

## SUBMISSION FROM UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND

### Summary

Scotland's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) recognise the importance of promoting equality and diversity to ensure we draw on the widest possible talent pool. Scotland's HEIs employ 21,215 women, 54% of their workforce.

There are cultural and practical barriers which hinder us in recruiting and retaining the very best skilled and talented women for our Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teams. Scotland is not alone in this: the 'leaky pipeline' effect is seen across universities in all 27 EU member states and the USA as well as businesses in the domain of Science, Engineering and Technology.

As well as a point of principle, universities see potential competitive advantage if we can find ways to improve the recruitment and career progression of female researchers. Institutions are working very hard to increase the diversity of the academic workforce, in all subject areas and through a wide range of initiatives create an environment and culture in which all staff thrive and know they have every opportunity to contribute to our success and enhance their institution's global research reputation. Much progress has been made, as outlined below, but there is more work to do on this front, and we are committed to doing it.

### Committed to Improving Diversity

In June 2012, all Scottish HEIs with STEM departments<sup>1</sup> set themselves the target of gaining (or renewing, as appropriate) the Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award within two years.

The Athena SWAN scheme is designed specifically to support university STEM departments to put in place a wide-ranging programme of measures to remove barriers to women, and has a proven track record in increasing the recruitment and retention of skilled women (see 'Athena SWAN Impact Report 2011'<sup>2</sup>). Examples include increasing the visibility of female role models and putting in place the kind of effective career development and succession planning to help institutions grow and nurture the talent of their researchers regardless of their background. The programme requires a significant amount of staff time, and is very stringent. One university reported that they made provision for 80 hours' work in the Workload Programme of the Convenor of each School which was applying for a departmental award, in accordance with the advice they had received from the Equality Challenge Unit which administers the awards. Awards are by no means guaranteed to participating institutions.

The Scottish HEIs reaffirmed their commitment by enshrining this target in the 2012-13 Outcome Agreements they made with the Scottish Funding Council, as noted in the SFC's summary document: "all HEIs with STEM departments have agreed to achieve the Athena Swan Bronze Award within two years". SFC will be monitoring progress against all the targets in the Outcome Agreements and liaising closely with HEIs about them. It should be noted that

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<sup>1</sup> Universities of Aberdeen, Abertay Dundee, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier University, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, Heriot-Watt University, Queen Margaret University, The Robert Gordon University, SRUC, Universities of St Andrews, Stirling, Strathclyde, West of Scotland and the University of the Highlands and Islands.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/sites/default/files/Athena%20SWAN%20Impact%20Report%202011.pdf>

many institutions were members before 2012, and most are aiming to go beyond the Bronze award.

## An Improving Picture

The official data from the Higher Education Statistics Authority show that the proportion of women present has been steadily increasing at all levels of seniority in all disciplines over at least the last six years. The change has been gradual but steady. The total number of women professors in Scottish HEIs (across all disciplines) has risen substantially from 305, five years ago, to 400 in 2010-11. That is an increase of 31% (a 7% increase took place over the past two years). Please see below figures from some STEM subjects which show that the number as well as the proportion of women is increasing in Scottish HEI STEM departments:

Subject	% increase in female academic staff in five years
General Engineering	28.6%
Physics	41.7%
Chemistry	14.3%
Biosciences	22.6%

## Monitoring Improving Diversity

The data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Authority every year allows universities to monitor progress. In addition to the voluntary steps universities are taking, universities are held to account on our progress as a result of various forms of regulation which have recently been introduced or amended to include performance on gender diversity, e.g.:

- The Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Research Excellence Framework (REF):
  - The Research Excellence Framework, which now (as of the REF2014 round, currently underway) requires all institutions to draw up and implement Codes of Practice relating to equality in the selection of staff for their REF submission<sup>3</sup>.
  - The 'environment' element of submissions must include evidence about how the submitted units promote equality and diversity.
  - The REF submission requirements have also been reformed to make adjustments to reduce disadvantage caused by taking a career break for maternity (researchers who have taken a career break for maternity, or faced adversity as a result of individual circumstances, are now, as of the REF2014 round, allowed to submit

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ref.ac.uk/equality/>

- with a reduced amount of evidence, in terms of the number of their academic publications).
- HEFCE will monitor and analyse the selection rates of staff for the purpose of equality and diversity.

On 17 January 2013, Research Councils UK published its 'Statement of Expectations for Equality and Diversity'<sup>4</sup>, announcing a new requirement that all departments in receipt of project or infrastructure grants from any of the seven Research Councils (which are major funders of research infrastructure and projects in all Scottish HEIs) must demonstrate progress in removing barriers to women. The announcement stated that "RCUK will review the overall effectiveness of organisations' approaches at a departmental and institutional level through its Audit and Assurance Programme. We will also discuss equality and diversity during institutional visits".

### Examples of On-going Work

- The University of Edinburgh has taken a very proactive approach to supporting its departments in participating in the Athena SWAN scheme, e.g.:
  - In April 2012, the Chemistry Department of the University of Edinburgh became only the second department in the UK to achieve the Athena SWAN Gold Department Award.
  - The University hosts the Scottish Athena SWAN Network, allowing all Scottish institutions to share their experiences and good practice.
  - All of the University's STEM departments and disciplines are planning to submit applications for Athena SWAN Awards by the end of 2014.
  - The University has designated management and operational responsibility for securing progress, recognised by successful achievement of external recognition such as Athena SWAN.
- The University of Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt University, along with Edinburgh, have already achieved the Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award.
- The University of Glasgow Physics Department holds Champion status in the Juno Award scheme. Juno is a programme which has been very successful in increasing the recruitment and retention of women in academic Physics departments<sup>5</sup>. All Physics departments in Scottish HEIs have at least Supporter status in the Juno programme. The number of female academics in Scottish Physics departments has risen by 42% in the past five years.
- The Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology led by Edinburgh Napier University for the whole sector has also been widely recognised for its achievements in this area. In March 2012 the First Minister commissioned SRC to take forward a range of projects to promote women in science. Scottish HEIs have been supported by the following work carried out by the staff of the Scottish Resource Centre for Women in SET (SRC):
  - Running the Interconnect Network (<http://www.interconnect.org.uk> ) which brings together female STEM students from all HEIs for employability events and provides access to industry. SRC's experts inform us that this assists with retention of female

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/EqualityStatement.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.iop.org/policy/diversity/initiatives/juno/principles/page\\_42621.html](http://www.iop.org/policy/diversity/initiatives/juno/principles/page_42621.html)

STEM students as it reduces the isolation felt by many female STEM students and increases their academic network. It also aims to improve the employability of the students into STEM industries by providing employer-led recruitment advice, site visits and role models. SRC have over 1800 female STEM students registered and 107 have taken part in events in the last 6 months.

- In the last six months SRC have provided advice and support, including surveys, focus groups and action plan reviews, to 6 universities on their Athena SWAN applications.
  - Working with staff at Edinburgh Napier University (which hosts SRC) to increase the recruitment and retention of female STEM students in line with the SFC Agreed Outcomes targets. This has involved partnership working with Faculties and central departments to increase their awareness of gender in their approach to recruitment and retention activities. As an example, SRC staff are about to deliver Unconscious Bias workshops to key academic and support staff who are involved in recruitment activity.
  - Delivering a range of career development workshops for women who work in STEM, including sessions to identify strengths, coping with change and overcoming internal and external barriers SRC have started Career Clinics for women looking for 1-2-1 advice on their career development. 45 women from Universities have used these services over the last 6 months.
  - SRC launched a Coaching for Success Programme last December, offering subsidised coaching sessions. The launch was attended by 57 women, of which 17 were from universities.
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- Every year the Universities of Dundee, St Andrews and Abertay participate in the Women in Science Festival, which comprised over twenty events last year.
  - Universities have embraced a more active approach to good employment practice generally through the development of the Research Careers Concordat.
  - Nine Scottish universities have already achieved the European Human Resources Excellence in Research(HRER) award.

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