



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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### Bronze Award for Medical School

The Athena SWAN Charter 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 through an award scheme. Departments can apply for different levels of award depending on their progress towards gender equality. The results of the November 2013 applications have been [announced](#) and our joint application from the School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences and School of Clinical Sciences at the University of Edinburgh was successful in gaining a Bronze award.

### Gender Equality Survey

In late 2012 the Athena SWAN self-assessment team of our University's Clinical Medical School conducted a gender culture survey of all staff and postgraduate research students (PGR). Of 722 responses, 459 were from females, 233 from males and 22 from individuals who chose not to say. Participants ranged from 63 Professors to 175 members of support staff and 165 PhD students. For more details, see <http://athena-swan.igmm.ed.ac.uk/>. Below, we highlight some of the concerns that have emerged, together with our plans for dealing with them. We also stress the many good points that emerged!

Staff perceptions of their line management were extremely positive. Only 7% (both male and female) did not consider their line manager to be supportive of requests for flexible working. Free text comments highlighted the benefit of flexible working and more formal arrangements such as compressed hours to staff. Over 80% of both males and females agreed that staff and PGR are treated equally on merit regardless of gender, and that meetings and seminars are generally held within core hours. However, significantly fewer females than males agreed that part-time workers are offered the same opportunities as those who work full-time. The responses also highlight the need to increase staff awareness of policies and legislation relevant to gender equality such as flexible working, parental leave, 'keeping in touch' days etc. **ACTION: Information to be provided on Schools' Athena SWAN webpages, in the newsletter, at a series of lunchtime fora for all staff and at PI training courses. We will highlight E&D issues on our webpage.**

Staff perceptions of the workplace culture were extremely positive with over 80% of males and females agreeing that unsupportive language and behaviour are considered unacceptable and over 90% of males and females in agreement that social activities are welcoming to both men and women.

Over 90% of females and 80% of males reported that they have not undertaken any training in gender equality or in understanding unconscious bias during their time at the University. Two respondents explicitly expressed the view that training in gender equality and understanding unconscious bias should be mandatory for managers, and many more hinted at the need for it. **ACTION: Promotion of [Online E & D training](#) and unconscious bias training for all, including students, as recommended by a recent UK Government report. These issues will also be covered at PI training workshops.**

There was uncertainty about whether the Schools take positive action to encourage females to apply for posts where they are underrepresented with 50% of males and females stating that they didn't know if this was the case.

**ACTION:** Text in job adverts has been amended to make this clear.

Both male and female responses to all questions on career development were extremely positive. Over 75% of males and females agreed that they are encouraged to take up career development opportunities and are aware of the range of training opportunities available within the University. There were, however, lots of free text comments about workload, workload, workload - and little reduction in it (if any) for part-time workers.

80% of males but only 64% of females perceive that men and women are equally encouraged to apply for promotion ( $p=0.000002$ ), and 67% of males but only 49% of females believe they clearly understand the promotions process and the criteria ( $p=0.0001$ ). **ACTION:** A series of lunchtime fora on the promotions process has started, and the P&DR form has been amended to prompt a discussion of promotion.

In response to the free text question "What factors do you think hinder you in your job/career?" the overwhelming responses were short term contracts/lack of permanence and a heavy workload.

Responses in the support and encouragement section highlighted areas of good practice such as networking opportunities. However, between 22-28% of males and females disagreed that their School provides them with useful opportunities to be mentored. In response to the free text question "What more could your workplace do to support you in your job/career?" the overwhelming response was the need for mentoring as a source of advice ranging from combining an academic career with having a family to providing support when grants/papers are rejected.

**ACTION:** the mentoring program had only just been launched (piloted in our Schools) at the time of the survey; there has been another round since and almost all people seeking a mentor have been matched. Lunchtime fora will combine specific advice on promotion and so on with networking opportunities.

**There are many more comments and responses detailed on the website, and more information on the data can be found in our [Bronze application](#).**

## Athena SWAN - plan of action

**[Our Athena SWAN application](#) includes an action plan to address the issues identified in the self-reflective analysis of data. Objectives already achieved across the College include:**

- Re-establishment of the College Equality and Diversity committee - met November 2013
- All interview panels to be at least 25% each gender for all academic posts potentially leading to a permanent position
- Inclusion of a statement welcoming applications from women and under represented groups in recruitment adverts
- All decision-making committees to be at least 25% each gender, with members co opted as appropriate, to establish a balance
- Members of promotions panels will undergo Equality and Diversity training
- Modification of Performance and Development Review forms to prompt discussions about promotion and flexible working
- Future training in unconscious bias none exists yet in the University
- Athena SWAN activities continue to be a standing item at School planning and resources meetings

### Key objectives for the future include:

- Train Principal Investigators in managing people
- A task group to examine how we can support, retain and promote women in clinical academia
- Introduction of workload models for non clinical academics to improve transparency and fair distribution of workload
- Embed mentoring
- Hold a series of lunchtime fora to on topics such as family friendly policies, how to get promoted, managing maternity leave, mentoring, making the most of your appraisals, and to provide networking opportunities (details of upcoming events on our website and see below)
- An "INSPIRING WOMEN" conference on 4 JUNE 2014; Dame Sally Davies is keynote speaker. Look out for flyers!
- follow-up survey in December 2014 to provide crucial data for our bid for a Silver award in November 2015

[Our full Action Plan can be found here](#)

## Academic promotions - everything you need to know

Knowing when you are ready for promotion or understanding what you need to achieve to gain promotion can be difficult. This along with a lack of understanding of the University's promotion processes was highlighted through our Gender Equality survey (see article above).

To help improve understanding and encourage applications, Susan McNeill of College HR invited academic colleagues interested in finding out more about promotion to attend a short briefing session entitled 'Academic Promotions - everything you need to know'. Susan used the session to explain the annual timetable for promotions, the paperwork required, Panel membership and the achievements and activities that the Promotions Panel look for at each level. A session was held at each of the College's three main campus locations and all were well attended. As well as the input from Susan the session provided time for questions and discussion. If you want to find out more, look out for additional sessions later this year. These are scheduled to take place ahead of the call for promotion applications in September ([details will be added to our AS website](#)).

## Career progression and support

How do we ensure that biomedical scientists who have proven ability to raise independent funding receive the best support possible to allow them to be competitive for more senior awards? Answering this question was the aim of a working group led by Dr Gillian Gray aided by Prof Adriano Rossi, Dr Sander van den Driesche and Prof Lesley Forrester. The group looked at the support currently offered to Biomedical Science Fellows, as well as at how this support is perceived by the Fellows themselves. Prof Gray presented the findings to the Athena SWAN self-assessment panel.

Although there were some examples of excellent practice (e.g. mentoring by senior academics, access to PhD studentships, association with larger research groups, mock interviews and access to bridging funding), a number of areas that could be improved upon were identified. Recommendations for improvement included the need for: 1) early identification, through the appraisal procedure, of senior post-docs who have the ambition to become future PIs to better prepare them for the transition to fellows; 2) transparent routes to access bridging funds, as well as to guidance & feedback on grant application strategy/content; 3) dedicated support through regular meetings (at least 3 times a year) with a Fellowship Committee consisting of 2-3 individuals.

## IGMM Postdocs discuss career/family balance

At a lunch time seminar titled "Women in Science: Balancing Career and Family" in October 2013, three successful female scientists, Prof Cathy Abbott, Dr Liz Patton and Dr Louise Bicknell, from the Institute of Genetics & Molecular Medicine (all mothers) told the IGMM postdoctoral society about their personal experience. With more than 40 scientists attending, this turned out to be the most popular seminar the PODS had ever organised. Among the subjects discussed were: maternity leave, child care arrangements and flexible working.



**inspiring women**

**Do you believe in the benefits of role models? If so, join the Open Windows team!**

Open Windows is a career-focused initiative funded by the University of Edinburgh to help aspirational women explore their interests, aptitudes and options through exposure to successful women. This initiative is building a supportive network to serve as a platform for women to refine perceptions of 'success', and how to achieve it. Its mission is to raise the profile of female role models, to facilitate direct contact with such women, and to spread the lessons they can share.

**Want to learn more? Join Open Windows LinkedIn group and be part of its network!**

<http://linkd.in/QSPVDr>

**Want to get involved? Please get in touch: [open.windows@ed.ac.uk](mailto:open.windows@ed.ac.uk)**

There will be at least one Open Windows team member attending the upcoming 'Inspiring Women in Academic Medicine and the Medical Sciences' event on 4 June in QMRI - feel free to come and chat with them!



## Upcoming events

### **Friday 9 May 2014 - Conference "Diversity and Medical Careers"**

Spring Conference of the Medical Women's Federation at St. John's Hotel, Birmingham.  
For more information visit: [www.medicalwomensfederation.org.uk](http://www.medicalwomensfederation.org.uk)

### **Thursday 15 May 2014, 12-2pm - Lunchtime forum on Promotions**

Mary Kinross Room, QMRI. No registration required, simply come along. Susan McNeil from HR will give a 30 minute presentation on the promotion process within the university and Karen Chapman will talk about her career. There will then be an opportunity for networking. Please bring your own lunch, tea and coffee will be provided.

### **Wednesday 4 June 2014 - Conference**

#### **"Inspiring women in academic medicine and the medical sciences"**

A 1-day event at the Wellcome Auditorium of The Queen's Medical Research Institute, Little France, University of Edinburgh. This event seeks to provide inspirational role models to encourage young female talent, including undergraduate students, to achieve their potential in academic medicine and the medical and related sciences.

For more information and registration visit: <http://tinyurl.com/o72xwlm>

### **Monday 9 June 2014, 1-2pm - Lunchtime forum on Flexible Working**

Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility seminar room, Western General Hospital. Elspeth Wedgwood from HR will give an overview of flexible working policy within the university. No registration required, simply come along. There will then be an opportunity for networking. Please bring your own lunch, tea and coffee will be provided.

### **Tuesday 10th June 2014 - IAD training course**

#### **"Managing your research group: essential training for PIs"**

Mary Kinross room at QMRI, 9.15 - 4.30 (coffee from 9 - 9.15). Registration required. There will be further training sessions in August, October and late November/early December.

Visit our website <http://athena-swan.igmm.ed.ac.uk> for more information, upcoming events (lunchtime fora, PI training dates) and other useful links.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

<http://athena-swan.igmm.ed.ac.uk>