

The Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) Charter was established in 2005 with the aim of “*Encouraging and recognising commitment to advancing gender equality*” within STEM subjects, i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The Athena SWAN agenda has grown overtime to promote equality in general. Scan the QR code opposite for more background about Athena SWAN at Heriot-Watt, including guidance and resources.



1. Celebrating Ada Lovelace Day on the Edinburgh Campus

An Open Lunchtime Lecture in Celebration of Ada Lovelace Day 2025



Verena Rieser

Google DeepMind

Whose Gold? Re-imagining Alignment for Truly Beneficial AI

Verena Rieser

Google DeepMind



**Verena Rieser (left)
Sara Lombardo (centre)
Nathan Imeson (right)**

On the 9th of October, Verena Rieser (Research Scientist, Google DeepMind) delivered an inspiring lunchtime lecture on the challenges of developing AI technologies that support diversity and well-being. Her talk highlighted the pioneering work of her group on addressing these challenges. This was an Open Lecture and attracted an extremely large audience. Many thanks to everyone that attended and all those that helped to promote the event; special thanks go to the members of the University's British Sign Language Team that supported the event – *Sula Brookes, Nathan Imeson and Lucy Niven*.



*This event was organized by the
MACS Athena SWAN Team*



**Athena
SWAN**
Silver Award

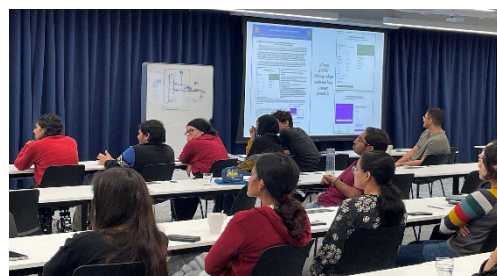




2. Celebrating Ada Lovelace Day on the Dubai Campus

A PechaKucha Event in Celebration of Ada Lovelace Day 2025

On the 9th of October six presenters shared their personal journeys using the PechaKucha approach, highlighting both their achievements and the challenges they faced as Heriot-Watt students. The audience primarily consisted of Year 3 Computer Science and Computer Systems students, who thoroughly enjoyed the presentations and felt motivated by the stories shared. Below you will find some reflections by the students that participated.



Presenter 1 - **Zahra Fathima** (Y4 Student)

Presenter 2 - **Fathima Ismath** (Graduate Student)

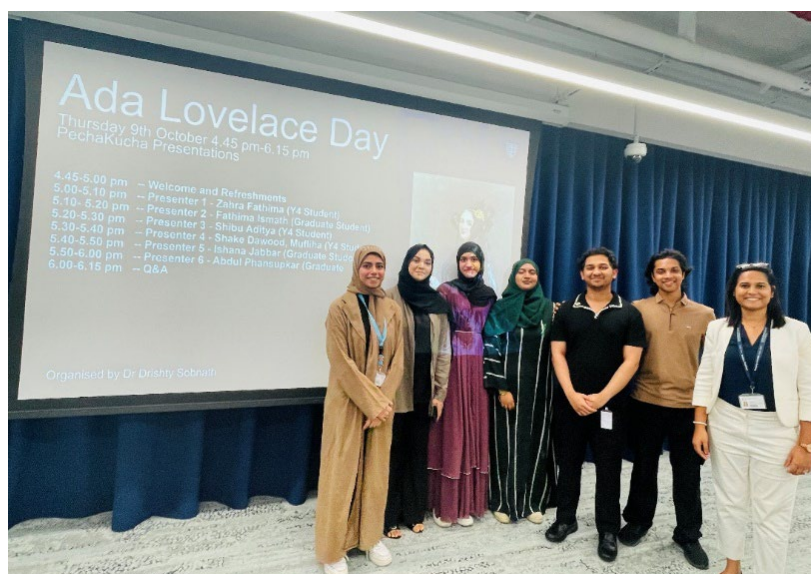
Presenter 3 - **Shibu Aditya** (Y4 Student)

Presenter 4 - **Shake Dawood**, Mufliha (Y4 Student)

Presenter 5 - **Ishana Jabbar** (Graduate Student)

Presenter 6 - **Abdul Phansupkar** (Graduate Student)

- Fathima Zaineb Ismath: *"Presenting in the Pecha Kucha format on Ada Lovelace Day was a great opportunity to share my journey as a computer science graduate. I spoke about my achievements and challenges and motivated my juniors to explore opportunities in the tech industry. It fostered a valuable two-way learning experience."*
- Shake Dawood Mufliha: *"Speaking at Ada Lovelace Day was surreal, from watching the talks last year to delivering my own this year, it felt like a full-circle moment. The PechaKucha format pushed me out of my comfort zone, but that's exactly where the growth was. I genuinely enjoyed the entire process and am so grateful to Dr. Drishty Sobnath and the extended MACS team for making this space possible."*
- Phansupkar Abdul: *"It was a pleasure to return to HWUD and speak with the third-year students about my career path and the lessons I've learned throughout my time at the university. It was incredibly fulfilling to reconnect with these upcoming graduates and share my experiences with them."*
- Shibu, Aditya : *"It was a lovely experience to return and share my journey. Hoping to inspire even one person in the crowd feels like the best way I could give back to the university that has shaped so much of who I am. A heartfelt thank you to Prof. Drishty for giving me the opportunity and platform to share my experiences."*



Organizer:

Drishty Sobnath



What is PechaKucha?

Checkout:



en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PechaKucha





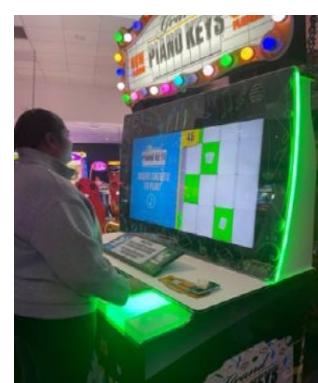
3. A Women@CS event on the Edinburgh Campus



On the 16th of October, **Women@CS** enjoyed a fantastic evening of bowling, generously funded by **Athena Swan**. The event brought together both new and existing members of our group, giving everyone the chance to meet, connect, and socialise outside of the university setting. Taking place during Consolidation Week, it was the perfect opportunity to take a well-deserved break from coursework and spend time together in a relaxed, fun environment. The evening was filled with laughter, friendly competition, and great conversations — a reminder of how important it is to build community and support among women in computing. We'd like to express our sincere thanks to Athena Swan for sponsoring this event and helping us continue to create inclusive and engaging opportunities for our members.



Women@CS



4. Hackathon for Women in Mathematical Sciences

ICMS Hackathon for Women in Mathematical Sciences February 2026



During the week of the **16th of February 2026**, the **International Centre for Mathematical Sciences (ICMS)** will be hosting a workshop for women in mathematics and AI, at the Bayes centre. The workshop will be composed of talks in the mornings on AI-related topics (e.g., ethics), as well as talks from inspiring women working in AI; and coding sessions through tutorials in the afternoons.

Speakers: We are looking for colleagues interested in organising **short tutorials** (3 hours approx.) or giving **talks** (from 30 min to 2 hours, depending on the topic), on any topic related to AI that would inspire fruitful discussions.

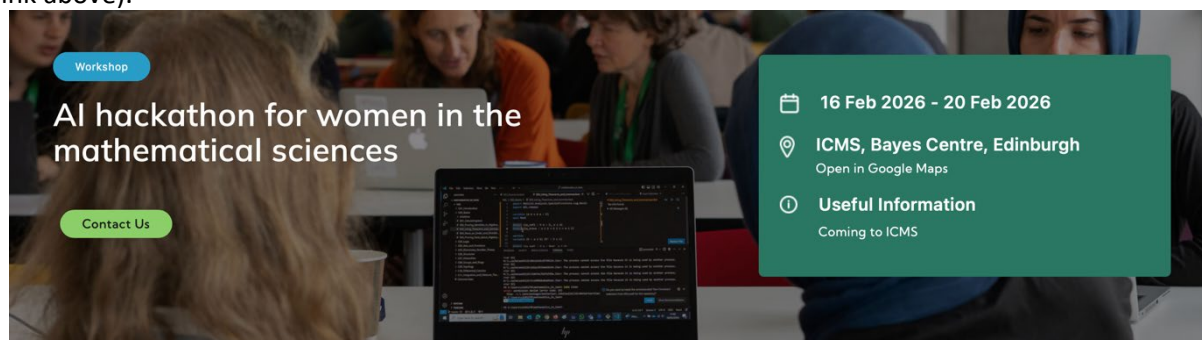
For the **coding sessions**, for simplicity, we will focus on coding in Python only.

If you are interested, please contact **Audrey Repetti** [a.repetti@hw.ac.uk].

Participation: The event will be open to all women in mathematics with an interest in AI, at any career stage starting from PhD students. We are expecting about 30 participants. If you are interested, please consider applying through the ICMS website:

<https://icms.ac.uk/activities/workshop/ai-hackathon/>

application will be open during the month of November). The event is free for Heriot-Watt University and University of Edinburgh participants. Details and schedule will be made available on the ICMS website (see link above).



If you have suggestions or questions related to Athena SWAN, or an event that you would like to advertise, then please send them to us via athena-macs@hw.ac.uk. In addition, if you would like to be part of the MACS Athena SWAN Team (a.k.a. the Self-Assessment Team (SAT)) then please do get in touch.



*Audrey Repetti and Andrew Ireland
(MACS Athena Swan Coordinators)*

