

University of York Department of English and Related Literature – Athena Swan Silver 2024 Action Plan

THEME ONE - REPRESENTATION & RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE DEPARTMENT:					
No	OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE	PLANNED ACTIONS & TIMEFRAME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	SUCCESS CRITERIA & OUTCOME
1.1	Achieve and maintain equitable representation in departmental governance	<p>Female Senior Lecturers serve disproportionately in departmental governance</p> <p>At the start of the 2023-24 academic year, departmental officer holders had the following demographics: 35% Lecturers (20% F/10% M/5% NB); 50% Senior Lectures (100% F); 15% Professors (5% F/10% M) [See Appendix 2b.9]</p> <p>At the start of the 2023-24 academic year, Workloads committee had the following demographics: 80% F/20% M; 50% Senior Lecturers (of which 100% F), 10% Professors (100% F), 20% Lecturers (50% F/50% M), 20% PSS (50% M/50% F)</p> <p>ECRs often feel overburdened with large citizenship roles (Source: ECR Focus Group)</p>	<p>1a. Review/revise committee memberships for wider representation across career level, gender, other areas of diversity</p> <p>1b. Make ECR and Professorial membership on Workloads Committee a requirement (Dec '23 - Dec '24)</p> <p>2a. Develop transparent and formalised processes to appoint staff members to citizenship roles, particularly those that serve on governance committees</p> <p>2b. Update Staff Handbook and Workload Policy documents to clearly outline the duties of citizenship roles, how they are allocated, and how they are transferred (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, DMT, BoS</p> <p>Implementation: HoD, DMT, BoS</p> <p>Responsibility: HoD and BoS</p> <p>Implementation: HoD</p>	<p>✓ All key committees and office holders are staffed by a representative demographic of the department</p> <p>✓ Staff Handbook accurately describes the responsibilities of citizenship roles in the department and is reviewed regularly to reflect changes in those roles (annually)</p>

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1.2	Workload allocation is transparent, gender balanced, and fit for purpose	<p>At the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year, 19% of academic staff were over their target workload, of which 82% were female [Appendix 2b.3].</p> <p>Only 65% of female staff feel that gender does not play a role in their work allocation (Source: Staff Survey)</p> <p>Only 49% of all staff (43% M/35% F) feel that their current workload is manageable. Unmanageable workloads and a lack of transparency around workload allocation has led to staff feeling the department does not support their mental health. Only 50% M/57% F report that the department supports their mental health/wellbeing (Source: Staff Survey)</p> <p>PSS report being over-stretched in their workloads, particularly taking on extra duties from academic staff during periods of industrial action (Source: PSS Focus Group)</p>	<p>1. Increase transparency of workload allocations within the department to review workload inequities (Dec '23 - June '24)</p> <p>2. Workload allocation procedures are standardised and brought forward in the academic calendar (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p> <p>3. Clear processes are in place for staff to propose amendments to workload hours for specific citizenship roles (Dec '23 - Sept '24)</p> <p>4 Better planning for anticipated pressured periods allows for more mobility for PSS staff across the faculty (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD</p> <p>Implementation: HoD & Workloads Committee</p> <p>Responsibility: HoD & DHoFO</p> <p>Implementation: HoD & DHoFO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduce the number of academic staff over their workload target to 5% ✓ Anonymous workload data is published and shared within the department consistently and openly ✓ Workload allocations will be annually reviewed with office holders ✓ Teaching is assigned to all staff at least three months before the beginning of the academic year and workload adjustments are made if necessary ✓ >70% of staff report that their mental health and wellbeing are supported in the department ✓ Faculty wide planning of PSS resource enables capacity to be redeployed during periods of highest workload
1.3	PSS are active members of departmental	PSS feel that departmental meetings are not always spaces where they can contribute. Data suggests PSS would	1. BoS meetings will include a standing item for 'day-to-day' PSS updates (Jan '24 -)	Responsibility: Chair of AS & BoS	✓ PSS management team will have representation in 100% of departmental committee meetings

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	committees and feel able to contribute to departmental governance	<p>welcome a clearer sense that departmental meetings are places where PS, not just academic, concerns can be raised (Source: PSS Focus Group)</p> <p>PSS do not have a clear sense of which departmental committees they are welcome to attend and whether being formal non-members of BoS precludes their active involvement (Source: PSS Focus Group)</p>	2. Department will standardise policies around committee membership & participation (Sept '24 - Sept '25)	<p>Implementation Chair of BoS</p> <p>Responsibility: Chair of AS and BoS, BoS</p> <p>Implementation: Chair of BoS, HoD</p>	<p>✓ PSS membership in specific departmental committees is clearly defined in committee terms of reference</p>

THEME TWO – INDUCTION, BELONGING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

No	OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE	PLANNED ACTIONS & TIMEFRAME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	SUCCESS CRITERIA & OUTCOME
2.1	Creation of effective induction procedures for all new staff and new tutors in the department	<p>No current, standardised, and consistently implemented induction for new staff exists</p> <p>A lack of formalised induction procedures has a negative impact on workload, departmental integration, and accessing support for all staff (Source: Staff Survey; ECR Focus Group)</p>	<p>1. All new staff are inducted when they join the department (Sept '24 -)</p> <p>2. The start-of-term GTA induction will expand to include a half-day training event that covers things like "What to do if something goes wrong" and "Combining Teaching with PhD research" (Sept '24 -)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, DHoFO</p> <p>Implementation: HoD, DHoFO, DRC, PGT, PGR, and UGT Chairs</p> <p>Responsibility: GTA Coordinator</p> <p>Implementation: GTA Coordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All new staff will be formally inducted within their first month of employment in the department ✓ Induction procedures will be formally outlined in the staff handbook ✓ Probation reviews reflect the effective implementation of induction procedures for new staff ✓ All new GTAs receive robust induction training before teaching in the department
2.2	Professional development for academic and professional support staff is consistently and formally offered	<p>Post-COVID, PDR and probationary reviews have not been consistently offered to academic staff</p> <p>There is a strong desire for better professional development schemes</p>	<p>1a Formalise the role of professional development in the department's mentorship scheme via updating the staff handbook and developing an online tracking system</p> <p>1b. Devise a detailed and standardised timetable for annual PDRs/Probation Review (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, Chair of Research</p> <p>Implementation: HoD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Academic staff receive annual PDR and/or probationary reviews that consistently address career advancement and are captured via online tracking system ✓ PSS are able to gain experience working in different departmental roles

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		<p>in the department and for PDR/probation review to directly and clearly aid in career advancement (Source: Staff Survey; ECR Focus Group)</p> <p>PSS need greater opportunities for promotion and development of skill sets/expertise (Source: Staff Survey; PSS Focus Group)</p>	<p>2. Implement more flexibility in PSS roles to allow for greater skill development and professional advancement within the departmental team (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, DHoFO</p> <p>Implementation: DHoFO</p>	<p>✓ PSS receive annual PDR and/or probationary reviews</p>
2.3	<p>Line management is effective and staff are able to routinely communicate with their line supervisor</p>	<p>Academic staff report that existing structures of line management in the departmental do not work well and that their line manager is not always reachable. The data suggests that this disproportionately impacts ECR and fixed-term colleagues (Source: Staff Survey, ECR Focus Group, Parent Focus Group)</p> <p>PSS report that changes to line management positions have made line managers less present and available, further hindering PSS professional development (Source: PSS Focus Group)</p>	<p>1 Restructure departmental governance to create two, empowered DHoD positions. This will in turn allow for greater workload capacity for HoD to better line manage (Sept '25 - Sept '26)</p> <p>2. Establish a PSS management team that will discuss collectively how PSS management and development can be better supported (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, BoS</p> <p>Implementation: HoD</p> <p>Responsibility: DHoFO</p> <p>Implementation: DHoFO</p>	<p>✓ All staff receive one 1-to-1 meeting with their line manager at least once per academic year</p> <p>✓ >75% of all staff report that their line manager supports their career development</p> <p>✓ All PSS to participate in regular, 1-to-1 meetings with line manager weekly</p>

THEME THREE – ACCESS & WIDENING PARTICIPATION:					
No	OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE	PLANNED ACTIONS & TIMEFRAME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	SUCCESS CRITERIA & OUTCOME
3.1	Foster a socio-economically and racially diverse academic community for UGs and PGs	<p>Recent progress in diversifying the socioeconomic background of our UG students may now have stopped (Source: WP Data)</p> <p>Although the university does not systematically track demographic data for PG students, staff report the need for greater racial diversity in our PG cohorts (which are majority female) (Source: Staff Survey, PGR Chair)</p>	<p>1 Establish a Widening Participation Officer citizenship role in the department (Jan '24 - May '24)</p> <p>2a) Explore more active departmental collaborations with university-level Widening Participation initiatives programs such as YESS & Next Step (Sept '24 - June '26)</p> <p>2b) Increase departmental engagement and scholarship opportunities for BAME students through YCEDE and the Black Access Scheme (Sept '24 - June '26)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD</p> <p>Implementation: HoD</p> <p>Responsibility: HoD, Widening Participation Officer, SSM</p> <p>Responsibility: PGR Chair, Widening Participation Officer</p> <p>Implementation: Widening Participation Officer, PGR Chair</p>	<p>✓ Improve conversion rates by 10% for students who come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds</p> <p>✓ Minimum of 3 departmental visits annually to schools that are underrepresented in HE</p> <p>✓ >10% of our students engage with programs through YESS and Next Step</p> <p>✓ PG information sessions and PGT doctoral mentorship include information on YCEDE and YGRS scholarship opportunities for BAME students</p>
3.2	Ensure that our pastoral supervision meets the needs of students from a wide variety of backgrounds - particularly male	Students from non-elite schools can struggle to feel that they belong socially and intellectually in the department (Source: Staff Survey; Student Survey; Widening Participation Focus Group Data)	1 Integrate student support resources such as the Success at York Toolkit and SLLC into departmental pastoral supervision (Sept '24 - Sept '25)	<p>Responsibility: HoD, Widening Participation Officer, SSM</p> <p>Implementation:</p>	<p>✓ >20% of our students engage with the Success at York Toolkit</p> <p>✓ >65% of male students report that their degree helps them present themselves with greater confidence</p>

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	students and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds	Only 50% of students who identify as male said that their degree helps them present themselves with greater confidence (Source: Student Survey)		HoD, Widening Participation Officer, SSM	
3.3	Better facilitate international students in transitioning to the department and UK HE	International students would welcome further awareness of their challenges in accessing materials and readings, as well guidance in navigating the norms of UK HE (Source: International Student Focus Group Data)	<p>1 Reading lists take into account varying levels of access for international students (Sept '24 -)</p> <p>2 Department communications welcoming international students better explain social and academic support systems available to students (Sept 24' -)</p>	<p>Responsibility: Chair of UGT, BoS</p> <p>Implementation: Chair of UGT, BoS</p>	<p>✓ First-year reading lists include links to online texts to allow international students to prepare for the course even if required translations/editions are not available in their home country</p> <p>✓ All international students receive information from the department about student groups and university networks (YUSU or GSA) they can join or contact before arriving</p>
3.4	Create a welcoming departmental environment for staff and students from a variety of religious backgrounds	<p>Departmental events/discussions often assume observance of Christian holidays and do not acknowledge the fuller range of religious faiths, such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and their observances.</p> <p>Staff report that the department could better recognize and make visible the religious diversity of its staff and student body (Source: Staff Survey)</p>	<p>1 Where possible, use religiously-neutral language for departmental events (Jan '24 -)</p> <p>2 Acknowledge non-Christian holidays in comms and spaces and publicise the university EDI calendar (Jan 24' -)</p> <p>3 Establish designated prayer spaces within the department (Sept 24' - Sept '25)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, DHoFO, EDI Forum, PSS, AS Chair</p> <p>Implementation: HoD, DHoFO, EDI Forum, PSS, AS Chair</p>	<p>✓ Departmental newsletter and bulletin boards acknowledge a variety of religious holidays that occur during the academic year</p> <p>✓ University EDI Google Calendar is integrated into departmental event calendar and disseminated across the department</p> <p>✓ Staff, students, and visitors have access to a private, designated prayer space</p>

THEME FOUR – RESEARCH, MENTORSHIP, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT					
No	OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE	PLANNED ACTIONS & TIMEFRAME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	SUCCESS CRITERIA & OUTCOME
4.1	Academic mentorship is consistently offered to all staff and effectively supports their research and PGR supervision	<p>Only 58% M/52% F agree that the department's mentoring scheme for academic staff effectively supports career development (Source: Staff Survey)</p> <p>Staff report a strong desire for consistent and consistently effective mentorship provision in the department to support research and academic development (Source: Staff Survey)</p> <p>Fixed-term contract staff feel particularly disadvantaged by the lack of clear and formal mentorship procedures (Source: Staff Survey, ECR Focus Group)</p>	<p>1a. Ensure the timely assignment of mentors to new staff, especially those on fixed-term contracts, and clarify expectations around semesterly mentorship meetings</p> <p>1b. Clarify departmental policies on assigning mentors and requesting a change of mentor</p> <p>1c. Provide specific guidance on the mentorship needs for fixed term academic colleagues and direct all staff toward university mentorship programs (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p> <p>1d. Offer workshops on PGR supervision and opportunities for staff to share best practice (Jan '24 - Sept '24)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD</p> <p>Implementation: HoD</p> <p>Responsibility: PGR Chair</p> <p>Implementation: PGR Chair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ >70% of academic staff report that the department's mentoring scheme effectively supports career development ✓ All staff are assigned a mentor and have been informed of how to request a new mentor ✓ Staff formally meet with their academic mentor at least twice an academic year ✓ PGR Supervision Workshops are offered at least twice during the academic year
4.2	Increased grant applications from ECRs (of whom a majority are female)	<p>Only 5% of staff members (100% F) intending to submit an external grant application in the 2023-24 academic year are lecturers; 55% are senior lecturers (73% F/27% M); 35% are professors (50% F/50% M); and 5% are postdocs (100% F) (Source: DRC Grant Register)</p>	<p>1 Include grant application workshops within the regular meeting cycle of the ECR forum (Jan '24 -)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, Chair of Research, ECR Forum Chairs, Chair of PGR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 15% of staff intending to submit an academic grant are ECRs ✓ Information regarding university grant-application boot-camps are disseminated at the ECR Forum and to PGR students

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No	OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE	PLANNED ACTIONS & TIMEFRAME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	SUCCESS CRITERIA & OUTCOME
		No lecturers in the department are currently a CI or PI on awarded grant projects (Source: DRC Grant Register)	<p>2 Incorporate grant application advice and guidance formally within the department’s mentorship scheme (Sept ‘24 - Sept ‘25)</p> <p>3 Increase grant application sessions/ support for PGR students to better prepare them for ECR role (Sept 24’ -)</p>	<p>Implementation: HoD, Chair of Research, ECR Forum Chairs, Chair of PGR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At least one ECR Forum meeting per academic year is dedicated to grant application support ✓ At least one PGR support session per academic year is dedicated to grant application support

THEME FIVE – EMBEDDING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION ACROSS OUR GOVERNANCE					
No	OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE	PLANNED ACTIONS & TIMEFRAME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	SUCCESS CRITERIA & OUTCOME
5.1	Review and revise roles, responsibilities and reporting structures so EDI and AS priorities are consistently understood and owned across the department.	<p>Department is ambitious to build on its AS review work by putting relevant issues at the forefront of more discussions and decisions (Source: SAT, DMT, Workloads Committee))</p> <p>AS Chair’s reach and remit currently limited by only sitting on one governance committee (Source: SAT, DMT)</p>	<p>1a AS Chair sits on DMT (Jan ‘24 -)</p> <p>1b Embed a ‘roaming brief’ for the AS Chair to attend different committees periodically to review relevant activity against the AS Action Plan (Sept ‘24 -)</p> <p>1c. Review the JD/role of the EDI Forum Chair alongside the AS Chair to introduce best practice from other departments (Jan ‘24 - Jan ‘25)</p>	<p>Responsibility: HoD, AS Chair, EDI Forum</p> <p>Implementation: HoD, AS Chair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The department will have established clear lines of direct report for AS issues to DMT ✓ AS Action Plan themes clearly evidenced in wider departmental planning activity, project and spending priorities, and workloads. ✓ Progress and feedback linked to AS Action Plan is routinely reported to the Departmental Management Team and Board of Studies.

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5.2	Build on the evidence underpinning this action plan by enhancing the use of AS data to understand and respond to departmental developments, performance, and direction.	AS data is often gathered inconsistently and in a manner that unduly burdens PSS (Source: SAT, BoS, Workloads Committee)	<p>1a Develop clear structures to facilitate departmental office holders reporting to/attending SAT meetings where appropriate to disseminate data and information</p> <p>1b Improve processes for SAT routine data gathering that is more effectively tied to dynamic Action Plan priorities (Sept '24 - Sept '25)</p>	<p>Implementation: HoD/DHoFO</p> <p>Responsibility: HoD, DHoFO, AS Chair</p>	<p>✓ AS data informs all relevant areas of departmental planning and is part of the data set used in the annual planning process.</p> <p>✓ AS priorities are written into departmental education and research strategy</p>