

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

Expression of Interest in submitting an Athena SWAN Departmental Application

Athena SWAN in UCC

The [Athena SWAN](#) Awards recognise and celebrate good practice in tackling gender inequalities that impede women's and men's progress in academic careers. Advance HE (f/k/a the [Equality Challenge Unit](#)) manages the Athena SWAN scheme in the UK, and also in Ireland, since the programme's launch here in 2015. Athena SWAN awards are available at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels at both University and Departmental levels and are valid for 4 years. To renew their awards, universities must demonstrate that they have implemented their 4-year gender action plans.

UCC became the third Irish university to receive a Bronze Award in August 2016. With the institutional award in place, STEMM Schools/Departments/units in UCC became eligible to submit departmental applications in their own right. In 2017, the Schools of Pharmacy, Chemistry and BEES became the first Schools in UCC to earn bronze Athena SWAN awards. UCC has committed to submitting a minimum of 6 departmental-level applications during the three-year term of our [Athena SWAN action plan](#) (see Action 2.1-1, p. 53).

In 2018, UCC adopted the [expanded Athena SWAN Charter Principles](#). Athena SWAN in UCC now covers all disciplines (not just STEMM), and focusses on addressing gender inequality more broadly, not just barriers to progress that impact women. UCC will apply to maintain our bronze institutional Athena SWAN accreditation in November 2019, under the expanded Charter. University-wide Athena SWAN activity is overseen by UCC's [Athena SWAN Steering Group](#) ("ASSG"), which meets termly and brings together key expertise and representatives from across the university and Human Resources. College-level Steering oversee Athena SWAN activity in each College and report to ASSG. The Athena SWAN Project Officer promotes and co-ordinates Athena SWAN activities across the University.

About Departmental Applications

Departmental submissions are overseen by locally-convened self-assessment panels, supported by the Athena SWAN Project Officer who can provide ongoing support and guidance, share examples of good practice, assist with data collection/analysis and action planning and provide feedback on draft submissions. There are two submission rounds annually, on the last business days of April and November. Typically, it takes successful applicants for Bronze Departmental Awards a year to carry out the self-assessment, staff consultation and action planning exercises on which the application is based.

In this context, a "department" can refer to a range of units that sit below the level of the institution and are wholly constituent units of the university. In the UK, there are precedents for a wide range of successful submissions from very small departments to large faculties; however, applications from faculties/institutes that span a range of subject areas may find it difficult to meet the application requirements. The decision to select a unit to submit an application will hinge on the make-up and autonomy of the individual sub-units, and should take these factors into account:

- sufficient size to pursue the self-assessment process
- autonomy and control over relevant policies (eg recruitment, induction, promotion, core hours, flexible working)
- ability to provide disaggregated data for students and staff
- distinct structure and culture within departments
- the head of unit should have overall responsibility for resource allocation, budgets, academic strategy and policy in the submitting unit, so as to be able to effect the changes set out in the action plan.

For more information (including a copy of the application form), see AdvanceHE [Guidance for Applicants](#), or contact the Athena SWAN Project Officer, Ann King, at 490 3999

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Process:

To express interest in submitting an application, please –

- Complete the attached two-page form. The Athena SWAN Project Officer can advise - 490 3999.
- Email it to athenaswan@ucc.ie

The relevant College Steering Group and the central UCC Steering Group will review all submissions. After consulting with the relevant College Steering Groups and Heads of College, ASSG will identify a minimum of 2 units to submit annually.

Please note that it's helpful to begin work as soon as possible, even if you are unsure whether a submission within the next year is feasible for your unit. The Steering Group encourages the establishment of departmental-level Athena SWAN panels in all units.

Expression of Interest in submitting an Athena SWAN Departmental Application

Word limit: 500 words (delete guiding questions as necessary)

Name of Unit:

Head of Unit:

Size of Unit: (approx. number of academic, research, admin/professional staff, numbers of UG, PGR, PGT students):

Has an academic lead been identified to work on the application as SAT Chair? (If so, please identify).

How will the academic lead be supported by the unit/College while working on the application? (e.g. provision of backfill, reduced teaching load, other?)

How is it envisaged others in the School/Department/Institute will contribute to the work?

A significant part of the initial work on the application involves collecting and analysing demographic data on staff/students, analysing it and presenting it. The EDI Unit will coordinate the provision of data from central sources; some data will need to be collected locally. How do you expect this work will be managed?

What preparatory work (if any) has been done to date in anticipation of a submission?

What do you anticipate may be the key challenges to your unit in preparing the application?

What are likely to be the key factors that will work to strengthen the quality of the application?

Target application submission date:

I confirm to the Athena SWAN University Steering Group that **I, as Head of School/Department/Institute:**

- Have met with the Athena SWAN Project Officer and Self-Assessment Team Chair and fully understand the commitment required for this application;
- I will/have assembled a SAT that reflects Athena SWAN principles of diverse gender, ethnic, staff role, and student representation;
- Accept the *proposed* timeline for data delivery from the EDI Unit/HR/ASA;
- Will commit my time and School/Departmental/Institutional resources as necessary to ensure each stage of application drafting and submission is completed according to the schedule agreed with the EDI Unit;
- Accept and will adhere to the *Protocol for Conducting Focus Groups with UCC Staff and Students as part of Athena SWAN Applications*;
- Confirm the SAT Chair and members will be appropriately supported and resourced to carry out their work throughout the process;
- Confirm SAT members' work will be proportionately shared;
- Confirm SAT members' work will be recognised as appropriate in workload allocation, performance development reviews and reference-writing, and acknowledged as an example of departmental leadership and citizenship;
- Acknowledge the self-assessment process may raise challenging staff, student and cultural issues in our Department/School/Institute. These will be examined in accordance with the Athena SWAN Charter Principles and addressed as appropriate/relevant through our action plan;
- Agree to ensure that the School makes progress in implementing our four-year Athena SWAN action plan regardless of whether an award is achieved on first application;
- Confirm the SAT Chair is a member of the School/Department/Institute's Senior Management Team (SMT) or will be co-opted to SMT for an Athena SWAN item for the duration of the application process.

- Confirm the Department/School/Institute SAT will permit online, shared access to the School's draft application with the EDI Unit at all times, so that the Unit can support the School/Department/Institute's application as necessary;
- Confirm the EDI Unit will provide support and advice to the School/Department/Institute throughout the process, and;
- Understand that the ultimate decision to submit the final Athena SWAN application and the timing of such rests with myself as Head of School.

Signature of Head of School/Department/Institute: _____

Date: _____

I confirm to Athena SWAN University Steering Group that, as **Chair of the School/Department/Institute Self-Assessment Team, I:**

- Have met with the Athena SWAN Project Officer and Head of School and fully understand the commitment required for this application;
- Accept the *proposed* timeline for data delivery from the EDI Unit/HR/ASA;
- Will commit my time as necessary to ensure each stage of application drafting and submission is completed according to the schedule agreed with the EDI Unit;
- Have read and will adhere to the *Protocol for Conducting Focus Groups with UCC Staff and Students as part of Athena SWAN Applications*;
- Will work to ensure SAT workload is proportionately shared amongst members;
- Will ensure online, shared access to the draft application is available to the EDI Unit at all times;
- Will ensure that the narrative and actions proposed in our application are put forward on the basis of careful deliberation and agreement by all members of the SAT and with the approval of SMT;
- Understand that the ultimate decision to submit the final Athena SWAN application and the timing of such rests with the Head of School

Signature of SAT Chair: _____

Date: _____