



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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Why Athena SWAN is necessary in our Schools

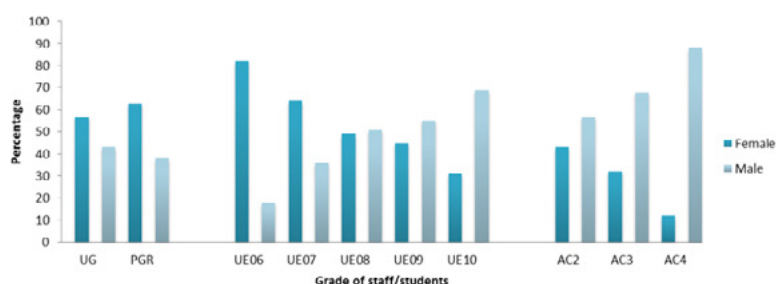
It still appears that career progression for women does not work the same way as it does for men, e.g. the Equality Challenge Unit has just released a [new report](#) on Equality in Higher Education. [Read the Guardian comment:](#) "Equality Challenge Unit figures reveal a dismal picture for female academics with the continued dominance of men in the sector" In this piece we focus on this issue within the University of Edinburgh Medical Schools and discuss what the problem is, what we are doing about it, and how you can help.

What is the problem?

Staff data

The graph below shows the 2012 proportion of males and females from undergraduate (medical student) through PhD/MD students to academic staff, in the University of Edinburgh School of Clinical Sciences (SCS) and the School of Molecular, Genetics and Population Health Sciences (SMGPHS). The right hand side, AC2-AC4 refers to clinical grades, with AC4 being the clinical professors. The drop off in the non-clinical grades has improved between 2010 and 2012, but there have been fewer changes in the clinical grades. We will be reviewing the data for 2013 and 2014 within the next few months and will then be in a position to see any impacts of the Athena SWAN activities, and of recent recruitment to Chancellor's Fellowships, for example.

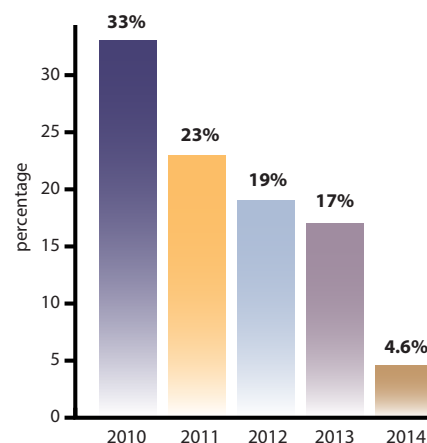
2012 SCS and SMGPHS



Gender breakdown for some major award schemes:

- MRC project grants applicants 29% female, awardees 25% female (2005-2010)
- Wellcome New Investigator awardees 18% female (to 2014)
- Wellcome Senior Investigator awardees 16% female (to 2014)
- ERC Starting grants Life Sciences applicants 33% female, awardees 24% female (2010)
- ERC Advanced grants Life Sciences applicants 13%, awardees 9% (2010)
- RCUK Large grants success rate 38% for males, 24% for females (RCUK: "There is a definite indication that older male applicants are more successful")

Royal Society University Research Fellowship female awardees



Caveats: this information is presented in different ways and for different years depending on the source. The MRC only quote numbers of applications that reach the board after outline stage, and some sources will combine data from life sciences and physical sciences, so can be misleading. Obviously in many cases there are fewer female applicants, so there is not necessarily a bias in the process post-application, but even the lower proportion of female applicants is a concern given the gender make-up of the pool of potential applicants. Why are more females not coming forward? There is clearly scope for more support, mentoring and encouragement.

What are we doing about it?

You can see our Action Plan on the [website](#)

Some of the central actions are: providing training for PIs in how to manage their groups, organising lunchtime meetings for all staff covering issues like promotion and flexible working, and lobbying for gender balance on interview panels and mandatory unconscious bias training for everyone involved in recruitment.

How can you help?

We were delighted to get a Bronze award earlier this year, but to stand any chance of getting Silver in 2015 we need to demonstrate that our policies have had an impact. One way we can do this is to show improved responses in **our follow-up survey this December. Please help by completing it!**

After a long period of lobbying, we now have unconscious bias training available, you can complete an online course [here](#). Thanks to all of you who have already taken it, and especially for all the feedback! There are also face to face unconscious bias workshops happening now, details will be forwarded as soon as they are available.

If you are a PI you will need to complete the workshop on Managing Your Research Group, so look out for emails on this. We've had a great response so far.

Last but not least, do get in touch with any ideas for lunchtime sessions or anything else you think we should be doing. We love to receive your feedback. ■ **Cathy Abbott** (Convener of the Athena SWAN self-assessment panel for SMGPHS)

The Aurora Leadership Programme

This is an excerpt from a longer piece by Mohini Gray (a clinical academic in CIR) which is available in full on our [Athena SWAN website](#).

I was privileged to be nominated (by my Head of College) to attend the Aurora Leadership Programme. Aurora is the name of the Roman goddess of the dawn who in myth reinvented herself each morning. I think a lot of women feel that they have to reinvent themselves several times a day passing from roles such as mother to clinician to teacher to supervisor and mentor and back again to mother and home-maker before the day is done. This leaves little time for considering their role as 'Leaders'. Indeed the Aurora programme came about following Professor Louise Morley's stimulus paper that showed that there were fewer women in the most senior positions in higher education than ten years ago (January 2013).

Clearly something has been going wrong and this is not helped by the dearth of female leaders that can act as role models for younger women to aspire to being. The women-only Aurora programme was intended to develop women with the potential for leadership, not just those who have already shown a talent for it and was aimed at both academic and professional service staff

We heard inspirational talks from many women in various professions; what they all espoused was to have a plan to work hard, to network and to just get out there and do it. It was clear that too often women were waiting to be asked rather than putting themselves forward. Women also suffered from feeling they needed to be sure they could, 'tick every box' before they risked taking on a leadership role, something our male colleagues seem to have less reticence about. It was good to step outside my own university and get a clearer perspective, and I learnt some valuable lessons. The course gave me the time to think about leadership; it's an acquired skill and women have a lot to offer.

I believe women should be putting themselves forward for this programme as soon as possible. They shouldn't wait to be asked or wait until they think they deserve a go! The Aurora champions in Edinburgh University are, Jane Norman, Vice Principal, Equality and Diversity and Kirsty Robertson, Senior Human Resources, Organisational Development Partner, Learning and Development. ■ **Mohini Gray**

Inspiring Women Conference

On June 4th this year we held an “Inspiring Women in Science” day at QMRI. The lecture theatre was packed and the talks superb. We heard from, amongst others, Dame Sally Davies (top left) and Professor Nancy Hopkins (bottom centre), who told us that of the many similar events she has attended, this was the best, and the level of understanding of the issues and the enthusiasm with which they were being tackled was unparalleled. ■



Vitae Conferences

Vitae Part-time Researcher Conference, Dundee August 21st 2014

This event was designed for part-time doctoral candidates or research staff registered with a university in Scotland or Northern Ireland. The 5th annual conference for part-time researchers had approximately 80 delegates and comprised a programme of workshops and sessions relating to training and development, delivered by specialist HEI staff tailored to part-time researcher needs. It included plenary sessions, workshops covering essential aspects of being a part-time researcher, and current hot topics.

Dr Emma Compton-Daw (St Andrews University) and Dr Patrick Hadoke (University of Edinburgh), in their capacity as current co-chairs of the UK Research Staff Association (UKRSA) presented a workshop entitled “Research Staff Associations; What? Why? Where?” as part of the conference. This focussed on support structures for research staff and how these could be applied to PT staff. The workshop included discussion of these issues with attendees pursuing their part-time research in a number of different settings.

Vitae Research Staff Conference, Bristol November 13th 2014

This 6th annual Vitae Research Staff conference, entitled “Recognition and Value”, was based on Principle 2 of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers which states that “Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation’s human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.” Dr Hadoke spoke at the plenary session. The conference attracted 100 delegates and included keynote addresses from Dr Sophia Karagiannis, King’s College London (Taking control of your career) and Dr Nessa Carey, International Director at PraxisUnico (Careers – I’ve had a few). ■ **Patrick Hadoke**

Postdoc Seminar: “Women in Science”

In September the IGMM Postdoctoral Society held a second lunch time meeting on “Women in Science”, this time with the theme “Careers in Science”. A similar meeting themed “Balancing Careers & Family” had been a great success last year, and once again the meeting was very well attended.

Three inspirational women with very different career paths informed and entertained the audience whilst discussing how their careers had led them to this point. Caroline Hayward (PI in QTL identification), Anne Wheeler (the new head of the IGMM microscopy unit), and Noor Gammoh (a recently appointed Chancellor’s Fellow) are proof that a successful career does not have to follow a specific path, however they all emphasised that success does depend on ambition and enthusiasm.

Following an interesting discussion on the course of their individual careers, the floor opened up for general discussion on the barriers faced by both women and men in scientific careers. Discussion themes included working hours and how to make better use of the flexibility that science offers. Moving countries was also discussed, with many attendees frustrated with the view that staying in one place is damaging to the CV, without consideration for commitments or simply enjoying living in a place. It was comforting to realise that many people in the room had similar views, although maybe if these views were aired more often things might change. [Prof Margaret Frame spoke at the Inspiring Women in Science conference (see above) about having “broken many rules”, particularly in terms of not having worked abroad, showing that it is possible to have a very successful career without moving too much, Ed]

Overall, this was a very interesting discussion with the take home message that there is no ‘right’ way to follow a career in science, so long as you have the drive to succeed. ■ **Sarah Cox**

The Athena SWAN self-assessment panel

We would like to thank the following people for their work on the Athena SWAN self-assessment panel, who have now stepped down: Dr Alex Adams, Dr Stuart Falconer, Dr Kirsteen Goodman, Dr Emily Gwyer Findlay, Dr Sharon Hannah, Dr Rachel Thomas, Dr Maria Valdez-Hernandez and Dr Patricia Yeyati.

We would like to welcome the following new members: Prof Mark Arends, Ms Sarah Cox, Dr Donald Davidson, Ms Anna Girling, Prof Nick Hastie, Dr Martyn Pickersgill, Mrs Vivien Smith and Dr Sonja Vermeren.

Joining the panel

In March 2012 I received an email about joining the Athena SWAN self-assessment panel for a Bronze Award bid from our school. I had never heard of Athena SWAN before, but learnt that it is a 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 through an award scheme. As a male postdoctoral scientist I did not have first-hand experience of how being a woman affects one’s career prospective, although at the time I did work as the only man in a lab with a dozen or so female colleagues. It had always struck me as odd that there should be any differences at all; and feel that anyone who wants to progress (to the top or as far as they wish to) should get the opportunity to do so, irrespective of gender. So I decided to join the panel, part out of curiosity to understand the reasons for the existing disparity, and part because I want to help change things for the better. Change is slow, but we have achieved things and will continue to make a positive impact. I’ve been happy to be involved with this worthwhile cause, and would encourage others who would like to get involved to come forward. ■ **Martin Reijns** (Athena SWAN committee communications manager)

Athena SWAN on twitter

If you want to follow us on twitter we are [@UofEAthenaSWAN](https://twitter.com/UofEAthenaSWAN). The account was set up by Stuart Falconer, a surgeon on the original SAT, and is now run by Cathy Abbott. We tweet many useful links, engage with the fantastic [#SheBlindedMeWithScience](https://twitter.com/SheBlindedMeWithScience) initiative and interact with other twitter users interested in women in STEMM. We are even being followed by Guardian Higher Ed! If you don’t want to use Twitter you can see the Twitter feed on [our website](#) (scroll down to the bottom).

Edinburgh scientist visits parliament

In this section, we highlight one specific achievement by a member of one of our Schools. You are welcome to send suggestions to us for the next newsletter.


Established by Dr Eric Wharton in 1997 'SET for Britain' is a highly prestigious poster competition for early career researchers in the House of Commons, judged by professional and academic experts. Earlier this year Erin Greaves from the MRC Centre for Reproductive Health at Queen's Medical Research Institute was selected from hundreds of abstracts to present her research on how we can find new ways to treat pain associated with the distressing reproductive disorder, endometriosis. On presenting her science in Parliament in March, she said:

"1 in 10 women of reproductive age have endometriosis; it is as common as asthma or diabetes but it can take up to 8 years to diagnose and there is an unmet clinical need for better treatments with fewer side effects. I applied for SET for Britain to have my research seen by a wider audience and to raise awareness for endometriosis with MPs who can influence policy, and guide how scientific funding is allocated in the UK. This was a fantastic opportunity, which I thoroughly enjoyed! I would definitely encourage other early career researchers to take part in this exciting competition." ■ **Erin Greaves**

Telegraph & Argus

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Dr Erin Greaves bids to end the pain

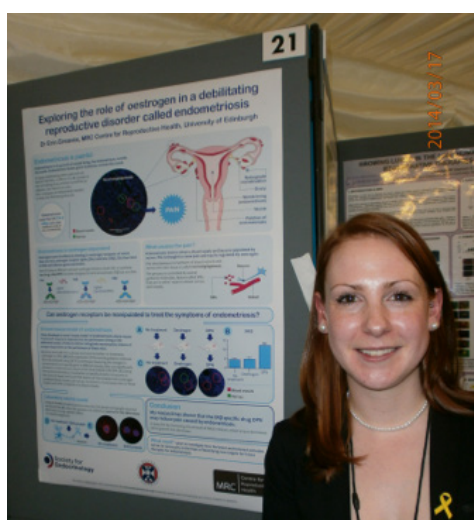
By Telegraph & Argus

10:00am Wednesday 12th March 2014 in News

A Bradford scientist short-listed from hundreds of others will tell politicians and experts in London next week of her work treating pain from the reproductive disorder endometriosis.



Dr Erin Greaves bids to end the pain



Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship

The Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship scheme provides funding for outstanding, early-career scientists in the UK who require a flexible working pattern due to personal circumstances such as parenting or caring responsibilities or health issues. This scheme has recently opened and is keen to promote this across the scientific community as the scheme provides support for those who require flexible working patterns. The Royal Society's Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship scheme is now open for applications (closing date 12 Jan 2015).

To find out more information, including case studies about current holders, [click here](#) ■



UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2014 - Gender Equality Survey

This month you will receive an email asking you to fill out our follow-up survey on Gender Equality to hear your views on this. It is essential that as many of you complete this survey as possible, as it is only with your help and by collecting this data that we can identify problems and issues to tackle, as well as those areas where we have made a change for the better.

Tuesday 20th January 2015 - Lunchtime forum

“The P&DR process – a practical guide”

ECRC Seminar room, Western General Hospital 12.00 – 1.00pm

Presented by Elspeth Wedgwood from HR. No registration required. Tea & coffee provided.

Thursday 12th February 2015 - IAD training course

“Managing your research group: essential training for PIs”

At Charles Stewart House, Chamber Street, 9.00am – 4.30pm.

This is a one day course for PIs on managing people in their research groups, covering the following issues: equality and diversity, recruitment, appraisals, flexible working/maternity leave and difficult conversations. This will become a compulsory course for anyone hiring people on grants, from next year, and will need to be renewed every 5 years in the same way as the PhD supervisor briefings. Registration required; soon bookable through MyEd. Other courses will take place on 26th February, 25th March, 28th April & 26th May 2015

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT [UPCOMING EVENTS](#) ON OUR WEBSITE

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