Most of the actions on the 2006 progress report have been completed; outstanding actions are:

Equal pay review: the equal pay audit (2008) showed that more detail is required to clarify the gender split in specific roles such academic, research and teaching.

Review of Exit interview procedures –to be completed by October 2009

Performance review will be reviewed this year. This will consider the review process; ensuring the experience is consistently valuable for reviewer and reviewee – regardless of Department or Staff grouping; and skills development.

**Significant areas of progress**

The University of York is seen as leader in the Athena SWAN agenda. We regularly provide advice to other institutions both at university and department level. Paul Walton, Head of the Department of Chemistry chairs the Royal Society of Chemistry Diversity Group, Ottoline Leyser was an invited speaker at Vitae conferences, and Paul Walton and Anna Grey have spoken at Athena SWAN conferences.

All SET Departments have Athena SWAN working groups; three Departments achieved Silver or Gold Athena SWAN Awards in 2007, Electronics are applying this year and Physics and Maths aim to apply next year. A key learning point has been the importance of visibility in promoting good management practice rather than the progress of women. This is not a women’s problem but is about keeping the best and reducing the loss of good quality staff. If the process is regarded as positive discrimination it tends to alienate people (both men and women).

The Athena SWAN process is accelerating the process of embedding gender equality in university culture; for example, prominent communications material about Athena SWAN on the website and in publications.

Consultation with staff and students in 2007 informed the Gender Equality Scheme ensuring that gender equality is embedded in everything the University does and that everyone benefits from good working practices. Progress towards priorities identified is outlined in the Gender Equality Scheme and Annual Report.

An Athena SWAN ‘road show’ has travelled the campus featuring profiles of staff at a variety of stages in their careers including their research, their career progression and how the inclusive practice within their Department has enabled them to progress.
A survey of staff was conducted in April-May 2008 to find out what really matters to staff. Results of the survey were communicated to staff in August 2008. Key positive areas included job satisfaction, diversity and equality while areas for improvement included workload and work demands, and staff development and career progression. The survey data was analysed by a range of factors including gender. Seven core functional actions plans have been produced (May 2009); these include work-life balance, and diversity and equality. Departmental reports have been published.

The University Plan replaces the Corporate Plan. It is a strong statement of University values that aims to help all students, staff and alumni achieve their full potential. The Plan has four themes: Excellence, Internationalisation, Inclusivity and Sustainability; which have been developed by extensive consultation across all categories of staff and students. The Plan is in the final stages of completion and will be widely publicised within the University this summer. Nine objective strategies, informed by the values in the Plan, will be implemented covering: Research, Teaching, Finance, Human Resources, Governance and Management, Support Services, Communication and Marketing, Student Experience and Business and the Community. These strategies will be informed by a similar wide ranging staff consultation. Athena SWAN is mainly embedded in the Research Strategy, recognising its importance in a research-intensive University such as York, but also reflected by Equal Opportunities objectives in the new HR strategy.

The proportion of female applicants is still lower than male applicants in most SET Departments. The University has produced family friendly policies including a flexible working policy. Manager and employee guidance is available online and briefings are to be given to Heads of Department and to staff. Some SET departments actively promote these policies in their information to candidates and most actively encourage suitable women to apply. All SET departments have a policy of always having a woman on the selection panels for academic appointments.

The staff development programme has improved significantly by the appointment of: a Research Training Officer with a remit of providing training for research staff; two Staff Development Officers with a remit to improve training for all staff; and by an officer leading Leadership and Management for senior staff. In addition the Careers Service now provides career advice to research staff.

All departments offer a mentoring scheme for new academic staff. Participants in a trial mentoring scheme for research staff, in association with UKRC, reported an improvement in their personal performance, performance at work and career planning. Mentors benefitted from improved networking and satisfaction from helping other women. This mentoring scheme is to be opened up to all staff.

Several careers symposia have been run to encourage postdocs and postgraduates to think about their next career step providing real examples of people who are dealing with work-life balance, families in academia and elsewhere, entrepreneurialism, varied or non-
traditional career paths. An RSC session on Women in Science was run in Chemistry (and opened up to other Departments) to promote –The Chemistry PhD: the Impact on Women’s Retention. Ottoline Leyser produced a book: Mothers in Science – 64 ways to have it all (Rosalind Franklin Fellowship, Royal Society)

York is active in promoting SET subjects in school both at a local level and through national initiatives. Professor John Holman, a senior member of staff in the Department of Chemistry, was instrumental in the establishment and founding Director of the National Science Learning Centre (myscience.co.ltd) based at the University of York. The Centre promotes high quality school teaching in science subjects that has been shown to increase girls’ interest in SET subjects; eg collaboration in the Girls into Physics project: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RB103.pdf.

The National STEM Centre (part of myscience.co.ltd), to be built at York, will contain the best teaching resources and will be accessible to all schools and colleges.