Appendix E: The Submission Report

A. Organisation of submission report

B. Level of award

The Department is seeking **Gold** status following award of silver status in March 2007. We have fully embraced the charter principles; we can demonstrate good retention of women at key early transition points and have female staff at all academic grades. Since the previous submission in Nov. 2006, we have appointed two new female academic staff, one at lecturer level the other at professorial level. We claim evidence of good practice at many levels. We recently hosted a *Good Practice* dissemination event with the RSC for all science departments. The Head of Department's advisory group has considered the action plans outlined in the 2006 Athena Swan submission.

The Department has identified two key targets for improvement:

- Attaining gender parity for undergraduate and postgraduate numbers
- The promotion of female academic staff to the higher academic grades

The further that we can go in this process, the more strongly will the good practice be embedded in the departmental culture.

C. Departmental response to RSC/ Athena Swan reports

The first *minuted* analysis of women's issues in the Department followed the 2003 RSC report on *Recruitment and Retention of Women in Academic Chemistry*; Professor Robin Perutz (HoD) commissioned Professor Jane Thomas-Oates to convene a working group to explore what could be learnt from the report. The recommendations of the group, made the same year (Table A), were all implemented immediately and continue in practice today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation in 2003 Athena/RSC Report</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(a) Recruitment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Particular encouragement to women candidates to apply for academic positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target women on long-term contracts as potential applicants for academic positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include female candidate on interview shortlisting and be aware that a woman’s CV may under-represent skills and accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-friendly moving policy to be made clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptiveness of Department to part-time/job-sharing/annualised hours to be made clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial, gender balance of Department should be considered in decision-making if other factors equal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues from checklist</th>
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<td>University exit questionnaires - are they followed?</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are staff trained as mentors?</td>
<td>No¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff are encouraged to apply for promotion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women not sidelined in atypical jobs</td>
<td>Improving²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee membership rotated</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness in departmental management</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of work-life balance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>Timing of departmental meetings</td>
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A verbal recommendation expressed that short-term contract staff were unwilling to put themselves forward for that promotion as they could price themselves out of the job. Perutz insisted that people must be promoted to the grade deserved. The department has made money available to address this issue and has initiated career planning sessions.

The Department has been actively engaged in monitoring and improving its performance towards female students, postdocs and academic staff since the publication of the first RSC/Athena report in 2003.

The Department was selected for interview as part of process leading to the 2004 RSC/Athena report Good Practice in University Departments; indeed many aspects of the ‘University of Utopia’ were derived from us. Examples include the annual teaching prize, publicity for women’s successes, photos and publicity for the Department’s mixed cricket team and promotions seminars.

When the final RSC report was published, the Department commissioned a diverse group, including administrative, technical and research staff, to investigate how the Department matched up to the report’s checklist (Table B).

Table B. Follow-up of 2004 Athena/RSC report

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There is currently no training for academic staff in their role as mentors
Disability officer has been taken over by a senior male member of staff

D. Departmental assessment process for Athena Swan submission

A departmental working group was assembled to:
(i) Identify and evaluate Departmental initiatives supporting Charter principles.
(ii) Identify the key data/statistics needed for self-assessment process.
(iii) Formulate and disseminate Athena Swan process within the department.
(iv) Formulate a strategy/timetable towards submission
(v) Evaluate the data/statistics collected, identify key barriers
(vi) Formulate new initiatives.

The Athena Swan working group comprises
- Paul Walton (Head of Department, departmental representative at the University Athena Swan working and sub-group)
- Anne Routledge (Lecturer, Departmental representative at the University Athena Swan working group)
- Caroline Dessent (Royal Society Research Fellow)
- Sue Couling (Teaching Fellow, Graduate & Postdoctoral Training Officer)
- Verena Görtz (Post-Doctoral Research Associate)
- Robin Perutz (former Head of Department, member of the National Athena Swan steering committee)

The group meets on a regular basis and all academic and non-academic staff were consulted on the Athena Swan process via an open meeting in Oct 2006. All staff forums have been informed on the Athena swan process and outcome Further dissemination of the Athena action plan and consultation will be held in 2007.

E. Strategic initiatives

The Department set up an ‘Inclusiveness for all’ Committee in 2005, designed to identify and address gender and ethnicity issues with the aim of enabling all staff to reach their full potential. The membership is drawn from academic, postdoctoral, administrative, and technical staff. The HoD and his predecessor (as disability officer) are members.

The Department has appointed Dr Sue Couling to implement training and personal/professional development for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. She set up an informal mentoring scheme in Oct 2006 for new postdoctoral researchers which will be expanded to include all researchers.

F. Key areas for assessment: Current and new initiatives in support of charter principles

F1. Baseline and SET academic profile

The academic SET baseline (Tables 1 and 2, Appendix H) shows the 10 current female academic staff, made up of two professors, one reader (appointed 2005 on a British Heart Foundation Fellowship, with guaranteed transfer to Anniversary Readership), one senior lecturer, four lecturers and two independent research fellows (with guaranteed lectureships). Professor Eleanor Dodson FRS, who retired in 2004, is still active within the department and has been appointed an Emeritus Professor. Figure 1 shows that York has a significantly higher percentage of female academics than the national average for chemistry departments in 2005 (Fig. 1).
Figure 1. Academic staff numbers

The recruitment data for academic and research posts in 2005 shows that out of the 17 appointments made, there were almost equal numbers of male and female appointees (F 8: M 9) (Table 3, Appendix H).

Tables 4, 5 and 6 (Appendix H) provide numbers of research staff, Ph.D. and undergraduate degrees awarded, showing that the Department has an excellent record in retaining women at the early transition points.

- Undergraduate (46% female of those graduating) to postgraduate student (47% of those gaining postgraduate qualification are female, Fig. 2)
- Postgraduate student to postdoctoral researcher (40% of PDRAs are female)
- PDRA to early career lecturer (38% of lecturer B grade are female)

Figure 2. Numbers gaining undergraduate and postgraduate degrees

York has a lower proportion of female undergraduates but a higher percentage of female postgraduate students than the national average. In contrast to the national data showing that the increase in the percentage of female chemistry students is actually due to a decrease in male students, York has maintained its absolute numbers of both sexes (Fig. 3).
Figure 3. Number of chemistry students graduating with undergraduate degrees

Tables 7 and 8 of Appendix H show the proportion of graduates and postdoctoral researchers staying in academia: ca. 40% are female. The information demonstrates that the department’s good record continues to this transition point.

Current policy/initiatives addressing representation and retention of women

The Department operates a transparent academic promotions policy, running promotions seminars and actively encourages those who may be reluctant to put themselves forward. A designated ‘champion’ on the Departmental personnel group also provides promotion support via constructive criticism of draft CVs. We support aspirations of junior female academic staff through collaboration on joint research grants and studentships with more senior colleagues. These policies have resulted in an increase in the number of women promoted ‘in house’. In 2005 one female independent research fellow was promoted to Research III and in 2006 one female, part-time lecturer was promoted to senior lecturer. Between 2004 and 2006 the numbers of female staff applying to senior lecturer grade has doubled.

The Department is proactive in supporting the careers of independent research fellows by guaranteeing academic positions to outstanding fellows; three women currently hold such guarantees.

For external academic appointments, potential female candidates are identified and encouraged to apply. The advertisement always emphasises a family friendly policy with the opportunity for part-time working or job-share. The interview panels contain at least one female academic. All appointments are based on merit alone; nevertheless, statistics suggest that if a woman applies, she is statistically more likely to be interviewed and has a significantly greater chance of appointment (Table 3, Appendix H).

The Department recognises that women are more likely to favour interdisciplinary working than men. In the last 5 years, 18% of collaborative Doctoral Training Account (DTA)* studentships have been held by women working with another female colleague and 18% held by women working in collaboration with a male colleague.

* Research Councils finance research studentships through so-called Doctoral Training Accounts
Dr Annie Hodgson (editor of Chemistry Review) acts an outreach co-ordinator. She not only provides a visible female role model in schools but her work (and that of the other staff involved in outreach, both male and female) has helped to maintain a healthy undergraduate intake with good numbers of females.

We interview all UCAS applicants to the Department. We aim for female members of academic staff to interview female candidates. This visible presentation of positive role models is designed to increase the percentage of female applicants with conditional/unconditional offers from York accepting their offers. Figures for 2005 and 2006 show female candidates with offers from York are still marginally less likely to translate their offer into a firm acceptance [2005: F (18.7%) M (22.1%), 2006: F (20.1%) M (21.6%)].

Key Challenges Identified from statistics
- We aim to increase the female undergraduate numbers to gain parity with males.
- Female academics are still clustered in the lower academic grades. We aim for similar representation at all grades.

Proposed plan of action
In response to the key challenges above, the self-assessment group has identified the following plans of action.

1. Presentation of percentage of female staff at all academic levels annually to Departmental personnel group and HoD advisory group. Responsibility: HoD from 2007 with the target of 50:50 F: M academic staff by 2020.
2. Presentation of data on female graduate students and researchers to HoD advisory group and Graduate School Chair with the target of 50:50 F: M graduate students by 2015.

F 2. Positive support for women at career transition points
Current departmental initiatives in support of charter principles
The Department has appointed a Graduate and Postdoctoral Training Officer (Dr Sue Couling); the only other similar appointment at York has been made by Biology. She supports post-graduate students and post-doctoral researchers with advice on career and professional development and opportunities. Her work is designed to address the negative impact of short-term contracts and to tackle obstacles in the transition from PhD into an academic career. The previous initiative on supporting postdoctoral researchers in the department had major shortcomings. The remit was given to a senior academic who had insufficient time to undertake the role in the necessary proactive manner.

Dr Couling has written a document that outlines the roles and responsibilities of contract researchers and principal investigators. This states explicitly that a principal investigator must offer career development training and support, either directly or via the postdoctoral training officer. She promotes the training opportunities for graduates and postdoctoral researchers and facilitates networking among the postdoctoral researchers. She provides advice on CV writing and interview practice,
job search information and contacts, and invites external speakers. She implemented a new postdoctoral mentoring scheme in October 2006. A career planning meeting will now be held 6 months before the end of a contract and a ‘self help’ group for long-term researchers has been established.

A formal Induction Programme supports new staff and there is a compulsory training programme in teaching for all academic staff at lecturer grade (York Certificate of Academic Practice), essential to meet probation criteria. All new academic staff are offered a departmental mentor to provide support in the early years of their career in York; a mentor is required at lecturer level.

All staff are encouraged to attend University wide professional development (POD) courses that are offered on a wide selection of topics.

All staff undergo performance review, a key aspect of this process is career development as outlined in a section of the review document below.

.. include in the discussion some or all of the following points: a) Changes in job role since the last review b) Courses or other training activities attended in the last year and whether departmental funding/support was forthcoming c) Were these activities beneficial? d) Career development and expectations in the future e) Issues identified at the last review that remain unresolved f) Support provided within the Department/research group/work environment and its effectiveness g) Realisation of the objectives set at the last review.

Proposed plan of action designed to increase the numbers of women moving into academia and to increase numbers in higher academic grades.

9. The department will explore ways to fund Dr Couling’s post after the current funding stream finishes in 2008, recognising its value in retaining female staff at the key transition points.
10. Broaden career development mentoring for researchers to include both academic and industrial careers. Responsibility: graduate training officer. The Athena Swan working group will support improved mentoring schemes (via Dr Couling in association with UKRC and University POD) for academic and postdoctoral research staff.
F3. Changing the culture and gender balance in decision making
The Department’s commitment to the Athena charter principles was initiated by the previous Head of Department, Robin Perutz, and has been carried forward by the current Head of Department, Paul Walton. Both believe that the role of HoD is to bring out the potential of all staff. They recognise that tackling gender equality must involve commitment from everyone, especially those at higher levels who are able to implement change. They have ensured all the University policy and procedures have been implemented and have worked to identify and eliminate barriers to equality and diversity.

The department ensures female membership on all its key committees (Head of Department’s Advisory group, Research Committee, Finance Group, Personnel Group and Planning/Strategy Group). The female membership of these committees encompasses staff at all academic grades and the membership changes regularly. The Finance Group is chaired by a female member of staff. All staff members know the membership of these key committees. Appointments to all committees are made on a fixed term basis.

Independent research fellows are fully engaged in the management of the department. They are full members of the Board of Studies and serve on departmental committees, albeit with a reduced load.

The minutes of committees are available to all members of the Board of Studies; administration and teaching loads are published on the website ensuring open and transparent management.

The Department believes that an open management style relies on effective dissemination of information to all staff. It currently disseminates information via the departmental website and a web-based newsletter, but recently conducted a survey (Nov 2006) into how staff would prefer to receive departmental communications.

The Department eschews the traditional ‘competitive culture’ often apparent in academic departments, valuing quality of research output over quantity. Visible celebrations of success encompass postgraduate student prizewinners through to academic staff. These celebrations include reports on the departmental website and newsletter, dinners for postgraduate prizewinners and departmental drinks parties (most recently for Dr Lucy Carpenter’s Leverhulme Award). We celebrate teaching excellence with an annual prize (won in 2006 by Dr Anne-Kathrin Duhme-Klair).

Proposed plan of action recognising that a transparent, open and inclusive management style underpins a change in culture and attitude.

12. Publicise examples of non-standard academic career pathways by HoD in promotions seminars from 2007 and encourage awareness of reviewers in performance review of different models leading to diverse pathways up academic grades (e.g. teamworking) Responsibility: academic administrator 2008.
13. To continue high involvement of female staff on all key committees with a target of women chairing key departmental committees, >20% by 2010.
14. To monitor female membership of external undergraduate examining panel.
   Increase the number of female postgraduate examiners > 30% by 2010.
   **Responsibility:** Chairs of Board of Studies and of Graduate school.

**F4. Work life balance practices - introduction and uptake**

The working group recognises that a contributor to the loss of women in science is an unhealthy work-life balance. We operate flexible-working practices at all levels, including annualised hours and part-time working. We schedule meetings and departmental seminars within the 9 am - 5 pm timeframe and are aware that committee members may have family care responsibilities that preclude attendance at late afternoon meetings. Several members work on part-time contracts, including research fellows, administrative staff and two academic staff.

We run a variety of social/sporting activities such as a departmental cricket match/barbeque, that are designed to involve not just academic staff members but their families as well. We have several staff and research group sports teams with mixed membership.

**Proposed plan of action** recognising the importance of family and of flexible working as key factors in recruitment and retention of women.

15. Establish more inclusive departmental social activities. To involve families in more social activities. A family party/open day planned for summer 2007.

   **Responsibility:** HoD, Departmental Laboratory and Facilities Manager and Head Administrator with the target of 10-20% staff working part-time by 2010.

17. Improve scheduling of meetings to take account of flexible working patterns from 2007. **Responsibility:** Timetabling office and administrative staff.

**F5. Champions, responsibilities and accountabilities**

Work to address the Athena Swan charter principles has been driven from the top down by the current Head of Department and his predecessor. Their work and that of other members of the self-assessment team is highly visible both within the department and the university. We recognise that role models (both male and female) at all levels increase the representation and retention of women in chemistry.

Dorothy Hodgkin was a long-term visitor to the department in her retirement. She influenced generations of crystallographers including Professor Eleanor Dodson FRS. The department’s new building for synthetic and analytical chemistry was named after Dorothy Hodgkin.

Professor Dodson worked part-time, always paid on research scales, eventually becoming a Research Professor and subsequently a Fellow of the Royal Society. Although retired, Professor Dodson is still active within the department. Professor Jane Thomas-Oates provides a highly visible role model within the department. She is involved in decision making both within the department and at university level. Outside the university she is a member of the Science and Technology Board and the Awards Committees of the RSC. Dr Lucy Carpenter has combined a successful academic career whilst working part-time and bring up two young children. Dr Caroline Dessent also has a young family and a highly successful academic career.
The department believes that publicity of the achievements of women is extremely important. Some recent academic examples are: (a) Dr Lucy Carpenter’s and Professor Jane Thomas-Oates’s group news in the Departmental newsletter, (b) Dr Annie Hodgson and her outreach work highlighted in the University Magazine, (c) Professor Dodson’s FRS highlighted in University’s and Departmental Annual Reports, (d) Dr Lucy Carpenter’s Leverhulme Award in The Times Higher.

We publicise and celebrate graduate and undergraduate prizewinners. Over the last six years there have been 12 female and 12 male winners of the departmental prize for PhD research and 9 female and 15 male winners of the annual poster prize competition.

The Department makes a conscious effort to invite female chemists as external speakers for departmental seminars. Recent speakers have included Dr Emma Raven, Professor Odile Eisenstein and Professor Jennifer Green.

The Department has appointed two female external examiners (Professor Jennifer Green, Oxford and Dr Helen Fielding, UCL) for the undergraduate degree course.

The University has appointed Odile Eisenstein (Montpellier, France) as an honorary visiting Professor. Eisenstein is a RSC and CNRS prize winner and she delivers a successful graduate course within the department.

Finally, we highlight the role of the Athena Swan process in championing women.

**Proposed plan of action** recognising the importance of visible role models.

18. Regularly collect statistics on female visiting professors, sabbatical visitors and external speakers for review by HoD advisory group, to measure progress towards a target of >30% F by 2010. Invite women chemists prize winners e.g. Rosalind Franklin award to give departmental seminars and become long-term visitors.

19. Encourage female staff to contribute to internal and university publications. **Responsibility:** communications group.

20. To keep Athena Swan processes active. **Responsibility:** HoD

21. HoD to report regularly to staff on Athena Swan and other gender/ethnicity issues within the department. **Responsibility:** HoD

**G. Concluding remarks**

The Department of Chemistry in the University of York has endeavoured to give strong support to women in science for many years. It took vigorous steps to improve even following each of the RSC/Athena reports. It has adopted the Charter principles and is monitoring its position on women in science at all levels. These initiatives have increased awareness and resulted in greater equality, benefiting all staff.