

Athena Swan Bronze application form for universities

Applicant information

Name of university	School of Biological Sciences, University of Cambridge
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Level of previous award	N/A
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Appendix 2: Data tables*	
Appendix 3: Glossary*	
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*These sections and appendices should not contain any commentary contributing to the overall word limit

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Section 1: An overview of the School and its approach to gender equality

1. Letter of endorsement from the head of the department



Professor A Philpott

*Head of the School of the Biological Sciences,
Professor of Cancer and Developmental Biology
at The Cambridge Stem Cell Institute*

Dear Athena Swan Team,

This Bronze Athena Swan Charter application has my wholehearted and enthusiastic support. I am grateful to the hard work of many people who have diligently contributed their time and effort to this hugely important piece of work.

As the Head of School, I am steadfast in my commitment to provide a fully supportive and inclusive working environment for all staff. I believe Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are keystones of this enterprise. While my personal experiences as a woman with an academic career starting in the 1980s help to inform my approach, I find listening to staff members across the School to be crucial in understanding how we can make further progress. It has been gratifying to work with dedicated leaders in the School (Heads of Departments and the School Senior Leadership Team) who show a genuine desire to embed the Charter principles in the School. With this application, we are introducing a new role for the School in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activities, which are only made possible by the remarkable people in our School at all levels and across all Departments.

The gender equity work we strive to achieve is central to our aspiration to create a positive culture for all, and in particular women. There are high profile issues related to gender and we believe that how we approach them can act as a bellwether for the School. These issues include attracting and appointing more women academics, supporting their promotion and appointment to leadership positions, supporting our predominantly female academic-related staff, ensuring our students achieve irrespective of their gender, improving the career progression of women post-doctoral researchers and research fellows, and supporting those with caring responsibilities.

I prioritise EDI in my personal leadership practice through mutual respect, honest conversation, and open communication. When a problem does arise especially with regards to bullying and workplace harassment (and these do unfortunately happen despite all out good work in this area), I always try to lead from the front. Having seen and experienced unacceptable behaviour as a junior academic, I know how powerful a message it sends when senior leaders confront problems directly.

As the Chair of the School Council, our governing body, I am committed, as undoubtedly are all members of Council, to supporting the allocation of financial and staffing resources to deliver the action plan below.

I confirm that the information presented in the application (including qualitative and quantitative data) is an honest, accurate and true representation of the Departments and the School.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Philpott'.

Professor Anna Philpott,
Head of the School of the Biological Sciences

2. Description of the School and its context

The research and teaching carried out in the School of the Biological Sciences (hereafter referred to as “the School”) is dynamic and multidisciplinary, covering the wide range of life on the planet. The School strives to contribute to global strategic priorities, including human health and therapeutics, improving agriculture practice, protecting biodiversity, and resolving the ongoing carbon crisis. We pursue these challenges through fundamental research carried out by a diverse and passionate staff.

We believe that gender equality and inclusion are essential to all School endeavours. The School has been engaging with issues of gender equality over many years, with all our component departments holding Athena Swan awards, two at Silver. However, a unified approach, with a School-wide application will also allow us to learn from the experiences of all component departments, target the allocation of resources, and communicate freely to address important issues facing our students and staff.

The School has a history of extraordinary women and we are fortunate to have many who currently act as role models, including Professor Christine Holt who was awarded the Brain Prize 2023 (world’s largest award for outstanding contributions to neuroscience); Professor Beverley Glover who received the 2022 Student-Led Teaching Award for her Lectures; and Professor Anne Willis, Director of the Medical Research Council Toxicology Unit, who was awarded an OBE for services to biomedical sciences and supporting the careers of women scientists. Led by our Head of School Professor Anna Philpott (2019–2027), we are committed to being an inclusive and enjoyable place to work and learn.



Priority: Support women at key career transition points including recruitment, progression and retention.

The School of Biological Sciences is one of six within the University and consists of 15 Departments and Institutes (Figure 1), located in central Cambridge and the Biomedical Campus at Addenbrookes Hospital. At the start of 2023, the School comprised 1,883 members of staff (56% Women (W):44% Men (M)) and 2,814 students (61%W). Each department/institute is run independently, with a Head of Department (HoD), deputies and management structure. Although devolved, departments/institutes work within the governance, strategy, and resource planning from the Council of the School, led by the School Senior Leadership team and supported by the School Office. Oversight of the Botanic Garden, the Herbarium and the Museum of Zoology falls to the School through the Departments of Plant Sciences and Zoology, respectively.

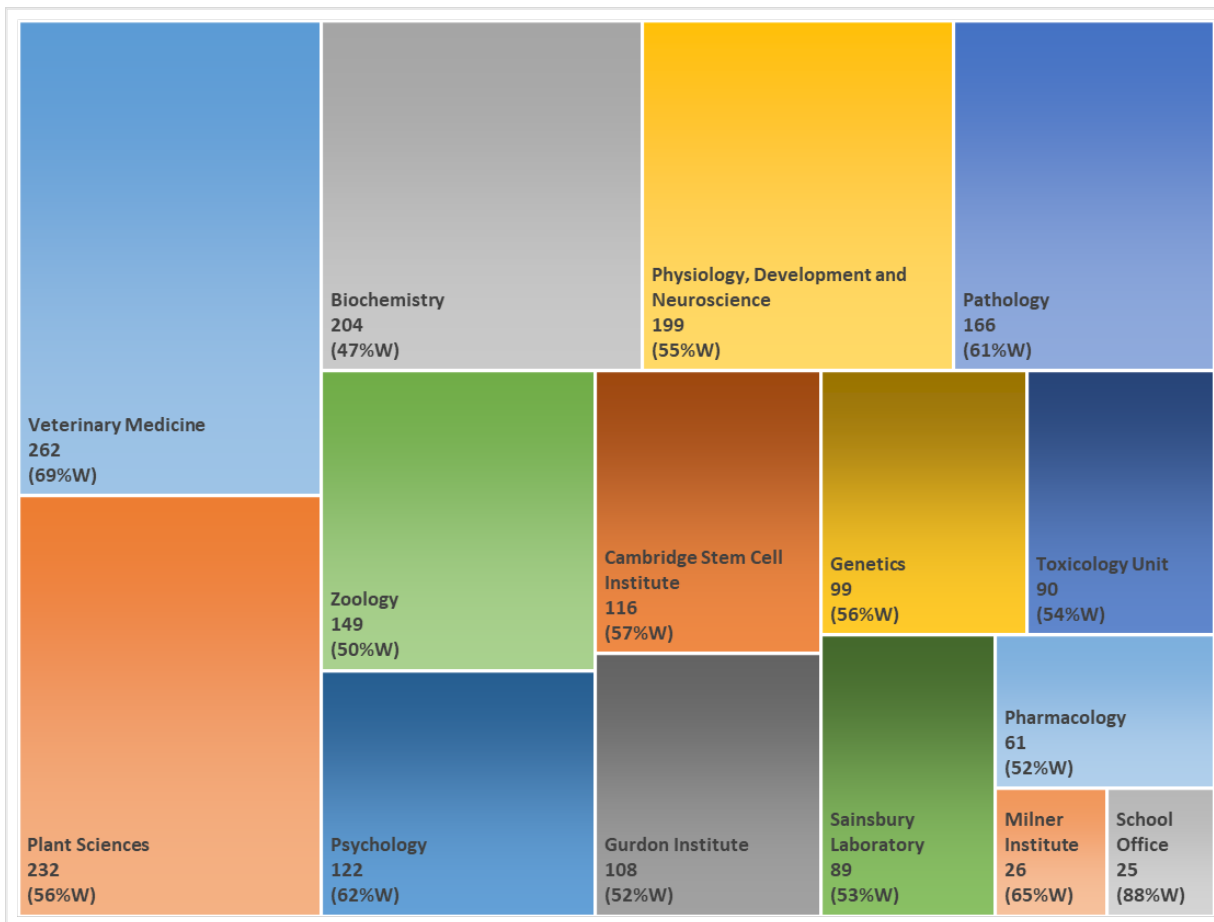


Figure 1: Department and Institute sizes by staff numbers

Our 2022 Staff Culture Survey (71% completion rate; 52%W:35%M) highlighted that: most staff agreed that they were valued and belong at work (76%W:80%M); there was the ability to work flexibly to maintain a good work life balance (81%W:86%M); and that people at work care about them (68%W:70%M). While these are encouraging numbers, we are determined to make all feel appreciated; to this end, we identified key gender differences around work-life balance questions that we aim to resolve through our action plan.

The Council is the governing body of the School, which meets six times a year, and is responsible for strategic planning, funding, and resource allocation. The Council comprises the Heads of Departments, Deputy Heads of School, Directors of the Research Institutes, the Chair of the Faculty Board, co-opted members, as well as post-doc and student representatives. In 2022-23 the Council was 54% women. We believe that the broad membership of Council, and all committees in the School, allows for open discussions, collaborative leadership and transparency of decision making.

The School has teaching responsibilities across four courses: Natural Sciences; Pre-Clinical Medical Sciences; Veterinary Medicine; and Psychological and Behavioural Sciences. Based on career service data, importantly,

after degree completion, the median salary for both undergraduate and postgraduate students is very similar for men and women.

“Interacting with amazing women professors, they actually knew who I was, made me think, for the first time, that I could achieve something great. Not that I will, but I had never even considered that before.”
Undergraduate woman, Natural Sciences

“Being treated as an equal, even when I was just starting my PhD, gave me the confidence I needed having come from an unconventional, shall we say, background. It was surprising that PIs would ask for my opinion – let alone listen to my suggestions!” *Postgraduate man*

Despite positive feedback from students, we are committed to supporting our undergraduate and postgraduate members, especially women and intersectional students (gender, sexual orientation, race, disability), while they study in the School.

3. Governance and recognition of EDI work

Historically (pre-2020), individual departments in the School operated in a mostly autonomous way, with local practices establishing how a department was organised, led and supported, as well as the overall culture. While this worked well locally, there have been minimal mechanisms to share best practice or develop initiatives to mitigate common issues across the school.

Working environments, both formal and informal, were slightly different depending on the department/institute in the School (e.g., a variance of 16% in agreement across departments for 'I feel like I belong at work' in the culture survey). This meant that an equivalent member of staff could be presented with different opportunities or challenges depending on their individual department. The same inequality of experience could be felt by undergraduates and postgraduates in different departments (e.g., a variance of <25% in feedback on some teaching surveys across departments). Despite all departments/institutes holding Athena Swan awards, how individual issues were dealt with also varied, depending on the leadership and processes within a department. This variation also impacted staff professional development opportunities and dissemination of University policies. In early 2020, a global review of the School's landscape, including EDI, began following appointment of a new Head of School and her installation of three deputies and a director – together forming the Senior Leadership Team (2W:3M).

Emerging from the pandemic in 2022, it was clear that a new joined-up strategy for the School was desirable and, in fact, possible. By exploiting economies of scale and equitable sharing of resources, lasting improvements to the School seemed possible. Importantly, the School is building on solid ground with the

2022 Staff Culture Survey data showing three quarters of respondents 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with questions related to 'belonging and inclusion' (73%W:77%M).

A School-level Athena Swan application became a natural step forward to achieve our academic, research, and cultural goals. We know building an inclusive work environment will take sustained enthusiasm, clear communion, and objective analysis. Addressing EDI culture will remain firmly part of a departments'/institutes' responsibility, but we feel it can be enhanced by an active School level group helping to feed forward best practice, rollout large-scale initiatives, and support departments who might be struggling. Departmental representatives on the School EDI Committee will be expected to report back to their Hod and at staff meetings. We are encouraged that this a realistic aim as other School-led initiatives have already proved successful (further details below).

The School has thus far focused resources on two principal areas: research culture and EDI more generally. While there is often overlap, the former is to consider the overall working atmosphere in the School and seeks to ensure positive interactions between all members, while the latter is specifically working to improve the representation and the experiences of women and others with protected characteristics. For both research culture and EDI, the School has (1) hired a new facilitator; (2) appointed academic leads; and (3) selected departmental Champions. The Champions meet six times a year to discuss ongoing issues, plan events, and assess progress. Importantly, all Champions are also members of their local departmental EDI committees, which will facilitate two-way communication. (Note: we have chosen to reduce the use of acronyms in this application, outside of common ones such as EDI (see action 18).

The School works closely with the University EDI team, and our members play an active role in formulating new University-wide policies. Recent initiatives include the redesigned Dignity at Work Policy (launched July 2023) for all staff members of the University, Reach Out Cambridge for improving awareness of the mental health support services available to students, and work to eliminate the awarding gaps in student achievement.

As the School works to improve in our working and learning environments, we are embedding robust mechanisms for the recognition of EDI contributions (e.g., in the Academic Promotion and Professorial Pay Raise processes), distribution of work (through a new transparent workload model), and allocation of resources from the Council (centralised and clear procedure). At the core of this mission will be a new School-wide EDI Committee.



Priority: Build School-wide infrastructure for the promotion of Athena Swan Charter principles and wider EDI strategy

4. Development, evaluation, and effectiveness of School policies

All committees in the School and departments/institutes have EDI as a standing agenda item. This offers members regular opportunities to discuss any concerns or highlight positives, as well as maintaining high visibility of EDI.

A recent example of this successfully leading to positive action is from the ongoing Undergraduate Curriculum Reviews in the Natural Sciences and Medical and Vet course. One of the main recommendations from the first phase of the reviews is to 'improve EDI in all aspects of the course, its delivery and its assessment'. This recommendation includes the following actions: using course content to showcase diversity in science, e.g., by highlighting the contribution of women scientists and researchers who come from under-represented backgrounds; reviewing all course content to ensure diverse examples are provided; investigating awarding gaps (gender, race and disability) and proposing actions to reduce them; monitoring the student workload and its impact on wellbeing.



Priority: Support the wellbeing of our students

In addition, the School plans to train EDI Champions on the University's Equality Impact Assessment process to enable them to act as Ambassadors, advising departments on how any new policies may impact EDI issues.



Action 14: Train EDI Champions on the University's Equality Impact Assessment process to allow them to act as Ambassadors and to advise departments on how to evaluate diversity and inclusion impacts on decisions and policies.



Action 32: All new School initiatives and policies will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment.

It is worth noting that the decentralised nature of the University facilitates independent policy and process changes at the School level. We have already successfully implemented progressive policies that are known to have a positive impact for women, including the Fellows' Research Framework; student and staff workload management; and undergraduate diversified assessment: all three of these are being explored by the University for wider application.

Essential to the long-term success of any policy will be establishing systems that accurately evaluate their effectiveness. We are working closely with experts in cultural transformation in the University as well as consulting with other Schools to design and implement the best solution to this challenge.



Priority: Improve data collection, analysis, and storage to inform gender equality initiatives and action planning

We are fortunate to work with a talented and devoted group of University EDI team members who have achieved a University Athena Swan Silver Award and a Race Equality Charter Bronze Award. Currently, the School Human Resources team acts as a conduit for the propagation of University policies. This is carried out in conjunction with the Department Administrators and Teaching Officers, all of whom have regular meetings with members of the Senior Leadership Team. Future roll-out of relevant University policies will also be supported by the School EDI committee.

5. Athena Swan self-assessment process

Our ambition to bring the School together with a unified Athena Swan application began in September 2022 with the formation of Self-Assessment Team (SAT) (54%W) and Steering Group (66%W). In addition to the Senior Leadership Team of the School being fully present in this structure, we were encouraged by the enthusiastic volunteers from all staff groups. Care was taken to ensure that people experiencing intersectional inequalities were given the opportunity to join the Self-Assessment Team.

"Universities are the primary learning and teaching organisations in our society and as members of the University of Cambridge, we are in an ideal position to make outsized societal impact through bold and innovative solutions to disparities in equality and diversity in our own backyard. I am glad to be a part of the School's Athena application team where strategies addressing these disparities will be translated into action." Man, Self-Assessment Team

Name	Athena Swan Role	Professional Role	Department
Julian Hibberd	SG: Chair	Professor and Head of Department	Plant Sciences
Tim Weil	SG SAT: Co-Chair	Professor Deputy Head of School (Undergraduate Strategy)	Zoology
Mathew Van de Pette	SG SAT: Co-Chair	Programme Leader (Track) SBS Academic Lead for EDI	MRC Toxicology Unit
Anna Philpott	SG	Professor Head of the School of the Biological Sciences	Cambridge Stem Cell Institute
Rachel Bailey	SG SAT	SBS Facilitator for EDI and WP	School Office
Gina Warren	SG SAT	University Equality and Diversity Consultant	HR
Milly Bodfish	SG SAT	School Secretary	School Office
Tara O'Brien	SG SAT	Lead HR Business Partner (SBS)	HR
Lucy Matthews	SG SAT	School Business and Operations Manager	School Office
Emma Gant	SAT	HR Business Partner (SBS)	HR
Natalie Wills	SAT	HR Adviser (SBS)	HR
Matthias Landgraf	SAT	Deputy Head of School (Postgraduate Strategy) Wellcome Trust Investigator	Zoology
Jon Simons	SAT	Professor Deputy Head of School (Research Strategy)	Psychology
Andrew Blagborough	SAT	Professor SBS Academic Lead for WP	Pathology
Paula Bibby	SAT	Research Culture and Fellowship Framework Facilitator	School Office
Julian Parkhill	SAT	Professor Chair Dept. EDI Committee	Veterinary Medicine
Lynn Dicks	SAT	Professor Chair Dept. EDI Committee	Zoology
Alexander (Xander) Jones	SAT	Research Group Leader	Sainsbury Laboratory
Anna-Maria Papameletiou	SAT	Undergraduate Student Rep (4th year)	Genetics
Yin Yuan	SAT	PhD student	Physiology, Development and Neuroscience
Maria Zacharopoulou	SAT	Oppenheimer Research Fellow Junior Research Fellow (Lucy Cavendish College)	Pharmacology
Sally Ward	SAT	Research Lab Manager EDI Lead	Sainsbury Laboratory

Natalie Walls	SAT	Public Engagement Coordinator	Gurdon Institute
Sebastian Eves-van den Akker	SAT	BBSRC David Phillips Fellow	Plant Sciences
Marc de la Roche	SAT	Group Leader Chair Dept. EDI Committee	Biochemistry
Paul Bays	SAT	Professor	Psychology
Amy Milton	SAT	Professor Research Theme Lead for Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour	Psychology
Alexandre Almeida	SAT	MRC Career Development Fellow	Veterinary Medicine

Figure 2: Self-Assessment Team and Steering Group Membership

The SAT met monthly from 9/2022 to 1/2023, and fortnightly since then. To maximise engagement and to support all personal situations, meetings were held during family friendly dates and times and either hybrid or fully online. The SAT was responsible for the analysis of the Culture Survey (Appendix 1) and mandatory data preparation (Appendix 2). The Steering Group, providing guidance, met six times a year and was responsible for reporting progress to the Council for oversight.

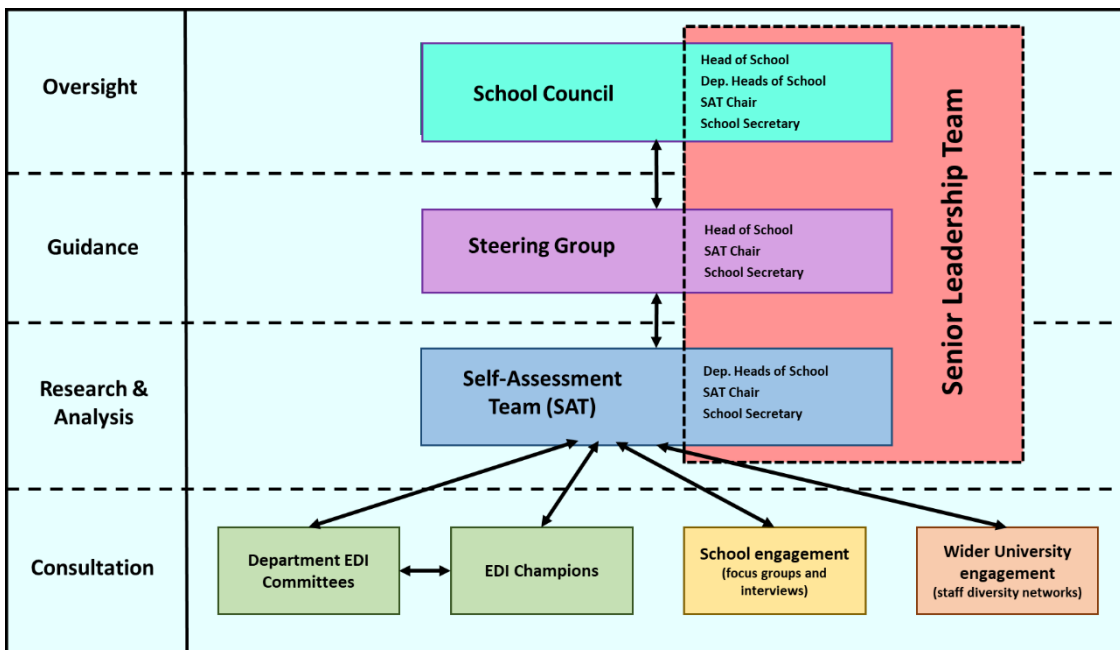


Figure 3. Self-Assessment Process Structure

To enable institutional memory and allow opportunities for new membership, a modified version of the SAT will form the new School EDI Committee. This group will act to enhance and support the progress of the

Action Plan across the School, feedback directly to Council, and cyclically expand to lead future Athena Swan applications.

The School EDI Committee will have diverse membership that seeks to cover all protected characteristics and include undergraduate and postgraduate members. It is our intention that members of this committee (for larger departments/institutes, one research/academic and one professional staff) will also be part of their home department's EDI committee to grow communication and collaboration. However, we are conscious of overburdening committee members and will seek to find the correct balance. We will also work proactively with departments to ensure that EDI workload recognition applies to all staff groups going forward. We plan to start with two-year terms for department representatives, with the succession process laid out in the committee's terms of reference and managed by the School Facilitator. Overall, we strive to build a system that allows for smooth communication, open dialogue, and engages with all members of the School.

To further identify and address intersectionality, the School EDI Committee will consult with the University of Cambridge Race Equality Network, the Disabled Staff Network, the LGBTQ+ Staff Network, the Women's Staff Network, and the Supporting Parents and Carers at Cambridge Network and relevant student/education bodies. (More detail in Section 2.)



Action 12: Establish a representative School EDI Committee with reporting channels to the Council and with clear strategic aims and terms of reference. The committee will measure and assess progress of the action plan during each 5-year Athena Swan cycle, with powers to ensure accountability at the departmental level. The committee will have responsibility for a £10,000/year budget.



Action 13: Build strong and meaningful connections between the School EDI Committee and the University EDI team.

Staff data were obtained from the University data system (12/2022) and student data from the University student data system (12/2022). As part of the self-assessment process, the School carried out two voluntary and anonymous surveys for all members. The Staff Culture Survey (7/2022-10/2022) was well received with an encouraging completion rate of 71% across the School. The Student Culture Survey (11/2022-12-2022) received less enthusiasm and had a disappointing completion rate (15%). Despite our best efforts, student feedback has been scarce for many years, a challenge that is University-wide. Cambridge has had very low

National Student Survey results for several years due to an organised Students' Union boycott (~30%). Student Barometer surveys have also had ~30% completion rates for the past five years. We will continue to experiment with approaches, specifically in practical data collection which has recently been used by a department to achieve 60+% response rates, as we believe student voice is essential to create an inclusive culture.

To complement the survey data, we conducted 10 focus groups (79% W) and more than 20 one-to-one interviews (65%W) with staff and students across the School. Women disproportionately volunteered for discussions which suggests they had more points to share.

To perform the detailed analysis for the gathered data (Appendix 2), the Self-Assessment Team divided into five working groups (Student lifecycle; Professional Services staff; Academic staff; Research staff; Structure and governance). Members joined groups based on expertise and interest, and met outside of formal meetings to facilitate reflection on the data before presenting to the SAT. Detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed various themes, such as the concerning levels that bullying and harassment are experienced and witnessed.



Priority: Develop and employ effective interventions to address bullying and harassment and build a culture where everyone feels included.

Section 2: An assessment of the School's gender equality context

1. Culture, inclusion, and belonging

The School believes that having an inclusive culture where all members are valued and respected is fundamental to our academic successes. We also take seriously the responsibility of training our staff and students in all aspects of their education, career, technical ability as well as personal growth and commitment to community. We have a track record of women role models, who ascend to high level leadership positions exemplified by Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation and Professor Anne Ferguson-Smith Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research at the University of Cambridge.

There are brilliant seminar speakers who have visited the School in recent years helping to promote EDI. They include Femi Otitoju ("Unconscious Bias"), Michelle Ryan ("Understanding How Context Shapes Women's Ambition"), and Baroness Young of Old Scone ("Tap Dancing on the Glass Ceiling"). Since 2019, EDI training has been mandatory for all staff, and new initiatives have organically started including: an annual "Inspirational Women in Science" poster competition; senior academic staff supporting scientists in their field from under-represented groups to apply to Cambridge; and biology focused events for International Women's Day.

Gender representation

Heads of Departments and Institutes are the main decision makers in the School, both locally and as part of the Council. We currently have 53% of these positions held by women, which is positive considering our overall professorial gender split at that level. Heads sit on many committees in their department and typically work closely with deputies, enabling good routes for communication with all staff members.

We are pleased that there was general satisfaction with the commitment of the School and individual departments, to achieving gender balance, with greater than half of academic staff recognising this commitment (58%W:71%M, Table 1.1.13). However, less than half of respondents were positive about the current gender balance practice in terms of workload allocation, career progression and efforts to offset the impact of COVID-19 (Table 1.1.27). New School initiatives, including a teaching workload model and promotion support, have been initiated to improve these data.

The proportion of academic positions held by women within the School was ~30% of from 2018 to 2022. This is lower than the proportion of undergraduate (63%W), postgraduate research (58%W) and research fellow (52%W) populations (Table 2.0). To improve this, we have adopted a “gathered field” approach to planning academic vacancies since 2022. Research suggests that this approach will increase the number of women applicants by making criteria broad and more welcoming to women.



Action 1: Use a “gathered field” approach to hiring academics that increases the size of the pool of women who would apply.



Action 2: Seek to shortlist an equal number of women and men for academic posts. Explore splitting the applicant field by gender and shortlist from those groups separately.



Action 3: Make the discussion of promotion and/or progression a standing item in all academic staff development discussions.



Action 4: Applications numbers for academic posts will be reviewed at Departmental and School level to investigate parity in gender and success rates of applicants.



Action 5: Publish statistics on W/M academic promotion success to demonstrate transparency of promotion procedures, commitment to improving promotion for women and highlight women who are successfully promoted.

In 2021, a revised promotion process for Research and Teaching academics was launched by the University and a new scheme for more teaching focused (Teaching and Scholarship) career progression introduced. As a result, the number of women academics increased from 31% in 2021 to 36% in 2022 (Table 2.0).



Action 6: Develop a robust system that tracks the Senior Research Promotions Scheme. We currently do not have data on this, for women, or any other group. Once gathered, it will be reviewed by HoDs to ensure equality of opportunity.



Action 7: Evaluate the Research Fellowship Framework to ascertain effectiveness through feedback from Research Fellows.

Belief in gender equality more broadly within the School/Departments is higher, 63%W:71%M agreeing that “departmental leadership actively supports gender equality” (Table 1.1.15). However, there was a notably high number of “don’t know” responses for questions about perceptions of gender equality, particularly in relation to the School. For example, 9%W:6%M (Table 1.1.17) said they did not know if there was “a clear commitment to achieving gender balance in leadership positions at the School level” and 26%W:32M% didn’t know about mitigations for the “adverse gendered impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on staff” (Table 1.1.27). Moreover, only 65%W:66%M staff agree that communications were “clear and relevant to them” (Table 1.1.11). Room for improvement was also raised in focus groups and in interviews where the opportunity for greater cross-School EDI collaboration and best practice sharing was highlighted. Together, this shows that better School level communications and visibility of actions and policies on gender equality are required.



Action 17: Development of a School EDI communications strategy that addresses all staff groups, promotes inclusive practices in communications and events, and makes gender equality actions more visible across the School utilising a range of mechanisms (including newsletters, local EDI committees and townhalls).

Of the 8% of postgraduate students who responded to the student culture survey, 77%W:86%M (Table 1.2.4) expressed a sense of belonging to their course, with 71%W:93%M (Table 1.2.32) feeling that opportunities for academic success are not defined by gender and 85%W:100M% (Table 1.2.76) felt supported in their skills and career development. Furthermore, 63%W:79%M (Table 1.2.10) felt positive that they can express their opinions, and 74%W:72M% (Table 1.2.52) perceived that racial, ethnic, sexual and gender-based jokes or slurs are not tolerated in their places of study. While these data are mostly positive, we did detect a pattern that men were more positive on culture than women. Only a very small group of students who responded to the survey did not identify with male or female gender, however this group was more critical of the School culture, feeling less supported. As we strive to address these issues, it will be important to increase our data pool.



Action 30: Undertake a School-wide survey on a biannual basis to gather data on staff and student views relating to culture and specific metrics for evaluation of the Athena Swan action plan.



Action 31: Carry out gender and intersectionality analysis on surveys. Share key findings and updated action plans with all School staff and students as relevant.

There were similar very low returns from undergraduate students (6%), but of those who replied, 78%W:94%M, (Table 1.2.6) feel like they belong on their course. Similar data trends to postgraduates are seen (Appendix 1.2) suggesting that men feel more comfortable than women in the course (delivery, content, communication, etc.). While the number of non-binary students responding is too small for inclusion in data tables, there was again a tendency for these students to feel less connected to their course. As part of the curriculum reviews, we are discussing with women and non-binary students how best to increase a sense of belonging.

Aiming to improve engagement, communication, and sharing of practices between departments, the School has an opportunity to build on the recent coalescing during the pandemic. To deliver our teaching and research, we established several new, informal meetings to cover responsibilities. These included meetings for the: HoDs; Heads of Teaching; Department Administrators; and Department Teaching Officers. Due to the success of these online meetings, many have continued, including fortnightly meetings of the HoDs, fortnightly meetings of Heads of Teaching, and termly meetings of the Department Administrators. What this means is that people come together in a forum that enables open dialogue and extended communication. We have noticed that EDI issues are now more commonly raised and discussed. This has the benefit of raising the bar for all departments, especially those who have unintentionally fallen behind. Critically, we have seen a willingness to improve across the School when this is the case. Thus, these informal meetings act as a safety net to catch issues and support their resolution.



Action 16: Building on culture survey results (and additional data points) work proactively with departments that are struggling with EDI issues and develop improvement plans



Figure 4 - Supporting EDI initiatives across the School. “Embracing Equity”, International Women’s Day

Addressing intersectionality

The combination of informal meetings and communication with the Champions Network has allowed us to identify some intersectional inequalities for both staff and students. For example, women identifying having a specific disability or long-term health condition 10% more (34% total) than men (Table 1.1.77). Women are also nearly twice as likely to report the experience of mental health challenges. Conversations suggest staff are uncomfortable sharing that they have a disability/health condition with colleagues.

The School is committed to addressing issues like these when identified. For example, when caring and parenting challenges were raised, a regular group meeting was established and information about Supporting Parents and Carers at Cambridge circulated. We also see opportunity to build upon local initiatives, for example LGBTQ+ initiatives around the School, including “Gay Tours in the Zoology Museum”, “Pride Teatime”, “Pride Happy Hour”, and “My Experience Talks” as well as a series of Black History Month events including an exhibition “Past & Present: Black Legacies in STEM” and roundtable discussion “Spotlight on Black Female Scientists in Cambridge”. It is also important to identify any unknown intersectional issues.



Action 15: Complete detailed analysis, which has begun during this application process, to identify departments leading on gender and intersectional (race, sexual orientation, disability) best practice and communicate via School channels.



Action 31: Carry out gender and intersectionality analysis on surveys. Share key findings and action plans with all School staff and students as relevant.

Staff race diversity in the School is low (Academic/Researcher 23%W:20%M, Professional 10%W:5%M, Table 2.0.1), thus making intersectional exploration challenging. However, a potential race and gender intersection is being actively interrogated with regards to student achievement. As students who are less academically successful are less likely to progress to an academic career, an awarding gap could contribute towards a “leaky pipeline” issue. Working closely with the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning, the School has undertaken quantitative analysis of the awarding gaps in Natural Sciences and Medicine and found that male students are more likely to be awarded First Class honours. The data also show that Black British students and those with declared disability are also experiencing an awarding gap. While there are limitations to the data due to low student numbers, the School is leading in the University to explore possible intersectional concerns for women students in these groups.



Action 33: Undertake a detailed analysis of gender awarding gap. We have recently started a full-scale analysis of the medicine course. We will complete this analysis and develop recommendations and then roll-out methodology to other courses.



Action 34: Analyse intersectional data for the School with respect to mental health and gender as well as race and gender regarding awarding gaps.

Inclusive practices

In recent years, informal channels of communication have been working well with the channels that existed before the pandemic. This means that diversity and inclusion topics can be openly discussed in informal meetings designed for long-form conversations. We have seen evidence that this leads to better proposals being taken to formal meetings and more equitable policies ratified. It has also been commented that people feel more comfortable expressing their views, especially women and less represented staff members.

“Giving sensitive issues the time for real discussion has been a welcome addition. I no longer feel that speaking out will be viewed as wasting time. Many female colleagues feel the same way.” Woman Professor.



Action 17: Development of a School EDI communications strategy that addresses all staff groups, promotes inclusive practices in communications and events, and makes gender equality actions more visible across the School utilising a range of mechanisms (including newsletters, local EDI committees and townhalls).

The School is actively striving to enhance our culture by allocating funds for EDI training and social activities (£10K/year) and raising the profile of women in School communications. At a broader level, School members sit on many University committees and work to positively influence decision making. For example, the Head of School has been on the selection panel for the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Prentice; the School Secretary is a member of the University Race Equality Charter Steering Group; and a Deputy Head of School is on the General Board’s Education Committee and helped to push the awarding gap analysis and student welfare up the agenda.

Through the engagement initiated by this application process, the School has also identified successful departmental-level practice that could be rolled out across the whole School. These may include inclusive recruitment practices to increase number of female applicants: reduction of teaching workload for new

women academic hires, who are less likely to negotiate reduced loads compared to men; promoting realistic women role models through local networks and an EDI recognition scheme for sustained contributions.

School leadership also meet professionally and socially with colleagues from the central University and other Schools. We are learning from their experiences, both successes and failures, regarding EDI- related activities.

We are conscious that the University has many terms and acronyms which could exclude those who did not study at Cambridge as an undergraduate, therefore, to improve inclusivity, the School will be eliminating acronyms where possible.



Action 18: Eliminate unnecessary acronyms from regular use. Excess or unnecessary use of acronyms can be confusing to staff members and may act to reinforce in-group and out-group mentalities.

Opportunities for mobility

The University does not have a uniform approach to promotions across staff categories. Professional Services Staff (hereafter referred to as “professional staff”) can advance their careers through application and appointment to another role at a higher grade. Advancing staff and staff recruitment data show no significant disparities from application to shortlisting to achievement based on gender. In fact, higher numbers of women are applying for roles and being successful.

There is an annual University-wide contribution reward scheme that professional staff can apply to. Men make up 34% of professional staff (Table 2.0), however, in the past two years, men have been slightly more successful in receiving these discretionary awards (2021: 12%W:14%M; 2022:17%W:22%M). This could be partly due to the variability in frequency and quality of annual staff development conversations with only half of professional staff (50%W:48%M, Table 1.1.55) agreeing that they “receive useful feedback on my career development through performance reviews”.



Action 8: Standardise the use of Staff Review and Development processes for all staff, with training and resources to ensure best practice.



Action 9: All development plans to include at least one development objective that is future focussed, supporting progression or future skills needs if more relevant for the individual.

In 2022, 66% of professional staff were women (Table 2.0), higher than equivalent roles across UK Higher Education (58%). Both men and women across professional grades feel that they are “enabled to work flexibly” (80%W:83%M, Table 1.1.29) and overall uptake of part-time working is increasing in the School (2020:41%W:15M%, 2022:42W:16M%, Table 2.6.3). More women work part-time in grades 1-6 compared to the rest of the School, and we need a better understanding if there is an impact on development, progression and retention for this group.

From 2017 to 2021 there was an increase in the number of women shortlisted for academic positions (2018 46%W, 2022 52%W). This may be due in part to the requirement that all individuals involved in decisions must undergo recruitment training which includes EDI and unconscious bias elements. (Across the whole School, 90% of staff have completed online EDI training and 76% completed Unconscious Bias Training.)



Action 2: Seek to shortlist an equal number of women and men for academic posts. Explore splitting the applicant field by gender and shortlist from those groups separately.

When considering the School as a whole, there is variation in the likelihood of women applicants being offered a position following shortlisting, and in the numbers of women accepting the position following an offer. Fewer than 50% of applicants to academic positions are female. This suggests that academic recruitment is still subject to the ‘leaky pipeline’.



Action 4: Applications numbers for academic posts will be reviewed at Departmental and School level to investigate parity in gender and success rates of applicants.

Some departments/institutes implemented actions to support women at key transition points in their career through mentoring, CV workshops, interview preparations, grant writing support, and fellowship application briefings. It is too early to know if these approaches have been successful, but the School EDI committee will work to implement actions that are most impactful. Databases of willing mentors to consult on key career building skills have been established and are maintained by the School. Enabling junior members to access support could help increase the success of School members in both internal and external competitions.

As discussed above, the promotions system now has greater value for teaching, enables culture contributions to be counted, and explicitly asks for EDI and gender markers of excellence. We are optimistic that with support from the School, this will improve the general trend of women eligible for promotion who apply, and we will monitor this data locally.

While it is common for researchers to further their careers by moving to another institution, there are several paths for career progression within the University including promotion to higher researcher grades through the Senior Research Promotions Scheme, award of contribution points within a grade, taking up an academic post, and/or a fixed-term contract being made permanent. We have identified a significant monitoring gap: we were unable to obtain any evidence of researchers' career paths over time. Closing this gap will be an important first step to identifying and remediating any inequalities researchers face due to gender.



Action 6: Develop a robust system that tracks the Senior Research Promotions Scheme. We currently do not have data on this, for women, or any other group. Once gathered, it will be reviewed by HoDs to ensure equality of opportunity.

The School has recently pioneered the Research Fellowship Framework initiative to support the careers of Research Fellows (more below on this framework). This scheme is expected to increase the competitiveness of Research Fellows in the School seeking to progress into established academic positions.




Action 7: Evaluate the Research Fellowship Framework to ascertain effectiveness through feedback from Research Fellows.


Work life balance and wellbeing


Great strides have been made in recent years to improve the work life balance of staff. A high proportion of staff (75%) across all grades and gender agreed that they feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work and that their "contributions are valued" (71%). As we move to improve on this, a key step will be continuing to increase awareness and support of those with caring responsibilities. This agenda has already begun with the "Returning Carers' Scheme" where University grants can be applied to flexible working arrangements for all staff, and a brand-new School "Roving Researcher" pilot. This scheme enables those entering or returning from maternity leave or caring leave to apply for a researcher to work in their group to support academic progress.

The issue of belonging has received increasing attention in the University; a recent focus of the University Directors of Education Day, a lower sense of belonging is linked to increased mental health challenges in both staff and students, and fostering a sense of belonging has been directly linked to increased mental


health and wellbeing. In the School, 27%W:19%M staff do not “feel confident asking for mental health and/or wellbeing support.”


 Action 19: Conduct yearly one-to-one interviews of a cross-section of professional staff to gather information on belonging and mental health.

 Action 20: Discuss with departments what they do to focus an inclusive culture and ensure all staff feel a part of the department. Take most successful action and implement them in all departments.


 Action 21: Develop and pilot an “exit survey” and a “stay survey” for staff members. Analyse key factors promoting sense of belonging, understanding of barriers and motivators to staying, and understanding reasons for leaving.

Similar gender differences were reflected in the responses from students, and concerns regarding belonging, mental health awareness and support have been amplified following the COVID-19 lockdowns.

 Action 35: Ensure that all those with responsibilities for supporting students, or in student facing roles, within the School are able to sign-post students to existing programmes that support mental health in the University and colleges.

 Action 36: Increase the members of School staff trained in identifying and supporting colleagues with mental health issues. Increase the uptake of University Mental Health Awareness Training available to staff and senior leaders.

To understand the workload of our academic staff more clearly, especially that of women, the School has piloted a bespoke workload survey aimed to capture all contributions. This new system considers often overlooked information, such as committee membership, outreach, and EDI engagement. While small adjustments are being worked out, we believe this will positively impact workload for women, as early data suggest some women in the School have a disproportionately high teaching load.

 Action 27: Finalise and roll out across the School, a Teaching Workload Survey that collects data on all activities, including, EDI and gender contributions.



Action 28: Encourage departments to redistribute workload when outliers appear within the workload survey and when staff are on parental or on long-term sick leave, after discussion with impacted staff.



Action 29: Implement reduced teaching loads for who have returned from parental leave, those with caring responsibilities, or with applicable reasonable adjustments in place due to a disability/health condition after discussion with impacted staff.



Figure 5: Volunteers from the Department of Pathology who organised inclusive science public engagement activities as part of the Cambridge Festival 2023.

Bullying and harassment

There are multiple ways that postgraduates and undergraduates can seek support regarding bullying or harassment, including the recently launched Reach Out campaign which aims to “ensure students know where to go for support” alongside their personal College Tutor who provides one-to-one pastoral care. However, survey results have revealed long-standing concerns around bullying and harassment.

Major penalties from funding bodies and high-profile direct action taken against perpetrators have raised awareness and shown certain behaviours will no longer be tolerated. Despite this, there is still a bullying and harassment issue in academia, especially in STEM subjects. In the School, we found that 55%W:35%M (Table 1.2.66) of our postgraduate students were undecided or did not know if departments were “active in tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment” and only a minority (24%W:50%M, Table 1.2.66) agreed

with this statement. Linked to this, less than half (45%W:50%M, Table 1.2.60) of postgraduate students felt that they knew how to properly report discrimination, bullying or harassment.



Action 24: Promote information about how to report bullying and harassment, relevant policies and where to seek support to students (undergraduate and postgraduate). We will use relevant student facing School and department communications.

With respect to all staff, the culture survey revealed that 17%W:10%M reported experiencing bullying or harassment in the previous year, 27%W:23%M reported observing incidents of bullying harassment, and only 30%W:18%M of professional staff felt that management effectively dealt with bullying and harassment. Responses from academics and researchers were broadly in line with this overall picture, where a gender discrepancy in personal experience of discrimination, bullying and harassment in the last year 15%W, 10%M. Staff responding 'prefer not say' for gender suggests a lack of trust in the school and these respondents witnessed or experienced a higher level of inappropriate behaviour, potentially indicating that this might be linked.

The data from the School is roughly in line with University data. These numbers are in part why the University relaunched a reinvigorated Dignity at Work Policy in 2023. This widely circulated policy informs staff on which behaviours are unacceptable and how to identify problematic behaviours in themselves. It also unequivocally states: "there is no place for bullying, harassment, discrimination...and each of us is responsible for the way we interact with and treat others." The School had a part in developing this policy and we will continue to proactively promote it.



Action 22: Communications campaign to make staff aware of what constitutes bullying, its impact and how to seek support. Physical and virtual approaches will be used (posters in communal area and information in newsletters and online) to promote awareness. The School will promote training sessions open to all staff members on how to address bullying and harassment and be an active bystander.



Action 23: Run a series of guided discussions of the new University Code of Behaviour with the senior leaders of departments/institutes. The focus of these will be on positive action and the role that leaders play in establishing and maintaining a positive working environment.



Action 25: Run a series of guided discussions and management training sessions covering best practice in building an inclusive research culture with PIs and Group Leaders.



Action 26: Provide active support of any HoDs who have new or ongoing instances of bullying and harassment in their department. Build positive support structures via HR and School leadership to ensure HoDs are supported with personalised advice and guidance to deal with negative behaviour in their local areas.

Cultural change

In developing our overall Research Vision, the School consulted widely to define future research directions, culture, and thematic structure. The result was six major Research Themes that aim to bring researchers together by scientific interest and cut across physical departmental boundaries. We believe this will provide integration and enhance interdisciplinary networking. An active choice was made to seek application and appoint Theme Leads from historically under-represented groups, with gender representation currently at 11W:15M. Overall, this has been successful in harnessing the enthusiasm and progressive perspectives of our research community, with proactive strategies to increase inclusivity, especially for women, being built into all Research Theme activities. We are already seeing positive change in the tenor of research having empowered this group, such as collaborative grant proposals, inclusive seminar series and larger conferences.



Figure 6: Supporting and encouraging women in leadership roles: Research Theme Leads 2023

In addition to the Research Themes, one area of great progress is the Research Fellowship Framework, which has been launched in collaboration with postdoctoral researchers, research fellows, and funding bodies. This framework aims to support those applying for mid-career fellowships as they navigate this precarious transition, a well-known bottleneck for women. Specifically, the School wants to “attract a diverse

community of the very best Research Fellows, supporting them with mentoring, researcher development training and a defined career progression pathway to enable them to flourish and achieve their full potential.” The framework targets clear communication to women, uses the Declaration of Research Assessment to mitigate barriers to publishing, and has a structured yet tailored approach to further supporting individuals who have experienced barriers or specific career challenges, especially women.



Action 7: Evaluate the Research Fellowship Framework to ascertain effectiveness through feedback from Research Fellows.



Figure 7: Supporting women and early PIs in leadership and development: European Molecular Biology Organisation Training Course 2023

One reoccurring theme from conversations with early career PIs in the School and University is around the need for better caring and parental support, with 25% unclear how to access information for caring and parental leave. While family friendly policies are generally implemented by the central University, historically there has been no process for this information to be uniformly distributed from the School.

It is critical that we educate staff on the enhanced leave for carers, parental and shared-parental leave entitlements, and options of career breaks and flexible working. For example, since 2014 only 16W,20M have taken shared parental leave. Related to parenting, new breast-feeding and baby-changing facilities have been established that all staff can access, and available nursery places have increased.



Action 10: Support and promote initiatives for female career development (all staff groups). These include the career network, returning carers scheme, and departmental activities such as workshops and practice interviews.



Action 11: Convene working groups to establish if parenting and caring (all caring types) provisions are adequate for all staff members and that they are appropriately supported.

Building information channels

As the EDI footprint of the School advances, we will improve communication. There are positive indicators that the Senior Leadership Team operates with an open-door policy e.g., leaders of the early careers network contacted the School asking for more support. Following a productive set of meetings and allocation of School resources, the network was revitalised and became more impactful. We have also been delighted that many of the departments have built informal feedback channels with other stakeholders, e.g., such department teaching administrators meeting with student representatives to discuss their academic and cultural experiences of a course, which is then relayed to the School Teaching Committees. We want to build and extend these information channels throughout all levels of the School.

We also consider data to be the linchpin for measuring our EDI outputs. With all the changes and challenges experienced over the past four years, it is essential that we can establish a baseline as we seek to assess the progress of our agenda in the future. To this end, we have collected EDI data that go beyond Athena Swan and will support broader intersectional work going forward. This includes in-depth qualitative data collection, including interviews and focus groups, that will help build a picture of staff lived experiences.



Action 30: Undertake a School-wide survey on a biannual basis to gather data on staff and student views relating to culture and specific metrics for evaluation of the Athena Swan action plan.



Action 31: Carry out gender and intersectionality analysis on surveys. Include findings in presentation and share key findings and action plans with all School staff and students as relevant.



Action 32: All new School initiatives and policies will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment.

In Cambridge, colleges are integral part of life for students and some staff. The Collegiate University works hard to balance the needs of the financially independent and autonomous colleges with those of the University. Undergraduate and some postgraduate students receive their small group teaching from colleges and many staff members who are college members deliver these supervisions. Approximately half of our academic staff (46%) are members of colleges.

Within the School, we believe it is important that our initiatives dovetail with activities in colleges, and we need to learn from previous college actions. The University, with input from representatives of the School, are regularly working with the colleges to develop joined up approach to issues around culture and EDI, including awarding gaps, mental wellbeing, and self-certification for coursework extensions.

2. Key priorities for future action

As indicated above, the School is fully committed to the following priorities that we have identified through self-reflection and data analysis:

Priority 1: Support women at key career transition points including recruitment, progression and retention.

Despite a strong pipeline of high achieving women from undergraduate through to the Senior Research Fellow career stage, the School academic staff hovers around one-third women. This number dips when considering women professors. Many factors contribute to these statistics and addressing them is a top priority. As discussed above and in the action plan, the School has identified key points where improvements can be made and intends to support women in all departments/institutes to excel beyond these potential barriers.

Priority 2: Build School-wide infrastructure for embedding of the Athena Swan Charter principles and wider EDI strategy.

To provide a positive working environment for all, especially women, a collaborative approach to EDI in the School is being established. We will facilitate a synergistic relationship between the new School EDI committee and existing departmental EDI committees. With a consistent EDI presence in the School, including having access to resources and open dialogue with to the Council, we will be able to enhance communication, support departments who are struggling to make timely progress, and amplify the successes

of others. We will also be able to work more closely with the central University EDI team as well as advance our intersectional agenda through collaboration with the University Women's Network, Race Equality Network, and the Early Principal Investigator Network.

Priority 3: Develop and employ effective interventions to address bullying and harassment and build a culture where everyone feels included.

Bullying and harassment has no place in our community, and we are deeply concerned that members of the School experience this and that others do not know how to report such behaviour. As covered above and in the action plan, we have specific plans to both increase awareness and emphasise that these behaviours are unacceptable. Evidence also suggests that post-COVID-19, people are struggling to coexist with colleagues in healthy ways, as evidenced by both formal and informal complaints increasing. Moreover, our objective to increase the sense of belonging for professional staff is one area we want to focus on. The School knows that culture change takes time, commitment, and recourses, and we are determined to drive this critical progress.

Priority 4: Improve data collection, analysis, and storage to inform gender equality initiatives and action planning

The School is taking a leading administrative role in EDI, enabling streamlined data collection, consistency across departments, and long-term storage of data will be possible. This is particularly important with teaching workload data and fair allocation of work to women. There will also be accountability for departments who fall behind and support available when necessary. Gathering meaningful, comprehensive, and comparable datasets on staff and students as well as survey and focus group data is essential to understanding patterns and making informed decisions.

Priority 5: Support the wellbeing of our students.

The School is taking a leading role in the University to understand and eliminate any awarding gaps experienced by our students. Awarding gaps may contribute to the pipeline issue, meaning some people are not being treated equitably. As discussed above, this has begun, and we are committed to investing the necessary time to research and resolve this issue. The Collegiate University has extensive wellbeing resources, but many of our students are unaware of them. By raising awareness of available support and further fostering an atmosphere of openness we hope to enable all our students to perform at their best.

Section 3: Future action plan

1. Action Plan

Priority	Rationale	Action	Key outputs/ milestones	Timeframes (start/end date)	Person responsible/ accountable	Success criteria and outcome
Support women at key career transition points including recruitment, progression and retention.	From 2020-2022, more men applied for academic posts than women (38%W:62%M, See Appendix 2, Table 2.7.3). With a smaller pool of women applicants, this has led to disparity in the proportion of eligible women being recruited (for academic posts from 2020-2022, women were shortlisted at 46%, offered at 51%)	ACTION 1: Use a “gathered field” approach to hiring academics that increases the size of the pool of women who would apply.	All departments use the "gathered field" approach for academic recruitments.	Start October 2023; review Summer 2025; ongoing	Head of School, School Council, HoDs	Increase the number of women applying to academic posts from 38% (average 2020-22) to 45% by 2025 and to over 50% by 2027.
		ACTION 2: Seek to shortlist an equal number of women and men for academic posts. Explore splitting the applicant field by gender and shortlist from those groups separately.	An equal number of women and men are shortlisted for academic posts.	Start October 2023; review Summer 2025; ongoing	HoDs, Department Administrators	Increase the number of women shortlisted for academic posts from 46% (average 2020-22) to over 50% by 2025.
	Historically, more men have been promoted than women at all academic grades (See Appendix 2, Tables 2.9.1, 2.9.2).	ACTION 3: Make the discussion of promotion and/or progression a standing item in all academic staff development discussions.	Staff Review and Development meetings will be documented by staff and their line managers. Department's HR teams will conduct an audit of Staff Review and Development meetings annually to confirm the process is being followed.	Start October 2023; review Summer 2025; ongoing	HoDs for academic posts All line managers and Department HR teams	School staff survey will show a year-on-year increase in staff satisfaction with the Staff Review and Development processes. Number of women academics being promoted will increase by 5 % by 2025 and 10% by 2027.

Contd.		ACTION 4: Applications numbers for academic posts will be reviewed at Departmental and School level to investigate parity in gender and success rates of applicants.	Data on applications will be gathered after each recruitment exercise and added to a School data base.	Start October 2024; review October 2026; ongoing	School Business and Operations Manager	The number of women in academic posts will increase from 36% (headcount, 2022, Appendix 2, Table 2.0) to 38% by October 2026 and above 40% by October 2028. Number of women academics being promoted will increase by 5 % by 2025 and 10% by 2027.
		ACTION 5: Publish statistics on W/M academic promotion success to demonstrate transparency of promotion procedures, commitment to improving promotion for women and highlight women who are successfully promoted.	Publication in School newsletter (or equivalent) on annual basis	Annually after the promotions process has been completed starting in 2024.	School Business and Operations Manager	School staff survey will show a year-on-year increase in staff perceptions of School and Departments commitment to gender equality.
	Numbers of women academics decreases as they transition from Research Fellow to Tenure Track positions which creates a "leaky pipeline" for women professors and leaders, see Appendix 2, Table 2.0.	ACTION 6: Develop a robust system that tracks the Senior Research Promotions Scheme. We currently do not have data on this, for women, or any other group. Once gathered, it will be reviewed by HoDs to ensure equality of opportunity.	Design of tracking system will be ready to implement by October 2024. Effectiveness of tracking system reviewed annually.	Data will be gathered in the subsequent 4 years	Research Culture Facilitator	Tracking system in place by 2024. Annual review with all HoDs to assess effectiveness of tracking system from 2025 annually.

Contd.	<p>Research staff have a specific pathway for applying for promotion to a higher grade, but qualitative feedback (see Appendix 1, Figure 1.3) suggests that this pathway requires improvement in support infrastructure.</p>	<p>ACTION 7: Evaluate the Research Fellowship Framework to ascertain effectiveness through feedback from Research Fellows.</p>	<p>Fellows feel supported and fairly treated in the new framework. Gender of submitted applications is tracked along with the outcomes.</p>	<p>Evaluation will begin in 2024 and occur annually.</p>	<p>Deputy Head of School - Research Strategy</p>	<p>Survey and qualitative data from Research Fellows shows an increase in satisfaction in Framework, as established from 2024 baseline.</p>
	<p>Professional staff (referred to as "PTO" in Appendix 2) are not eligible to apply for promotion but can advance their careers through re-grading of their current role or through application and appointment to another role at a higher grade. Numbers of reported promotions by this route are low (16%) and in the</p>	<p>ACTION 8: Standardise the use of Staff Review and Development processes for all staff, with training and resources to ensure best practice.</p>	<p>Aim for $\geq 20\%$ in first year, with relative increase of 10% each year.</p>	<p>Dates for annual reviews to be set by January 2024. Staff Review and Development meetings to completed annually from 2024.</p>	<p>All line managers will be responsible. Department Administrators will be accountable</p>	<p>>90% of staff, on average, will have undergone a review within two years by 2026. School staff survey will show a year-on-year increase in staff satisfaction with the Staff Review and Development processes.</p>

Contd.	<p>past 3 years have been gender balanced (2020-2022 W14% received promotion, M14%, Appendix 2, Table 2.10) but women make up 68% of staff in this category.</p> <p>Among professional staff men were slightly more successful at receiving promotion or pay increments, despite the numbers of women eligible in this staff group being more than double that of men (increments 2020-2022 W521:M248, W12% received increments, M14% received increments, see Table 2.10; Promotions 2020-2022 W352:M143, W14% received promotion, M14%).</p>	<p>ACTION 9: All development plans to include at least one development objective that is future focussed, supporting progression or future skills needs if more relevant for the individual.</p>	<p>Department's HR teams will conduct an audit of Staff Review and Development (SRD's) with staff on a twice annual basis to confirm the process is being followed correctly.</p>	<p>Dates for annual reviews to be set by January 2024. SRDs to completed annually from 2024.</p>	<p>All line managers will be responsible. Department Administrators will be accountable</p>	<p>An increase in the number of women being successful in a re-grading of their current role or through application and appointment to another role at a higher grade to 25% by 2026.</p>
	<p>Limited leave for childcare due to personal finances or potential detrimental impact on career (actual or perceived) was cited by women researchers and early career academics during the focus group qualitative data collection</p>	<p>ACTION 10: Support and promote initiatives for female career development (all staff groups). These include the career network, returning carers scheme, and departmental activities such as workshops and practice interviews.</p>	<p>Include information regarding schemes around the University at a meeting for all relevant groups. Funding is available from the School for training.</p>	<p>Start March 2024; ongoing</p>	<p>EDI Facilitator</p>	<p>Satisfaction with parenting and caring provision by the School will be shown to increase by 10% in future staff survey results by 2025, and 20% by 2027.</p>

Contd.	<p>(see Appendix 1, Figure 1.3). This forces difficult decisions about if and when to have children. Staff (mainly professional and junior research staff) who were working or had worked on a 0.7-0.9 FTE basis, reported that expectations and workload for their role was the same as full-time. Where workload was reduced, it was development activities and contributions outside of individuals' immediate role that were cut (e.g., staff diversity networks, advocacy and consultation activities), having a long-term impact on development and progression opportunities, and creating a barrier to actively contributing to institutional culture and success.</p>	<p>ACTION 11: Convene working groups to establish if parenting and caring (all caring types) provisions are adequate for all staff members and that they are appropriately supported.</p>	<p>Hold multiple meetings and present findings to the School EDI Committee. Propose actions to the Council based on the outcome of consultations.</p>	<p>Start March 2024; ongoing</p>	<p>EDI Facilitator</p>	<p>Uptake of initiatives supporting women's careers will increase by at least 10% and the percentage of women who feel that "they progress regardless of gender" based on staff survey will increase by 10% in 2025 and 20% by 2027.</p> <p>Satisfaction with parenting and caring provision by the School will be shown to increase by 10% in future staff survey results for 2025, and 20% by 2027.</p>
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Build School-wide infrastructure for embedding of the Athena SWAN Charter principles and wider EDI strategy	There is a need to share good practice in relation equity, diversity and inclusion in order to be cohesive and coherent as a School, bringing together disparate elements in a structured fashion. This would improve efficiency, increasing local ownership but with central, overarching support from the School.	ACTION 12: Establish a representative School EDI Committee with reporting channels to the Council and with clear strategic aims and terms of reference. The committee will measure and assess progress of the action plan during each 5-year Athena Swan cycle, with powers to ensure accountability at the departmental level. The committee will have responsibility for a £10,000/year budget.	Committee will be convened and will meet twice a term. Annual feedback from department EDI committees, Heads of Department and Senior Administrators on how well the School EDI Committee is functioning will be collected and areas for improvement identified.	EDI Committee will be set-up and recruited for during the 2023 Michaelmas term: * Terms of reference will be drafted for review by the School Council in October/November 2023 * Recruitment will take place in November * First meeting will be in December 2023.	Head of School, School Council will monitor progress	Perceptions of gender equality commitment will increase from 49% to 75% by 2027. In culture survey, 80% of staff aware of committee and its functions by 2025.
		ACTION 13: Build strong and meaningful connections between the School EDI Committee and the University EDI team.	EDI Facilitator will be embedded in the University's new Community of Practice for EDI.	Start April 2024, ongoing	EDI Facilitator	EDI Facilitator will report progress/ideas/training opportunities to the School EDI Committee at every meeting.
		ACTION 14: Train EDI Champions on the University's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process to allow them to act as EIA Ambassadors and to advise departments on how to evaluate	Trained Champions feel empowered to support departments on how to evaluate diversity and inclusion impacts on decisions and policies. Measured by Facilitator	Training to take place in March and October of 2024, ongoing annually.	EDI Facilitator, support from School Business and Operations Manager	Greater than 80% of EDI Champions trained by the end of 2024 and 100% by 2025. 100% of new policies
Contd.						

Contd.		diversity and inclusion impacts of decisions and policies.	asking the Champions if they feel sufficiently equipped, and keeping good records.			and initiatives to have had an EIA completed by 2025
		ACTION 15: Complete detailed analysis, which has begun during this application process, to identify departments leading on gender and intersectional (race, sexual orientation, disability) best practice and communicate via School channels.	EDI practice and initiatives mapped out to identify different departments with areas of successful activity (events/campaigns/training /communications)	Departments identified during the 2024-25 academic year	School EDI Committee	Departmental best practice identified and shared via School communication channels. Perceptions of gender equality commitment will increase from 49% to 75% by 2027.
		ACTION 16: Building on culture survey results (and additional data points) work proactively with departments that are struggling with EDI issues and develop improvement plans.	Departments with challenges identified. Improvement plans drafted.	Departments identified during the 2024-25 academic year. Plans for improvement drafted in 2025-26.	School EDI Committee	Perceptions of gender equality commitment will increase from 49% to 75% by 2027.
		ACTION 17: Development of a School EDI communications strategy that addresses all staff groups, promotes inclusive practices in communications and events, and makes gender equality actions more visible across the School utilising a range of mechanisms (including	A communications strategy draft will be drafted, then approved	Drafted to be reviewed by School EDI Committee by Easter 2024, ready to be implemented by October 2024.	Chair of School EDI Committee and School Communications Manager	Perceptions of gender equality commitment will increase from 49% to 75% by 2027.

		newsletters, local EDI committees and townhalls).				
		ACTION 18: Eliminate unnecessary acronyms from regular use. Excess or unnecessary use of acronyms can be confusing to staff members and may act to reenforce in-group and out-group mentalities.	Acronyms will be avoided by spelling out words/phrases in communications from and within the School	Rolled out January 2024; ongoing	Committee Chairs and Secretaries	Increase in the culture survey question "Communications I receive are clear and relevant to me in my role", from 62% overall to 80% by 2027.
Develop and employ effective interventions to address bullying and harassment and build a culture where everyone feels included	Focus groups, interviews (see Appendix 1, Figure 1.3), and survey data indicated that professional staff did not feel that they were included in School level communications, which led to feelings that their contributions to SBS are not recognised or valued.	ACTION 19: Conduct yearly one-to-one interviews of a cross-section of professional staff to gather information on belonging and mental health.	Hold multiple meetings and present findings to the School EDI Committee. Propose actions to the Council based on the outcome of consultations.	Interviews to be conducted annually July-September starting in 2024. Analysis and reporting to be completed annually in November starting in 2024.	EDI Facilitator	School staff survey will show a year on year 5% increase in professional staff perceptions of factors relating to belonging and wellbeing starting in 2025. Identification of further initiatives and activities to support belonging and wellbeing for professional and other staff groups.

Contd.	<p>ACTION 20: Discuss with departments what they do to focus an inclusive culture and ensure all staff feel a part of the department. Take most successful action and implement them in all departments.</p>	<p>Collation and mapping of insights from department EDI and wellbeing committees and termly discussions with DA's - identify areas of best practice.</p> <p>Annual belonging and wellbeing workshop with cross-section of department representatives to exchange ideas, promote collaboration and plan/support roll-out of best practice across all departments.</p>	<p>Complete initial collation by October 2024. Updated annually. First annual workshop in February 2025.</p>	<p>EDI Facilitator in conjunction with School EDI Committee</p>	<p>School staff survey will show a year on year 5% increase in professional staff perceptions of factors relating to belonging and wellbeing starting in 2025.</p>
	<p>ACTION 21: Develop and pilot an “exit survey” and a “stay survey” for staff members. Analyse key factors that promote a sense of belonging, understanding of barriers and motivators to staying, and understanding reasons for leaving.</p>	<p>Surveys designed with respondents having the option of completing anonymously and selecting responses that can be shared with specified stakeholders. Respondents will also have an option to feedback on the survey design.</p> <p>Pilot of the exit survey in 5 volunteer departments for 12 months.</p> <p>Pilot of the stay survey in the same 5 volunteer departments.</p>	<p>Exit survey designed by September 2024 to be piloted 24-25 academic year.</p> <p>Stay survey designed by October 2025 to be piloted November 2025.</p>	<p>EDI Facilitator - in conjunction with HR staff from departments</p>	<p>Design of an “exit survey” and a “stay survey” for staff members that can be rolled-out across the School by 2026. Target of 80% completion for both surveys.</p>
Contd.					

			Utilise feedback from surveys and department HR teams to make improvements to the survey designs.			
	Almost 16% of responders to the Staff culture survey (Appendix 1, Table 1.1.39) reported that they had experienced some form of bullying, discrimination or harassment in the previous 12 months. This figure rose to over 26% for those who reported having witnessed bullying behaviours in the same period (Table 1.1.41). Breaking down these figures provides a high degree of variation between staff groups, with professional staff reporting the highest levels of witnessing and being the subject of	ACTION 22: Communications campaign to make staff aware of what constitutes bullying, its impact and how to seek support. Physical and virtual approaches will be used (posters in communal area and information in newsletters and online) to promote awareness. The School will promote training sessions open to all staff members on how to address bullying and harassment and be an active bystander.	Communications plan drawn up covering an initial 12-month period. Communications plan implemented and reviewed (effectiveness and feedback) at end of 12 months - undertake cost-benefit analysis and identify possible changes to content and format.	Commence development of plan in April 2024, with implementation from October 2024.	School Communications Manager and School EDI Committee	School staff survey will show a decrease of >10% in both witnessing and experiencing bullying and harassment by 2025 and >15% by 2027. School staff survey will show an increase of >10% in the perception that management effectively deals with bullying and harassment among professional staff by 2025 and >15% by 2027.

Contd.	bullying (both >30%) and only 34% of professional staff felt that management effectively dealt with bullying and harassment. A clear gender split exists with the majority of staff groups, with academic staff providing the widest disparity- 23% of female academics reported experiencing bullying, while only 9% of male academics reported this. 18% of students (17%W:12%M) have witnessed discrimination, bullying and/or harassment in their department, with 45% (W53%:M32%) not knowing how to report it.	ACTION 23: Run a series of guided discussions of the new University Code of Behaviour with the senior leaders of departments/institutes. The focus of these will be on positive action and the role that leaders play in establishing and maintaining a positive working environment.	Design and set-up discussion workshops with senior leaders from each department/institution. Run and evaluate discussion workshops.	Design and set-up in November 2023. Run first wave of workshops December 2023 - April 2024	EDI Facilitator	80% of departmental senior leaders to have undertaken session by 2025. School staff survey will show a decrease of >10% in both witnessing and experiencing bullying and harassment by 2025 and >15% by 2027. School staff survey will show an increase of >10% in the perception that management effectively deals with bullying and harassment among professional staff by 2025 and >15% by 2027.
		ACTION 24: Promote information about how to report bullying and harassment, relevant policies and where to seek support to students (undergraduate and postgraduate). We will use relevant student facing School and department communications.	Bullying and harassment communications plan drawn up covering an initial 12-month period. Communications plan implemented and reviewed (effectiveness and feedback) at end of 12 months - undertake cost-benefit analysis and	Commence development of plan in April 2024, with implementation from October 2024.	School Business and Operations Manager	Student survey will show >10% improvement in students knowing how to report bullying and harassment, relevant policies and where to seek support to students by 2025 and >15% by 2027.
Contd.						

Contd.			identify possible changes to content and format.			Qualitative capturing of students' voices presented to EDI Committee annually.
	In the interviews and focus groups, (see Appendix 1, Figure 1.3) laboratories/research groups were most commonly identified as environments where bullying and harassment is particularly prolific, where there is limited recourse to addressing problematic behaviour, and significant fear in speaking up due to concerns about being believed and possible repercussions.	ACTION 25: Run a series of guided discussions and management training sessions covering best practice in building an inclusive research culture with PIs and Group Leaders.	Conduct qualitative data collection with research staff in the School about their experiences of current procedures to identify issues, gaps and recommendations for improvements - use this data to inform discussions and training programme for PIs and Group Leaders. Compile a report for Council with recommendations for School level support and processes.	Data collection commencing in January 2024, with training developed by July 2024, and rolled out October 2024. Report to Council in October 2025.	EDI and Research Culture Facilitators, and School EDI Committee	School staff survey will show a decrease of >10% in both witnessing and experiencing bullying and harassment by research staff by 2025 and >15% by 2027. School staff survey will show an increase of >10% in the perception that research management effectively deals with bullying and harassment among research staff by 2025 and >15% by 2027.
		ACTION 26: Provide active support of any HoDs who have new or ongoing instances of bullying and harassment in their department. Build positive support structures via HR and School leadership to ensure HoDs are supported with personalised	School HR team will respond within one working day to any requests for support from HoDs or Department Administrators.	Starts October 2023; ongoing	Head of HR	Collect qualitative positive feedback from HoDs and departmental senior leaders in regard to support. School staff survey

		advice and guidance to deal with negative behaviour in their local areas.				will show a decrease of >10% in both witnessing and experiencing bullying and harassment by 2025 and >15% by 2027. School staff survey will show an increase of >10% in the perception that management effectively deals with bullying and harassment among professional staff by 2025 and >15% by 2027.
Improve data collection, analysis, and storage to inform gender equality initiatives and action planning Contd.	It is necessary to develop data collection mechanisms that enable the School to gain comprehensive insight into both good practice and challenges to fairness in workload distribution for staff with teaching responsibilities. Academic staff part-time working has been described as a fallacy (in focus groups, see Appendix 1, Figure 1.3) due to no adjustments	ACTION 27: Finalise and roll out across the School, a Teaching Workload Survey that collects data on all activities, including, EDI and gender contributions	Annual collection and analysis of workload data, presented to the HoDs and Council.	Starts in academic year 2023-24; ongoing	Deputy Head of School - Undergraduate Strategy	Survey is completed by 100% of all departments, includes all members of each department. Presentations happen annually.
		ACTION 28: Encourage departments to redistribute workload when outliers appear within the teaching workload survey and when staff are on parental or on long-term sick leave, after discussion with impacted staff.	Establish what an 'average workload' is across the School. Work with Heads of Teaching to support redistribution of work where some staff appear to be overly burdened. Inform HoDs of the policy regarding those on leave.	Starts on academic year 2025-26; ongoing	Heads of Teaching, Deputy Head of School - Undergraduate Strategy	The number of "outliers" - those overly burdened as identified in the workload survey will be reduced year on year.

	being made to teaching requirements when moving to a part-time working pattern. Women academics also cited not having teaching duties reassigned during maternity leave and expectations to still do marking. Reducing teaching loads will support women returning from parental leave to undertake research activities.					
	ACTION 29: Implement reduced teaching loads for who have returned from parental leave, those with caring responsibilities, or with applicable reasonable adjustments in place due to a disability/health condition after discussion with impacted staff.	Identify members of staff who fit these criteria. Find appropriate replacements for their workload from across the School.	Starts in academic year 2025-26; ongoing	HoDs, Department Administrators	Workload for those these individuals is reduced by at least 50% by 2026-27 compared to previous workload.	
Contd.	It is necessary to develop data collection mechanisms that enable the School to build a strong evidence base, gain comprehensive insight into both good practice and understand the equality challenges for all categories of staff.	ACTION 30: Undertake a School-wide survey on a biannual basis to gather data on staff and student views relating to culture and specific metrics for evaluation of the Athena Swan action plan.	Surveys designed - will include a feedback mechanism on the survey design to enable improvements. Surveys implemented every two years, with analysis and findings collated and reported. Quantitative and qualitative measurements of success criteria for Athena Swan actions obtained. Adjustments and improvements to Athena Swan initiatives and activities enabled and implemented. Identification of further initiatives and activities	Surveys designed by end January 2024. Surveys conducted every other year from February 2024. Findings to be reported in the following April/May.	School EDI Committee	Response rate for staff culture survey to exceed 85% by 2025 and 90% by 2027. Response rate for student culture survey to exceed 40% by 2025 and 50% by 2027

			relating to gender equality and EDI more broadly.			
		ACTION 31: Carry out gender and intersectionality analysis on surveys. Include findings in presentation and share key findings and action plans with all School staff and students as relevant.	<p>Communications, reporting and dissemination plan created for survey.</p> <p>Survey analysis and findings collated and reported annually.</p>	<p>Communication s, reporting and dissemination plan created by end February 2024.</p> <p>Analysis and findings to be reported in April/May annually.</p>	School EDI Committee	<p>Intersectional analysis completed. Adjustments and improvements to Athena Swan initiatives and activities in relation to intersectionality implemented.</p> <p>Identification of further initiatives and activities relating to intersectionality.</p>
		ACTION 32: All new School initiatives and policies will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment.	<p>Equality Impact Assessments conducted on all new initiatives and policies, with required changes and recommendations identified.</p> <p>Implementation of required changes to all new initiative and policies.</p>	All new School initiatives and policies will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment within >2 months from presentation to the School EDI Committee. If time sensitive, this will be shortened accordingly.	School EDI Committee	<p>100% of new policies and initiatives to have had an EIA completed by 2026.</p> <p>Identification of how all new School initiatives and policies will promote equity on the basis of gender, other protected characteristics, caring, or widening participation criteria.</p>

<p>Support the wellbeing of our students</p>	<p>A research project completed in March 2022 on awarding gaps in the School of Biological Sciences revealed gender awarding gaps, with male students being more likely to be awarded First Class honours in Biological Natural Sciences and Medicine. This data reflects a Cambridge-wide trend, but not the national HE sector (OfS, 2021). This awarding gap narrows as students progress through the course, suggesting that actions should be focused on earlier years of study, specifically the first year. Our analysis also</p>	<p>ACTION 33: Undertake a detailed analysis of gender awarding gap. We have recently started a full-scale analysis of the medicine course. We will complete this analysis and develop recommendations and then roll-out methodology to other courses.</p>	<p>Liaise with University Access and Participation Plan (APP team) to enable alignment and resource sharing.</p> <p>Set-up agreement and project plan with the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning (CCTL), including quantitative and qualitative methodology/sources.</p> <p>Undertake data gathering and analysis culminating in production of theory of change and action plan for addressing gender awarding gaps.</p>	<p>Agreement and project plan by April 2024.</p> <p>Research and analysis commencing September 2024*</p> <p>Report and recommendation by July 2026*</p> <p>*(timescale dependent on completion of Medicine course analysis).</p>	<p>Deputy Head of School - Undergraduate Strategy and Education Projects Manager</p>	<p>Identification of factors contributing to gender awarding gaps.</p> <p>Reduce observed awarding gaps to 0% by 2028</p>
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Contd.	<p>Individual areas of the School culture, including mental health support, were found to be viewed more negatively by women student responders (Appendix 1, Table 1.2.84), with 27% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that they felt confident in asking for help to support their mental health, compared to 19% of men. Such levels were reflected in the responses from students, and concerns regarding mental health awareness and support have been amplified following the COVID-19 lockdowns. A clear gender disparity was also observed for those with a disability seeking support, highlighting that we need to do more to support</p>	<p>ACTION 35: Ensure that all those with responsibilities for supporting students, or in student facing roles, within the School are able to sign-post students to existing programmes that support mental health in the University and colleges.</p>	<p>Departments will be asked about their communications (posters, emails, induction information etc) of University programmes supporting mental health in order to identify gaps and effective practice for wider sharing (a soft touch "audit").</p> <p>School level action/communications plan for promotion of existing programmes in collaboration with the University Mental Health and Wellbeing team.</p>	<p>Audit conducted in January - February 2024.</p> <p>A 12-month action/communications plan will be produced by April 2024</p>	<p>School Communications Manager in conjunction with EDI Facilitator</p>	<p>Annual review and audit in 2025 will demonstrate a >10% increase in frequency and range of communications compared to 2024 audit.</p> <p>Annual student survey will show >15% improvement in students feeling confident in asking for help to support their mental health</p> <p>Qualitative capturing of students voices will feed into the annual review of communications.</p>
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Glossary

EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
HR	Human Resources
HoD	Head of Department
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer
M	Men
PTO	Professional, Technical and Operational staff - this comprises Academic Related and Assistant staff at the University
SAT	Self-Assessment Team
SG	Steering Group
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths
W	Women