

Heriot-Watt University Athena Swan Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

1 Constitution and purpose

1.1 The University's Athena Swan activity has developed over the last 7 years, with an increase in scale and complexity. A review was undertaken to determine future governance arrangements, and recommendations were agreed by the Global Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (GEDI) in Feb 2022.

1.2 Governance arrangements include establishment of (a) a dedicated Programme Management Board overseeing delivery of the Institutional and School Athena Swan action plans and other key programme deliverables (b) **an Athena Swan Advisory Group made up of University stakeholder representatives** (c) Utilisation of the Annual Planning Round to embed action resourcing, reporting and monitoring. See *Appendix 1, Fig 1*.

1.3. Delivery of the Programme will be overseen by the Athena Swan Programme Management Board (ASPMB).

1.4 The Advisory Group (ASAG, or "The Group") will act as an advisory body, allowing stakeholder engagement and consultation. With representation from across the university community, including those actively delivering EDI initiatives. It will provide a space to develop technical expertise in all things Athena Swan, share best practice and surface issues, risks and opportunities. This group will annually review institutional data to determine the impact of programme delivery. They will also be integral to the 2026 Institutional renewal.

1.5 The Chair of ASAG will be a member of the Programme Board. It's success will be monitored via consultation with members and review by the Programme Board.

2 Remit

2.1 The Group will:

- a) Act as an advisory body, allowing stakeholder engagement and consultation;
- b) Provide a space to develop technical expertise in the Athena Swan Charter;
- c) Share best practice and identify issues, risks and opportunities;
- d) Annually review institutional data to determine the impact of programme delivery
- e) Be integral to the 2026 Institutional renewal – scope to be determined in due course.

Examples might include:

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- Scrutinising and commenting on qualitative and quantitative information in order to identify key findings, gaps and areas that will require further research and will feed into action planning;
- Identifying and recommending suitable priorities and actions to be taken forward e.g. in the next University-level submission
- Raising awareness of gender equality issues at HWU;
- Helping develop practical solutions to address issues of underrepresentation of women at senior levels and occupational and discipline-based segregation;
- Representing the views of staff and acting as a body of expertise on gender issues;
- Advising senior management on how to promote an inclusive culture for all colleagues, including those with caring responsibilities;
- Involvement and consultation on the university's plans, strategies, policies and guidance;
- Acting as a channel for communication with senior management on gender issues;
- Assisting in the coordination of events and activities which celebrate gender diversity at HW;
- Supporting the Athena Swan application process e.g. by participating in mock panels
- Facilitating information sharing between members

3 Composition and Membership

3.1 The Group will have senior representation from each Primary Academic Unit.

3.2 In finalising membership consideration will be given to the gender balance of the group, with representation of staff from different grades and staff (research, academic, professional services, students etc.) and other diversity considerations, as required by Athena SWAN.

3.3 In keeping with Athena Swan's UK specification, membership will primarily be from across the UK, with participants from Dubai and Malaysia helping to inform and shape our approach.

3.4 The group may co-opt members who they consider have particular skills and experience which would assist the work of the group.

4 Equality and Diversity Statement

4.1 The Group will exercise its responsibility, as far as possible, to promote diversity of representation within its membership and the membership of any working group or committee established by it. The Group will also act to promote equality of opportunity for all colleagues who are involved in carrying out its business.

5 Quorum

5.1 Quorum will be a simple majority, or half plus one where there is an even number of members.

6 Committee Chair

6.1 The Chair will be selected from a pool of individuals with experience of Athena Swan and/or of gender equality issues.

6.2 The Chair will be a member of the Programme Board.

7 Frequency

7.1 The Group will meet at least 3 times per annum for workshop style events with additional specialist workshops and sub-groups.

7.2 Where there is difficulty convening, consultation may be made by correspondence.

8 Attendance at meetings

8.1 Members are expected to be active and it is anticipated that they will contribute in some way to the business of the Group.

8.2 Members should prioritise their attendance at Group events. Where a member cannot attend a specific event, this should be raised with the Chair to see if support can be given to help the member to attend, and to identify how best to handle the absence (e.g. attendance of a proxy)

8.3 British Sign Language assistance will be made available on request.

8.4 Attendance outside a member's regular working pattern, that requires child or adult care will be supported where possible, as outlined in the university's expenses policy.

8.5 Attendance by video conference or telephone conference will be supported as best possible.

8.6 Others may be invited to attend on an *ad-hoc* basis for particular agenda items.

8.7 The group will maintain a record of attendance at each of its meetings.

9 Reporting procedures

9.1 The Chair of ASAG will be a member of the Programme Board and provide a stakeholder voice at the Programme Board on any matters which the Group considers should be brought to their attention, including risks, issues and opportunities, and on any matters requiring Programme Board input.

9.2 ASAG's success will be monitored via consultation with members.

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9.3 Minutes of each event including actions will be distributed to members of the Group as soon after the meeting as is practical. The Chair will approve the content of reports before release including the redaction of any information deemed necessary for reasons of confidentiality.

9.4 The Group's records (agenda, papers, and minutes) are included in the University's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme. Information will be readily accessible on request to members of the public under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act FOI(S)A with the exception of information which is deemed to be covered by a specific exemption under the Act.

9.5 Minutes and reports of the Board will denote those areas of reported business which are deemed to fall within the designation of information which is 'exempt' under the FOI(S)A.

10 Forward Planning

10.1 The effectiveness of the Group will be reviewed informally each year.

10.2 Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually with approval by the Programme Board.

10.3 The Group is expected to operate until the Programme is closed. The Programme Board will review the ongoing need for the Group as part of closure of the Programme.

Actions that may be taken by the Group

The Committee may:

- Note
- Receive
- Consider
- Approve
- Endorse
- Recommend

Most appropriate minuting style

Brief in style while providing an auditable record of all decisions reached by the Group.

Resources

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Chair	Professor Beatrice Pelloni
Clerk	Mika Moriyama
Meetings	Main meetings will normally be held three times per annum. Subgroups may meet outside these. Additional meetings may be called as necessary.
Workspace	A Teams/SharePoint site will be provided to facilitate communication of papers and act as an archive for all relevant files.

Agreed governance arrangements for Athena Swan at Heriot-Watt University

GEDI agreed the following governance arrangements at its inaugural February 2022 meeting. In summary: establishment of (a) a dedicated Programme Board overseeing delivery of the Institutional and School Athena Swan action plans and other key programme deliverables (b) an Athena Swan Advisory Group made up of University stakeholder representatives (c) Utilisation of the Annual Planning Round to embed action resourcing, reporting and monitoring. See *Fig 1*.

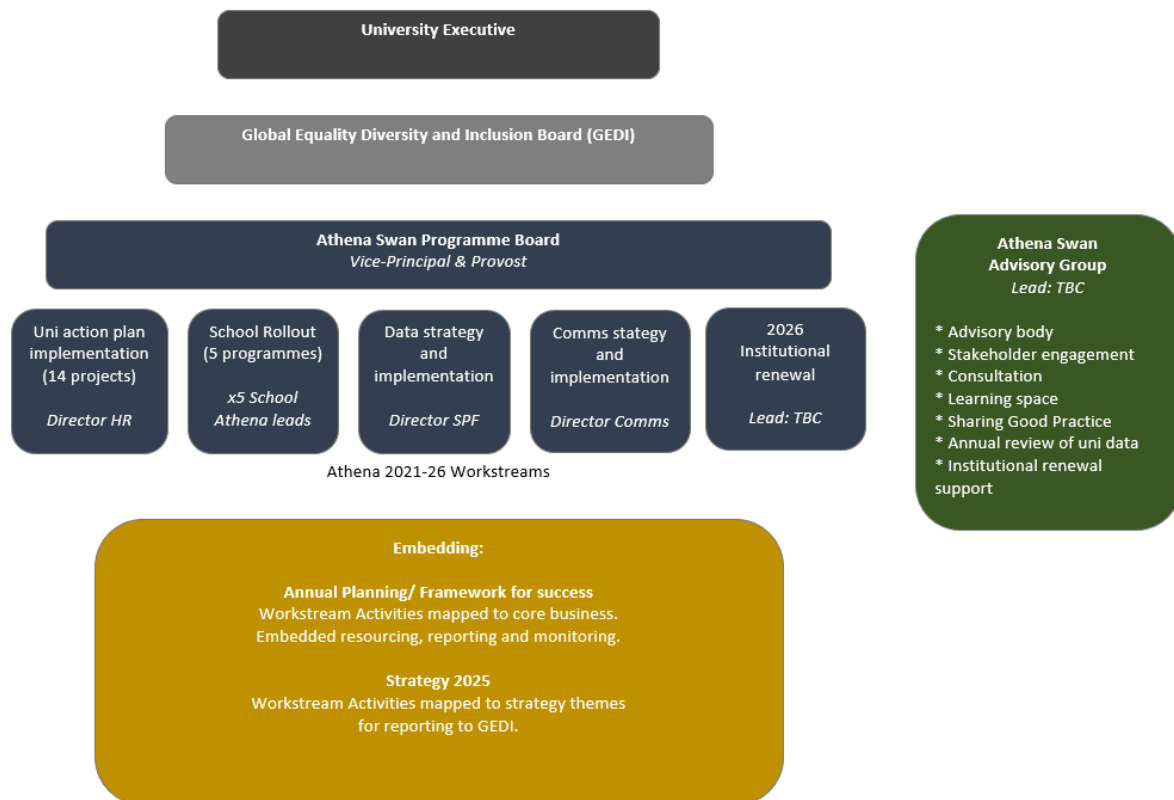


Fig. 1: AGREED Governance arrangements for Athena Swan at Heriot-Watt University