

Transformed Athena Swan Charter Application Feedback

A panel was recently convened to review your Athena Swan application and details of the result and key feedback from the panel is shared below. Please note that the below feedback is not exhaustive and panel assessments are made “in the round”.

Institution and Department:	University of Oxford, Faculty of Law
Level of award applied for:	Bronze
Result:	Award Conferred
Award round:	May 2022
Overall comments	
<p>The panel agree that this is a strong and honest application for a bronze award from the Faculty of Law at University of Oxford.</p> <p>It is clear throughout the application that there are structures and processes underpinning and recognising the gender equality work. There is clear and open reflection on the gaps and drawbacks to the previous structure in place for the 2017 application (page 8), details of the improvements made and the significant investment to resource Equality and Diversity and Athena Swan work (page 8) as well as having actions to make further improvements in the future (priorities 6 and 7, page 36). The panel are particularly pleased to see that the letter from the Dean of the Faculty not only demonstrates an honest account of the challenges faced but identifies intersectional inequalities (page 4). The incorporation of ongoing monitoring of SAT membership to ensure representation by the EDI Officer is commended, and although not a requirement, the panel suggest reviewing the demographics of the self-assessment team, beyond gender, role function and role types, to ensure intersectional representation.</p> <p>There is a clear demonstration of progress against the previously identified priorities, both in the rating of the previous action plan and the narrative (pages 10-12). The panel did question why there were additional actions added to the action plan in 2020, despite it being recognised that the Faculty had been overly ambitious in the original action plan (this was considered to be a minor point).</p> <p>The key priorities for future action are underpinned by a clear evidence base, with each priority explaining how the evidence was used as well as connecting with any of the previous action plan’s priorities and actions being carried over and forward. The panel agree that the clear and concise analysis provides a strong basis for the development of the action plan.</p> <p>The panel agree that the action plan is SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), and clearly prioritised and aligned to the challenges identified in the narrative. The</p>	

panel particularly commend:

- the consideration of Athena Swan principles in relation to actions, e.g. the rationale for key priorities 2 and 6
- Action 5.7 to introduce less formal routes for reporting bullying and harassment
- awareness of how actions may impact each other , e.g. Action 2.8 recognising the limitations of previous survey designs and how future action will address this.

The panel note that the Faculty has identified over-ambition in terms of number of actions to be a barrier in the delivery of the previous action plan, and while it is recognised that the additional resources provided has increased capacity, the panel wish to highlight this as an area for the Faculty to be mindful of.

Scores against criteria

A - Structures and processes underpin and recognise gender equality work

Score: 4 - Good. The application addresses the criterion very well

B - Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

Score: 4 - Good. The application addresses the criterion very well

C - Action plan to address identified key issues

Score: 4 - Good. The application addresses the criterion very well

D - Demonstration of progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities

Score: 4 - Good. The application addresses the criterion very well

Key Next Steps

The panel agree that the Faculty is in a strong position to take forward their gender equality work, and consider the following to be the key next steps:

- the delivery of the action plan in line with the time scales provided
- ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation to be able to demonstrate progress and success of actions as well as adapting them as needed throughout the lifetime of the award
- ensure balance between being ambitious and overly ambitious for the delivery of actions

Good Practice Example

Faculty's decision to invest in resourcing an EDI team, so that there are now two members of the Faculty (one from professional and support staff, the EDI Officer, the other academic staff, the Associate Dean) who are embedded in EDI work at the wider divisional level.