



We strive to promote a culture of respect and inclusion of people from all backgrounds that nurtures excellence, leadership and innovation

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## Welcome

Welcome to the 4th Newsletter from the Athena SWAN committee for the Edinburgh Medical School Clinical Sciences, and Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences. The Athena SWAN charter is an award scheme that recognises excellence in employment practices that advance and promote the careers of women in STEMM subjects (science, technology, engineering, maths, medicine) in higher education and research. Importantly, this doesn't only impact on women; the positive changes we strive for should benefit everyone. We strive for good support and an appropriate work-life balance, fairness and transparency for all. Over the past three and a half years we have introduced a number of important changes and continue to monitor their impact. In May 2014 we were awarded a Bronze Award for this work, and in November 2015 we submitted our application for a Silver Award. In this newsletter we would like to share a few things with you that are relevant to our ongoing efforts.

## Our website

We have our own website ([athena-swan.igmm.ed.ac.uk](http://athena-swan.igmm.ed.ac.uk)) on which we explain what we do, why we do it and what our plans are for the future (in spite of 'IGMM' in the web address, this site is for everyone in our Deaneries). In addition to this you can find various other useful pieces of information. You can also follow us on Twitter @[UofEAthenaSwan](https://twitter.com/UofEAthenaSwan). Do please have a look on our website to find out more about:

- [Family friendly policies](#), which is not just about maternity or paternity leave, but also provides information on, amongst others, flexible working, shared parental leave and time off for carers
- [Presentations](#) of previously held events, such as presentations on the promotions process, mentoring, how to run a successful viva and work-life balance
- [Upcoming](#) and [past events](#)
- [Other useful links](#) (e.g. to relevant publications, talks, meeting reports and films)
- [Past newsletters](#)

## Athena SWAN goes international

Since its launch in 2005, the Athena SWAN Charter for Women in Science (now run from the Equality Challenge Unit; ECU) has expanded from just 10 member institutions at the start to 129 universities now. In September 2014, The Faculty of Science at the University of Nottingham Malaysia campus became the first international department to be awarded an ECU Athena SWAN award. The scheme was recently opened to universities in the Republic of Ireland, with the first awards to Trinity College Dublin and the University of Limerick announced in July 2015. Athena SWAN has now also spread to Australia with up to 20 universities, medical research institutes and publicly funded research agencies participating in a Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) pilot launched in September 2015. Talks are also taking place between ECU and organisations in Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway and the US.

## Inspiring Women 2: Save the date!

Following on from our very successful Inspiring Women meeting in 2014 we are organising a second meeting, Inspiring Women 2, on Tuesday 31st May 2016 at QMRI (Little France). Despite the name, this full day conference seeks to inspire everyone (men and women) to benefit equally from the opportunities available for those with a career in Science.

### Our headline speakers are:-

- Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell ([president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh](#)) who was the first person to identify pulsars whilst still a PhD student and has been an influential campaigner to raise the number and profile of women in Science posts.
- Professor Tom Welton ([Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Imperial College](#)) who was instrumental in the Gold Athena Swan Award gained by the Department of Chemistry at Imperial College in 2013 and believes in workplace diversity and that inclusion is key.

Both these speakers are very engaging and entertaining and will discuss their experiences and the issues facing women and increasingly men in Science. The day will also include speakers from within our two Deaneries (women and men) at various points on the career ladder and how they have balanced family responsibilities with their career and where problems still exist.

## Athena SWAN survey 2015

Below we give some highlights (and lowlights!) of the data we obtained from the survey we conducted across both Deaneries between December 2014 and January 2015. We had around 700 responses, which was great. We are grateful to all of you who responded, as it provided us with invaluable data for our Athena SWAN Silver award application.

### **Q** *In general, staff and postgraduate research students are treated equally on their merits, irrespective of their gender*

82% of women and 89% of men agreed with this statement, which is pretty good in comparison with other departments, although we recognise a need to improve. The one outlier was in CCBS where only 61% of women agreed.

### **Q** *Overall, meetings, seminars and other events are held within core hours (10am - 4pm)*

Here we held steady in comparison to 2013 at ~77%, with no real gender differences. However, in CCBS, CRH and CIR, only ~55% women agreed with this statement, so we have some way to go in these centres.

### **Q** *Two questions relating to "same opportunities for those working part time or flexibly"*

Here we saw a striking male/female difference in some centres, with as low as 26% of women agreeing in CVS.

### **Q** *I have been given clear information about policies relevant to gender equality, such as flexible working, carer's leave*

Here we saw a small but significant increase for both genders, from 21.8 up to 25.5% of women, and 31.6 to 35.4% of men, and most people say they know where to find the information even if they haven't been given it. Almost nobody at higher grades answered no, suggesting the PI training may have had a real impact. We now need to focus on reaching all grades.

### **Q** *Equality & diversity and unconscious bias training*

We saw a significant and welcome increase here. The proportion of women who had done E&D training was 5% and is now 19%; for men this has increased from 13% to 31%. The number of people who have undertaken UB training has increased: from 4% to 25% amongst women, and from 10% to 35% for men.

### **Q** *A number of questions about the promotion process*

There is clearly a real issue amongst lower grades here. The biggest male/female discrepancy was in CVS where agrees to "my impression is that men and women are equally encouraged to apply for promotion" was 33% amongst women but 97% amongst men.

### Some quotes *[our response in italics]*:

- I have received a lot of support and encouragement with regards to getting involved with both internal and external committees and conferences to boost my CV.
- I am surrounded by women who have reached the top of their professions, I do not feel held back or discriminated against.
- Development in the university is aimed solely at those in research. Support services are not well served at all in terms of possible development opportunities etc. *[The next generation of AS awards will help with this, as they include support staff.]*
- It is my belief/experience that often women who have children, or are of child bearing age, are not considered for promotion or career development in academic research, despite these women being willing to work full time, flexible hours. *[We will add case studies to the website as there are many examples where this is not true.]*
- On average, men are more likely to pursue information about and put themselves forward for promotion. While the knee jerk response to this is to encourage women to behave more like men, the alternative of encouraging men to be more reflective, self-aware and self-critical (i.e. to behave more like women, on average, do) is considered less.

## Altmetrics

On the 17th of September, we held an event entitled “Career Progression, Equality & the Role of Altmetrics” (supported by the Deaneries of Clinical Sciences and Molecular, Genetic & Population Health Sciences). Following an introduction by Professor Cathy Abbott, it featured presentations from two guest speakers: Euan Adie (founder of altmetric.com) and Paul Naish (publisher at Taylor & Francis).

Altmetrics is an internet-based ‘alternative’ way of demonstrating international attention to a scholar’s work - e.g. using geographically-specific metrics of how many times an article is tweeted, mentioned on Facebook etc. - without them actually having to travel. International invitations to visit and speak at other universities are a key way of showing international impact, and hence represent a major criterion for promotion to senior (Reader/Professor) positions at Edinburgh. Yet, international travel can be challenging for those with caring responsibilities (and we know that women disproportionately bear this load). Further, monies for international travel are often part of the discretionary funds made available to principal investigators through grants; however, these usually relate to salaries, and we also know that there is a gender gap in pay especially at mid/senior career levels (with men faring better). These organisational and cultural factors place limits on the extent to which women especially are able to evidence international impact - and hence progress into leadership positions. Our Athena SWAN event sought to increase awareness of altmetrics within Edinburgh, with the aim of assisting individuals in evidencing their international impact in promotion and contribution reward applications. The event was also intended to help to increase Heads of Schools’ and promotion review committees’ recognition of how impact in other countries can be achieved in a range of non-traditional ways.

Euan introduced altmetrics, and how it can be of benefit to academics; Paul spoke about how publishers are increasingly using altmetrics to consider the reach of research. Around 50 people attended the event, from PhD students to Deans, and it attracted very positive feedback. A video of the event is available on our [website](#) and via [vimeo](#).

## Avoiding gender bias and encouraging family friendly working

See below for advice on how to achieve this when recruiting for a post. Importantly, IAD also runs “[PI briefing - Managing your research group](#)” training sessions, which includes best practice in recruitment and all other aspects of managing staff.

### Advertising a job:

- Add an equality statement stating that applications from women and black and minority ethnic candidates are welcome;
- Consider whether the post could be advertised as part time and/or fulltime;
- State that the University supports flexible working and scheduling most meetings in core hours;

- Advertise in venues that target diverse audiences;
- Avoid using terms that describe stereotypes of people (and hence gender) (e.g. action-driven vs people person) and use terms describing behaviours instead (e.g. ability to take initiative vs ability to collaborate with a team).

#### Set up of interview:

- Within core hours (10.00 - 16.00)
- Mixed genders on interview panel, aiming for 50% male and 50% female
- Tell the candidate who will be on the interview panel
- Sufficient notice for interview to make family arrangements
- Willingness to interview by Skype if awkward to travel long distances

#### Questions not to be asked either inappropriate or illegal:

- What is your sexual orientation?
- Are you pregnant?
- Do you have children?
- Do you have or plan to have children?
- Are you married or single or in a civil partnership?
- How would you juggle your family and work responsibilities?

Apart from this, make sure to question statements by other interviewers such as “This candidate just isn’t a good fit”, unless justified with facts rather than vibes. Also, it is important to note that all interviewers should have completed [unconscious bias training](#).

## Unconscious Bias

Ever wondered why all the members of the site visit team are all white males? Why there are so few women giving the plenary lectures at your favourite annual conference? Maybe it’s because of unconscious bias in those who select the site visiting team or the medallists. We all have unconscious bias – it’s part of the mechanism that allows us to make quick judgements based on our experience. The problem is that it can affect our decision-making in a way that can be unfair to those affected by the decision. This is increasingly recognised by promotions panels, recruitment panels and funding bodies. Following the “Tim Hunt” furor (see [our last newsletter](#)), the Royal Society commissioned a great little [3 minute training video and pdf](#), for their panels. The MRC is promoting unconscious bias training to its panel members and reviewers. You can find out what your own implicit biases are with some [quick tests available online](#). Find out how to overcome the effects of your own biases by completing [the University of Edinburgh online UB training](#) or better still, attend a face-to-face training. These are provided through external trainers (paid for by the Deaneries). One was recently held in the Centre for Population Health Sciences. Keep an eye open for the next one.

## Dignity and Respect for All

The recent revelation that the famed astronomer Geoff Marcy violated sexual harassment policies at the US University of California, Berkeley over a decade (2001-2010), has led to outcries in the press against not only Marcy but also the University of California who chose to put him on probation. The vice provost for the faculty stated “The university has imposed real consequences on Professor Geoff Marcy by establishing a zero-tolerance policy regarding future behavior,” essentially meaning he would be sacked IF he did it again!! Marcy finally resigned of his own accord possibly due to the open letters to the New York Times from 20 members of the U of C Berkeley, Astronomy Faculty and from 278 astronomers and physicists from around the world who decried the fact that he had abused his position of power, betrayed his responsibilities as an educator, and caused profound damage. It is very powerful that now people have come out to state clearly how unacceptable this type of behaviour is, but it must have been going on with his peers deciding to ignore it.

The recent editorial in Science "Zero tolerance. Period" (Science 30 October 2015: Vol. 350 no. 6260 p. 487) by Bernard Wood, points out that recent research confirms that most sexual misconduct is perpetrated by men who outrank the women they prey on (Clancy et al. PLOS ONE 2014, 9, e102172) and in science most senior professors are male. His editorial is well worth a read and in it he advocates powerful male voices to be heard as the allies of women affected by sexual misconduct. "Sexual harassment in the sciences occurs in many circumstances and settings, but the silence of the past must be replaced by action."

Edinburgh University has a clear [Dignity and Respect Policy](#). The policy states that the University is intent on promoting a positive culture for working and studying in which all members of the University's community treat each other with dignity and respect.

There is a network of Dignity and Respect Advisors, who are available to talk to you should you wish to make contact for information or advice if you feel you are being subjected to harassment or bullying. As an employee you can contact any from the list of 'staff only' Dignity and Respect Advisors, regardless of where you work. If you are a student then the Advice Place has advisors. [See a full list here](#).

## **Headstrong: 52 Women Who Changed Science - and the World, by Rachel Swaby**

### **Book Review by Barbara Stevenson (CGEM)**

Who wrote the first computer program? Alan Turing? Another code-breaker at Bletchley Park? You may be surprised to learn that it was actually Lord Byron's daughter Ada Lovelace and that she did so in 1843. Lovelace translated a set of instructions for Charles Babbage's massive Analytical Engine and described how codes could be created to handle letters and symbols along with numbers. She also theorized a method for the engine to repeat a series of instructions that computer programs still use today.

When we think of women scientists, we can usually come up with Marie Curie, Florence Nightingale and possibly Rosalind Franklin. But did you know that a woman discovered the earth's inner core (Inge Lehmann), a woman discovered nuclear fission (Lise Meitner) and a woman's mathematics underpinned Einstein's Theory of Relativity (Emmy Noether).

Many of the women in "Headstrong" worked against overwhelming prejudice and stigma - not being allowed to graduate from university, working without pay and having to resort to working from institute cupboards. The prevailing Victorian attitude towards female education was voiced by Edward Clark, MD, Professor at Harvard: "I have seen females... graduate from school or college excellent scholars, but with undeveloped ovaries, later they married and were sterile."

As Hertha Ayrton (physicist) said in 1901 "Either a woman is a good scientist or she is not; in any case she should be given opportunities, and her work should be studied from the scientific, not the sex, point of view."

"Headstrong" is a collection of 52 micro-biographies of women who have made a significant contribution to science (regardless of gender) and serves as a short introduction to read further and be inspired.

Suggested further reading: "Ada's Algorithm" by James Essinger, "The Dark Lady of DNA" by Brenda Maddox, "Gertrude Bell, Queen of the Desert" by Georgina Howell



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