

Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team

26 May 2021 via Zoom

MINUTES

Present: Adrienne McFarland (Co-chair AMcF), Julie Sanders (JS), Malasree Home (MH), Nadia Ahmed (NA), Chris Stanley (CS), Vi Parker (VP), Mel Leitch (ML), Stacy Gillis (SG), Freya Douglas Oloyede (FDO), Meenakshi Swamy (MS), Carolyn Laws (CL).

Apologies: Judith Rankin (Co-chair JR), Gareth Longstaff (GL), Kate Chedgzoy (KC), Amy Reeve (AR), Sharron Kuznesof (SK), Paul Britton (PB), Sarah Anderson (SA).

Item	Notes/Actions	Action by/ Deadline
1	Welcome & apologies AMcF welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies: As noted above.	
2	Minutes of the Last Meeting 22 April 2021 Minutes were agreed. Points raised: Events and impact log: MH updated that it will feature in the next edition of the EDI newsletter. FDO now has access to the log to use for Athena Swan purposes. Menopause policy: Following further consultation, this is almost ready. Interviews are ongoing for the new colleague wellbeing team and staff should be in place over the summer. This policy will be picked up in the new academic year by that team. External advisory group: AMcF updated that AMcF, JR and FDO had discussed this further and suggested that as the workstreams are just commencing, it is too early to identify what the role of the external advisors will be. FDO updated that the workstream Chairs and Co-Chairs have been asked to consider for which actions/themes they would benefit from external expertise as part of their work over the coming months. We agreed to bring this topic back to AS SAT in a few months' time.	
3	Update on the Athena Swan charter (FDO) Following an Independent review of the Athena Swan charter that reported in spring 2020, Advance HE (AHE) has been undertaking a	

	<p>transformation process, led by the Athena Swan Governance Committee, which is now almost complete.</p> <p>Key actions already implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Charter principles are already available. • All awards extended to 5 years. • The requirement for institutions to hold departmental silver or gold awards before applying for an institutional silver or gold award is abolished. • Work to professionalise the peer review process. New chairs and panellists have been appointed. <p>The 'new way of doing Athena Swan' will be launched at the end of June.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New high-level criteria and underpinning expectations for each award level. • New assessment approach, which is more developmental. • New application materials and guidance. • New culture survey for academic departments. Set of 7 'core' questions' from the survey will be mandatory for academic department applicants. • An online application process and data tool are coming later. • Recruitment of new Athena Swan roles within AHE is ongoing. • AHE is offering meetings / events to help institutions with new requirements. <p>JS asked about the data tool and whether it will include data relevant to REC, as well as the broader question of any future bringing together of Athena Swan and REC. FDO mentioned that the review of the REC published in March 2021 had recommended that the data tool also provides REC data, so this will be considered as part of the upcoming transformation process for the REC. The REC review findings did not support the combining of Athena Swan and REC at this point in time.</p>	
4	<p>Action plan and workstreams update (FDO)</p> <p>The workstream Chairs and Co-Chairs have been appointed. A meeting was held on 24 May to agree on roles, responsibilities and timelines. Key roles include driving implementation of the action plan, evolving the action plan over time, monitoring and reporting on progress. A workstream tracker has been created and Chairs will input a quarterly progress update and RAG status, note any evolution of actions and timelines.</p> <p>Workstream Chairs and Co-Chairs will meet again on 6 July to agree on the approach to recruiting other members. This will include a combination of inviting specific individuals or representative from teams for actions relating to their work or knowledge/expertise, and a wider call for members for some of the workstreams, with clear guidelines on what we are looking for.</p>	

	<p>The importance of the link between the workstreams and USAT was noted. FDO proposed that Chairs attend on rotating basis to share progress and discuss any challenges in their workstream. We will invite workstream Chairs to attend USAT meetings for AY21/22 once they are scheduled.</p> <p>Additionally, if a cross-cutting theme emerges, it will be brought to the USAT.</p> <p>In spring 2022 there will be a review of progress across the plan and a short report to the USAT.</p>	FDO
5	<p>Beaconing - themed discussion (FDO)</p> <p>NU has aspirations to move towards a gold award, which requires being a beacon for gender equality.</p> <p>Being a beacon is about being a leader on gender equality. It is both showing “significant and sustained progression and achievement” in gender equality, and about sharing learning and championing gender equality externally in the HE sector and beyond – at conferences, in presentations, workshops, articles, blogs, publications, other stakeholder engagement work. In our Action Plan, we commit to do 8 beaconing activities per year.</p> <p>FDO asked how we can identify beaconing activities and ensure we capture them for our submission.</p> <p>There was discussion about what the definition of a beaconing activity is. Advance HE guidance on this is limited, but gold departmental awards can provide examples. It is also for NU to create its own definition for our context.</p> <p>ML suggested a definition or checklist for what a beacon activity is.</p> <p>CL suggested University communications to raise awareness of what beaconing activity is.</p> <p>MH recommended that capturing impact of the activity will be important, including the scope and scale of involvement.</p> <p>VP suggested we think about how we measure impact of these activities more deeply, beyond surveys of what people learn.</p> <p>MH suggested we consider beaconing activities beyond gender – thinking of other protected characteristics, and other factors e.g. part-time working. This will also be beneficial for REC.</p> <p>JS suggested we consider our regional context and our work with the local community as part of this.</p>	

	It was agreed that a definition and plan for communications about and capturing of beaconing activity should be developed and brought back to the first AY 21/22 meeting of the USAT.	FDO
6	<p>July meeting (AMcF)</p> <p>AMcF proposed that the July USAT meeting be used to provide an educational training session regarding the new Athena Swan requirements and the implications for NU, a reminder of NU's history and current status with Athena Swan and the role and responsibilities of the USAT.</p> <p>The group agreed to this proposal.</p> <p>AMcF noted that members of the Tackling Structural Inequalities group from the Transformational Leadership Programme may also attend.</p>	
7	<p>Update from NU Women (SG)</p> <p>The steering group had recently met. The issue of workload allocation for PS colleagues had been discussed.</p> <p>A 10 minutes film on what it is like to be a woman working at Newcastle University and a zine will be launched at the end of June.</p> <p>The NU Women annual survey will be circulated on 1st June as well as a call for new steering group members.</p> <p>The interns have created a handover document to share with the other EDI staff networks.</p> <p>SG asked if NU Women should be planning next year's events as virtual or in person and whether there was any guidance on this. JS shared that the Insights Team have opted for virtual meetings for semester 1, with a blended offer from spring 2022 to enable planning.</p> <p>The issue of some colleagues not having access to email or computers and accessibility of events was discussed. JS suggested spaces on campus could be used to provide access e.g. clusters.</p>	
8	<p>AOB</p> <p>No AOB was raised.</p>	
	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 28 July 2021, 14.00 – 15.30 via Zoom.</p>	