balanced. Our Outreach and Widening Participation programmes are all inclusive but it is very difficult to assess the impact of this on our UG student applications as we contact over 8,000 school children annually and are not provided with gender data. We do however keep full records of our programmes on our own database. **145 words**

- (iii) **Postgraduate male and female numbers completing taught courses** – full and part-time - comment on the female: male ratio compared with the national picture in your discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

We have no postgraduate taught students at this time though it is our intention to introduce a Masters next academic year. **21 words**

- (iv) **Postgraduate male and female numbers on research degrees** – full and part-time – comment on the female: male ratio compared with the national picture in your discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

We are consistently slightly behind the Russell Group and All HEI averages but consistently slightly ahead of our Faculty. This year's figures show a disappointing dip in female numbers which is difficult to attribute to any particular event or change in School practices. Once again we have a predominantly male academic staff community and we are dependent on them for recruitment. We feel that a survey of postgraduate research students focusing on our admissions process and their perception of the School culture could reveal useful information which we will build into the Action Plan. **94 words**

- (v) **Ratio of course applications to offers and acceptances by gender for (ii), (iii) and (iv) above** – comment on the differences between male and female admissions and describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future

Undergraduate admissions acceptance rates do not differ significantly between the sexes and comparison with Russell Group and all Chemistry HEIs indicates that where data exists, we achieve a better acceptance rate. We do have in place mechanisms to ensure gender balance is achieved wherever possible during our open days but it is not possible to achieve this in an interview situation with academic staff. The large majority of applicants will be interviewed by a male academic.

Postgraduate research student applications show a drop in the percentage of females applying by comparison with undergraduates, which is in common with other SET Faculties. This could be because the interview process is much more focused on an individual member of academic staff who is highly likely to be male. Applicants being introduced to the research group will meet postdoctoral research associates as well as postgraduate students and are bound to notice that the group is predominantly male even if only subconsciously. It is disappointing to note the low take up by females in 08/09 despite an increase in the number of offers made. This should be investigated as part of the Action Plan. **190 words**

- (vi) **Degree classification by gender** – comment on any differences in degree attainment between males and females and say that action you are taking to address any imbalance.

First class honours degrees were awarded to more females than males in 06/07 and 07/08 but, rather worryingly, this reversed in 08/09. More upper seconds were awarded to females than males in 08/09 but it is difficult to identify any particular trend showing bias against females within the degree classifications. The overall picture of degrees awarded however shows that there was a significant fall in the percentage of degrees awarded to females in 08/09 (36% compared to 45% the previous two years). This does not compare well to the national Chemistry rate of 47% but despite this we remain consistently higher than the Faculty year on year.

There is a University wide working group investigating differences in degree attainment by equality group and we will feed into this work and consider any recommendations made. **134 words**

- (vii) **Length of time for postgraduate completion by gender** – comment on any differences in completion times between males and females and say what action you are taking to address any imbalance.

We have been unable to obtain verifiable data but the University's Equality and Diversity Office are currently working towards collation of the information.

Staff Data

- (viii) **Number of male and female staff (academic and research) at each grade** – comment on any differences in numbers between males and females and say what action you are taking to address any underrepresentation at particular grades/levels.

We have no female and nine male lecturers which is perhaps disappointing given that they are mostly relatively recent appointments (although prior to our commitment to Athena SWAN). With one female senior lecturer and one professor we have a serious issue to address. In a period of austerity and downsizing we are unlikely to be able to effect significant change in the next few years. Although we have recently offered a lectureship to a female we are unlikely to achieve even the national average.

We can however make a difference with research and teaching only staff; we currently have a promising 30 females and 60 males including 2 females out of 11 Fellows. This latter ratio is perhaps highly significant; as the last step in career prior to academic tenure we can already see a worrying trend. There may be a sort of acceptance in our culture that high level academic performance is incompatible with family life which forces women to make an early choice against a science career. Although this is clearly not true the evidence that people see around them supports the perception; we need to promote evidence from successful senior female academic staff using the Postdoctoral Forum. **200 words**

- (ix) **Job application and success rates by gender and grade** – comment on any differences in recruitment between men and women at any level and say what action you are taking to address this.

The application rate for last year (the only full year for which we have data) is over 2 to 1 and an equal 14% of each gender were shortlisted. Significantly, the success ratio reverses the application ratio and although the numbers are statistically low it does seem to indicate there is nothing about our recruitment and selection process which disadvantages women unless it is at the advertisement stage. Comparison with the Faculty figures indicates a similar reversal in the ratios between application and

appointment which suggests that we do need to look carefully at our advertising. That said, if there are more male chemists than female, which there almost certainly are, our application rate will reflect this. **117 words**

- (x) **Turnover by grade and gender** – comment on any differences between men and women in turnover and say how you plan to address this. Where the number of women in the department is small you may wish to comment on specific examples. Explain if turnover affects recruitment and promotion rates.

Male research staff leavers outnumber female leavers as might be expected by the ratio in post although it is interesting to note that more women resign than men, who tend to stay in post to the end of fixed term posts. This is worth investigating as it might suggest that they are deciding to move away from an academic career, although it might also mean that they are more successful at obtaining new positions. Where such staff move on to is not recorded; it would be useful to introduce exit interviews to provide better data in the future. **98 words**

- (xi) **Maternity return rate** – comment on whether your maternity return rate has improved or deteriorated and say how you plan to improve further. If you are unable to provide a maternity return rate, please explain why.

Our maternity return rate has not been recorded although we can however report that of three staff who have taken maternity leave in the last two years two have returned and are still in post several months later and the third is still on leave and not yet scheduled to return.

The University's maternity policy, rated best in the university sector by a *Guardian* poll and the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, provides for 6 months at full pay, a further 3 months at statutory maternity pay, followed by 3 months unpaid leave (total 12 months). Full holiday entitlement is accrued during the maternity period. **104 words**

- (xii) **Paternity, adoption and parental leave uptake** – comment on the uptake of paternity leave by grade and parental and adoption leave by gender and grade and whether this has improved or deteriorated and say how you plan to improve further.

The University has not been recording this data and has simply been using letters to deal with each request on a case by case basis. We do know however that three core academic professors and two fellows have recently taken paternity leave. The shortcomings in our administrative procedures are known and the University is introducing a system to enable the recording of such data in the future. **67 words**

- (xii) **Promotion application and success rates by gender and grade** – comment on whether these have improved and say what further action may be taken. Where the number of women is small you may comment on specific examples of where women

have been through the promotion process. Explain how potential candidates are identified.

Academic staff promotion success rates in recent years are more or less 100% successful which suggests that the School only puts forward those cases which are robust. There is little merit in building up hope in an individual at School level only to have those hopes dashed weeks later by the Faculty. Two years ago one female member of academic staff was promoted. The process last year appears to have stalled at Faculty level.

Promotion figures for women are scrutinised as a high priority at the Faculty's Operational Performance Review with the University's senior management. An action plan is developed with the Faculty to look at how we can increase the number of women applying and gaining successful promotion. **119 words**

- (xiv) **Male and female representation on committees** – provide a breakdown by committee and explain any differences between male and female representation. Explain how potential members are identified.

Representation on the School's committees is largely ex-officio thus the appointment to the role will have more bearing on the gender of committee members than the few elected, recommended or nominated members.

The **Management Team**, comprises 6 male and 1 female members of academic staff, and 1 male and 3 female support staff.

The **Teaching Committee** has no female representation other than the Senior Teaching Administrator

The **Research Committee** comprises 11 male academic staff and 3 female

The **School Board** is open to all staff but voting is limited to academic and related staff plus an elected member of research staff

The **Staff Student Liaison** Committee comprises three senior academic staff a female administrator and elected student representatives

The **Safety Committee** comprises mostly nominated representatives from various areas of the School and University officers; there are 12 males and 4 females **141 words**

- (xv) **Numbers of applications and success rates for flexible working by gender and grade** – comment on any disparities. Where the number of women in the department is small you may wish to comment on specific examples.

This information is not formally recorded as flexible working is almost always a local agreement with the line manager. We can however refer to the data from our staff survey where 82% of respondents say that their line manager allows them to work flexibly, with only 5% being refused

We do have concern though that 27% of respondents say they struggle with their workload. 35% say they do not and 38% say that they do sometimes or are not clear. **80 words**

- (xvi) **Female: male ratio of academic staff on fixed-term contracts and open-ended (permanent) contracts** – comment on any differences between male and female staff representation on fixed-term contracts and say that you are doing to address them.

This is discussed in section 3 (ii) below. The low leaving rate for academic staff combined with our difficult financial position means that appointing new academic staff in the next few years will be very difficult. **36 words**

3. Initiatives to support women in the department

Provide commentary on the thematic areas below, explaining what the key issues are in your department, based on the data above, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed (maximum 300 words each for sections i - xii).

- (i) **Promotion and career development** – comment on the appraisal and career development process and the evidence of gender balance in the process of identifying people for promotion.

Academic staff are notified each year that their grading review will be taking place (professorial staff every two years) and advising them what to do should they wish to apply for promotion. It is a source of considerable disappointment that a similar arrangement for support staff has not taken place since the merger of the two Universities five years ago. Promotion for research staff is possible; research assistants are automatically promoted from grade five to six on completion of their PhD. It is clear to all that progression to grade seven is dependent on being awarded a Fellowship which will bring academic status albeit on a fixed term contract. However, independent Fellowships are difficult to obtain and the majority of postdoctoral researchers must therefore be realistic about their chances of progression in academia. The Postdoc Forum, run in conjunction with the Faculty and supported by “Roberts” funding, provides a range of support initiatives; talks from Fellows, previous PDRAs who have moved into other careers, CV clinics and recruitment fairs. Progression from Fellowship onto a tenured academic position is perhaps the most difficult transition to achieve in the present economic climate. It is dependent on range of criteria which may not be clear or understood by many postdoctoral staff, not least of which is the financial position of the School and Faculty.

Performance and Development Reviews are not directly related to grades or promotions, although evidence from PDRs may be used in support of an application.

Postdoctoral staff are, at present, not rewarded financially for outstanding performance . We are looking into the possibility of establishing research themed prizes with funding from various external sources. It may also be possible to establish accelerated incremental progression using School resources or the lobbying of funding bodies to support such initiatives. **297 words**

(ii) Support for staff at key career transition points – comment on any initiatives, drawing out different approaches at different levels.

One of the most difficult career progressions is the move from a fixed term Fellowship to a tenured academic post. Most staff traditionally have seen a Fellowship as a guaranteed way into academia although it is appreciated that it is not always true and particularly in the present climate is in no way guaranteed. Once a Fellowship has been obtained however, applying for further research funding is possible within a limited time-frame. Research Councils insist on the applicant having guaranteed employment for the duration of the grant and the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, which includes the School of Chemistry, will write such a letter of support under circumstances where a notable proportion of the Fellow's salary is covered. However, universities are often reluctant to extend contracts for prolonged periods of time on the basis of grant applications which bring in limited overheads, without going through an official appointment procedure for a permanent position. Crucially, however, the School will find it increasingly difficult to keep their rising stars if these Fellows are restricted from raising their own research funds and, importantly, salaries. This situation may require an extensive review at University level; on first sight there should be a way to circumvent this issue, perhaps the issue of conditional contracts could be a way forward.

Academic staff on appointment are designated a mentor and it has been suggested that female mentors be appointed to female staff where possible. Given the gender imbalance this may be difficult to achieve within the School: we will need to resolve this and consider mentoring for all PDRAs. We already have an active Postdoc Forum though which such a mentor scheme could be developed and launched. **282 words**

(iii) Flexible working – comment on the numbers of staff working flexibly and at what grade and gender, whether there is a formal or informal system, the support and training provided for managers in promoting and managing flexible working arrangements and how you raise awareness of the options available.

Academic staff enjoy considerable flexibility over their working hours, as their contracts are not prescriptive in terms of hours of work, As a consequence this tends to extend the working day; the buildings are open from 8.00am until 6.00pm during the working week and accessible 24/7. It is therefore easy to work very long hours indeed but also easy to

be very flexible. The academic community tends to accept long hours as normal practice and whilst this can be beneficial in terms of meeting deadlines or managing a variable workload those individuals with dependents and/or families do not have that luxury. Long hours tend to be seen as indicators of diligence, commitment and passion for science but they may also be indicators of excessive workload, inability to deliver the job, lack of training or underpinning knowledge or a breakdown in communications between the line manager and employee.

Support staff on the other hand have the ability to work within a more formal flexitime scheme within which long hours are restricted and hours worked are reported on a regular basis when time sheets are submitted; excessive hours of work are therefore rare.

We know from our survey that some staff do feel pressured by the School culture to work long hours:

Yes	27%
No	35%
Sometimes/not clear	38%

We also know that 82% of surveyed staff feel their line managers support or encourage them in flexible working with only 5% saying it is not available. **244 words**

(iv) Culture – comment on how you demonstrate that the department is female-friendly and inclusive.

We recognise that the School is a predominantly male workforce, many of whom have been in post a long time and do not necessarily see that there is an issue with the current culture within the School, or recognise the need to be proactive to change this culture. We have been active in drawing attention to the gender imbalance and Athena SWAN Silver award at School Board Meetings, Management Team Meetings, (Ref Section VI) the Postdoctoral Staff Forum, at School Induction and Awareness events for new staff and through the carrying out of a recent staff survey to aid the development of our action plan for SWAN Silver. We know from the latter that only 8% report the School to be unwelcoming and consistent verbal feedback from staff inductions is that new people find it an extremely friendly environment. Other issues raised during verbal feedback include statements from both male and female staff that there are not enough toilets in the building. The reality is that there are well above the required minimum for both sexes but they are actually poorly signposted. We have requested improved signage from the Directorate of Estates.

We operate a formal flexitime scheme for members of support staff although most academic staff regard their contracts as being very flexible indeed. The concern is that there is an expectation from many postdoctoral staff that they will not progress in their careers unless they work long hours, largely as academia is extremely competitive. We would like this to move to a culture within which the only acceptable reason for an

individual to work long hours would be of their own volition and not due to pressure from their line manager or peers. **285 words**

- (v) **Recruitment of staff** – comment on how your recruitment processes ensure that female candidates are attracted to vacancies and how you ensure that recruitment processes comply with the university's equal opportunities policies.

Our recruitment is done according to University guidance and regulations, and we are inherently committed to recruiting the best possible candidate for every post whilst ensuring that line managers are aware of both positive and negative discrimination issues. There a number of checks built in to the process by Human Resources to ensure equality of opportunity so we are not entirely independent in this activity. These include recording of applicants and appointments, equal opportunities monitoring and the provision of short listing and interviewing proformas.

All staff leading recruitment and selection are required to have at least attended the University Training in Equality and Diversity Issues and the School keeps a record of those who have attended. Our goal is to have all staff who are involved fully trained in Recruitment and Selection and to have attended the appropriate University course for their role. This is also a University requirement which is ramped in over three years. **156 words**

- (vi) **Representation on decision-making committees** – comment on evidence of gender balance in the mechanism for selecting representatives.

Representation on the School's committees is largely ex-officio thus the appointment to the role will have more bearing on the gender of committee members than the few elected, recommended or nominated members.

The **Management Team**, the senior committee into which all others report, comprises the Head of School (HoS), in the chair whose appointment is recommended to the Dean by the School Board, the Director of Research (DoR) who is informally elected or nominated, the Director of Teaching (DoT) who is a specific and permanent appointment, the Heads of Teaching Sections (HoTS) who are informally elected and an MIB representative who is invited. The Head of School Administration (HoSA) and PA to the Head of School are ex-officio members. Also attending by invitation are the Health and Safety Advisor and Technical Services Manager. The team comprises 6 male and 1 female members of academic staff, and 1 male and 3 female support staff.

The **Teaching Committee** is chaired by the Director of Teaching and comprises the three HoTSs, the School's teaching officers and the Senior Teaching Administrator who is the only female.

The **Research Committee** comprises The DoR (chair) the Deputy DoR, the three HoTSs, the Postgraduate and Undergraduate Tutors, senior staff representing the Research

Institutes, an invited early career academic, an elected postdoctoral representative, the Senior Research Administrator and the Research Administrator. The latter three are female, the other 14 male academic staff.

The **Staff Student Liaison** Committee is chaired by the DoT plus the three HoTSs and undergraduate student representation which is by volunteers who are nearly all female. An election will be held if there is more than one volunteer for each post. The postgraduate student community has not yet been actively engaged in this process but will be in the future. **295 words**

(vii) Workload model – comment on evidence of transparency and fairness.

The School is currently in the process of developing an acceptable workload model, partly as a result of the staff survey. We feel that this is an important exercise and our long term goal will be to decide on a model that is accepted by the large majority of staff. The working model takes account of the following activities: lectures, workshops, projects, tuition, demonstrating, postgraduate students, PDRAs, citations (H-index), research income as Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigator (CoI), external income generated and administrative duties. We recognise that there will be difficulties in reaching full agreement but we will consult widely and consider models already in use elsewhere.

We know from the survey that there are quite strong feelings over workload models with some questioning the validity of other colleagues' outputs. **130 words**

(viii) Cover for maternity and adoption leave and support on return – comment on the mechanisms for covering workload absence and specific support on return.

The cover provided for teaching responsibilities works well with colleagues generally supportive of each others needs in much the same way that cover is provided when staff are on sabbatical leave. We are less successful however in dealing with research responsibilities and easing staff back into the workplace when they return. Guidelines need to be put in place to ensure appropriate cover for research activities and supervision of research groups whilst on leave. These could be incorporated into our Management Charter.

Staff are entitled to paternity and parental leave as well as maternity leave and there are individuals in the School who have taken this recently. How well this is known however is not clear: although staff may know that their terms and conditions are available on the University Intranet (StaffNet) they probably rarely refer to them. Terms and conditions of employment are part of the HERA implementation and are likely to change once agreement with the trades unions has been reached.

We know that in general staff do feel supported while they are on leave and kept informed of any developments in the workplace which may be relevant. There are also cases where staff have voluntarily continued to work at home whilst on leave. **246 words**

(ix) Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings – evidence of consideration for those with family responsibilities.

The main school committees tend to meet around mid-day and may include refreshments when these intrude on people's lunch breaks. It is generally felt that this is preferable to meetings which may require an early start or late finish to better accommodate those with a need for flexible working.

The above is not the case for a number of our research seminars, some of which may be scheduled for 4 or 5 pm. This is often beyond our control since they have to be scheduled to suit the timetables of visiting speakers some of whom will be on tight schedules imposed by lecture tours and visits to other universities. Other seminars may be held in conjunction with, say, the Royal Society of Chemistry with people attending from outside the School. These are often followed by a social gathering and/or dinner which may extend into the evening. The Postdoc Forum includes a social element to bring staff together and these are also held at lunchtimes. The major social event of the year is the traditional Christmas party which again is held at lunchtime and typically attracts around 50% of our staff. Individual groups have their own social events as do staff housed in other buildings.

Social and networking events are arranged for new students to welcome them into the School and these are themed and targeted, for example international and/or postgraduate students. The School also has an active student-led Chemistry Society which arranges events and social gatherings. **246 words**

(x) Outreach activities – comment on the level of participation by female and male staff and whether they get recognition for being involved and the time and work put in.

The School has a vibrant and extensive Outreach programme each year directly impacting on some 8,000 school children from Year 3 onwards. Regular Flash Bang shows held both in the building and at local schools are our flagship event to attract students to Chemistry during their formative years. In addition we hold regular "hands on" chemistry classes in our laboratories and subject specific lectures for older pupils. We also host summer camps for Salters and one day events for local schools to engage with students at an early age. Student attendance is left to the school so we have no influence over gender although we could consider asking schools to provide a gender breakdown.

We currently have one female member of staff who was involved in outreach, including delivering flash bang shows, with three males. Since her sabbatical however there are only males delivering the programme. There are Recognition for this is not formal; there is however an appreciation from all staff that this is an important part of the School's activities. **172 words**

- (xi) **Induction and training** – comment on the support provided for female students to enable them to make the transition to a sustainable academic career, particularly from postgraduate to researcher.

We have an Induction Checklist to ensure that new staff have sufficient information from day one, and a guide for line managers. We run half-day School induction courses for all new staff to introduce them to, *inter alia*, our Training Policy and Management Charter as part of our commitment to Investors in People and Athena SWAN. Feedback from the events is consistently good, the only difficulty being that due to relatively low numbers of new staff arriving it is only practical to run them every 4-6 months. Our Health and Safety Induction, led by our Health and Safety Advisor is compulsory for all staff and students who are assessed on their understanding before they are permitted to start laboratory work. Attendance on both events is recorded. In addition to this the University runs a New Academics Programme and a University induction course for all staff.

The School has an agreed Training Policy which is based on imported best practice and recommendations made by the Bett and Roberts Reports. It is supported by our Management Charter which sets out the requirement for line managers to support their staffs' training and development through their PDR. From our survey we know that 87% found their PDR to be satisfactory and will use this to encourage further uptake.

We need to consider holding career development events for postgraduate students in addition to the University events and to develop a mechanism to support our own students applying for postdoctoral positions. **245 words**

- (xii) **Support for female students** - comment on the support provided for female students to enable them to make the transition to a sustainable academic career, particularly from postgraduate to researcher

WiSET (Women in Science, Engineering and Technology) is a network for all female students, research and academic staff organised for Chemistry through the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences. The student coordinator for Chemistry liaises with Faculty staff to organise events such as skills workshops, debates, industrial site visits and social networking. There is also a specialist strand of the Manchester Gold mentoring programme, run by the Careers Service, for female students looking to enter traditionally male biased careers. **79 words**

4. Case study: impacting on individuals – Describe how your department's SWAN activities have benefitted an individual woman working the department (maximum 200 words).

Following an announcement that one of the Research Fellows was pregnant, a new Health and Safety assessment was performed to ensure that any necessary procedures were in place to accommodate the Fellow's Teaching and Research commitments under

the new circumstances. Lectures timetabled for after the predicted due date were re-scheduled, so that all teaching commitments were fulfilled before the end of the 8th month. Furthermore, the School arranged that marking of exam scripts, which would have had to be performed whilst the Fellow was on maternity leave, was re-allocated to appropriate academic staff on the respective lecture courses. However, the Fellow was expected to make their own arrangements to ensure that their research interests and postgraduate student supervisions were appropriately managed whilst on leave. While the majority of research active academics will be in contact during such extended leave, this will be intermittent and formalised procedures should be put into place by the School to ensure that support is given to help those staff maintain their research groups were possible. **170 words**

5. Further SET-specific Initiatives

Comment on any particularly innovative programmes not covered above which have been undertaken, noting their effectiveness to date and any plans to introduce new initiatives and/or review present practice (maximum 200 words).

The School volunteered for assessment in 2008 when the University applied for the Bronze award and was found to be “benchmarked at Level 2/3”. We were encouraged by this and the way that our previous efforts in working towards liP had benefitted our assessment, especially the equality of opportunity requirements. We have not yet applied for liP assessment, now placing more importance on achieving the Silver Award. We have however undertaken an liP pre-assessment and this was very useful in identifying a way forward; we intend to survey our line managers this summer and, results and finances permitting, to proceed with liP assessment later in the year. **107 words**

6. The self-assessment process

Describe the Self-Assessment Team members and the action planning process, as well as any consultation processes that were undertaken (maximum 750 words).

Following a consultation with the RSC Universities Education and Research Manager we established a working group for the Silver Award in Summer 2009. The group comprises: an early career academic, a Research Fellow, a postdoctoral research associate, the technical services manager who represents technical staff and takes the lead, a member of administrative staff, a senior experimental officer, the University’s Head of Equality and Diversity and a Faculty Human Resources manager. The gender split is 3 female, 5 male.

After discussion we decided that the way forward was to run a staff survey to identify the key issues that we would wish to address in order to achieve the six principles. We discussed at the outset whether to include the Head of School in the group and although this is recommended we felt that as his support is so positive and all proposed actions are brought to the Management Team with his support, his influence at that level would be critical. In addition we thought that the HoS’s presence on the group might discourage some staff from expressing their true feelings. We finally decided, with his agreement,

that we would invite him onto the group if we felt that there were difficulties which would need his authority to resolve.

We agreed a “mission statement”: “to develop best practice in management of all staff so that women in the School are not disadvantaged by existing cultures and practices” and a role for the group “To develop an operational plan to address the main gender issues with a view to seeking Management Team approval for those policies and procedures which are deemed by the group to be appropriate. Members of the group should consult freely with their colleagues and bring those views back for discussion”. As a result we developed a staff survey which was run electronically and anonymously. We were pleased with the level of response; 31% of the School responded of whom 58% were female and 41% line managers. The results were made available to the School in summary form and in full but excluding a small number of comments which we thought could identify the respondent. The latter were however considered in the development of the action plan. This is focused around the following main goals which we see as crucial:

- Develop an effective workload model – must be clear and transparent
- Promote our Management Charter especially for line managers but available for all staff so that individuals know their entitlements
- Promote our Training Policy, again to all staff but with the emphasis in line managers
- Develop and communicate promotions procedures – notwithstanding HERA

In developing the action plan we have also tried to include some of the minor points raised although the focus must primarily be on the major issues. We believe that line managers, be they middle or top, are the key to changing the culture of the School. The change, once introduced for staff, should pay dividend in the student population. We will not however allow this to have a passive or indirect effect on our student population. There are clearly areas where we will need to develop agreed policy and protocols for students and embed them within the culture too. The plan must also clearly be integrated into the School and Faculty plans, which in turn must relate to the Manchester 2015 Agenda and Towards Manchester 2020. **564 words**

7. Action plan

Please attach your action plan for the next three years which summarises actions identified from the data and commentary above, naming the person responsible and time scale.

8. Any other comments

Please comment here on any other elements which you think relevant to the application, e.g. recent mergers between departments (maximum 250 words).

The School recognises the importance of engaging with all staff and has recently extended membership of the School Board and the Research Committee to elected

postdoctoral staff representatives. We have found that this group are difficult to engage with but nevertheless have encouraged them as a group to take the lead in this and in the Postdoc Forum. The School perception is that those coming forward as representatives are volunteers rather than competitively elected, nevertheless we are grateful and appreciative of the work and effort that a few committed individuals have contributed to enable the School to progress in this area. It is interesting to note that the more active individuals are predominantly female.

Although the focus of Athena SWAN is on students, research and academic staff we are of the opinion that adopting best practice will benefit all staff and so the practices that we have introduced will apply to all staff where appropriate. **155 words**