Athena SWAN Feedback – April 2017
Silver Department

Please note that the below feedback is not an exhaustive appraisal of every point made in the submission. Additionally, while feedback is offered to applicants on each section of the form, it should be noted that applications to the Athena SWAN Charter are assessed "in the round".

Institution name:	University of York - Department of Health Sciences
Level of award applied for:	Silver

Letter of endorsement from Head of Department	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Personal interest in Athena SWAN activity, and awareness of engagement opportunities and specific challenges. The head of department (HoD) is an Athena SWAN Working Group (ASWG) member.	The letter would benefit from further reference to previous achievements.

Description of the department	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Clear overview, which reflects on the high proportion of female students. High proportion of part-time staff (albeit this ratio suggests that more specific focus on issues that traditionally face part-time staff may be warranted).	Presentation of information on gender balance in the management structure.

The self-assessment process	
Commended	*For future consideration*
ASWG formally embedded in department's governance structure (albeit seemingly one step removed from the management team due to its constitution under the auspices of other committees). Regular updates provided to staff. Joint chairing of ASWG (information on how they were selected would be welcome, and any expected length of service). Representation of different staff roles on the ASWG. ASWG membership accounted for in workload model. Emphasis on ASWG members 'spreading the word' about Athena SWAN. Development of links with university-wide Athena SWAN work.	There are no students currently on the ASWG. Detail on roles ASWG members undertake in the team, how the actions are managed and the focus of meetings. More formal consultation methods. The fora are welcome, although they have only informed actions SAP C4 and C5 to date.

A picture of the department	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Increasing enrolment of men in several courses. Recognition of challenges associated with reduction in funding for SSRPD courses. Increasing proportion of staff on open contracts. Increasing proportion of female professors. Decreasing academic gender pay gap, subsequently shown to be at least in part due to pay increments. Redeployment policy.	Further benchmarking of data (e.g. using national HESA data). Further increasing focus on recruiting male students; whilst some progress is seen, the imbalances remain severe in some courses. Actions have focused on imagery and open days but a critical reflection on the effects of these actions is limited. Figure 4.1.7 is misleadingly titled; it appears to show all undergraduate students with no disaggregation of FT and PT data. Although numbers are small, it appears the male undergraduates generally have better degree outcomes.

	PT PGT students appear to have worse degree outcomes than FT students. It may be informative to look at time taken to complete PGR degrees. Relative proportions of men and women studying at different levels show a lower proportion of women at PGR, regardless of whether the pipeline is continuous. Large decrease in number of T&S staff at grade 7.

Supporting and advancing women's careers	

Key career transition points	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Induction programme appears good, and there are plans to expand, although qualitative feedback would support the analysis. Engagement with university work to better recognise contribution of T&S staff. Action to run workshops prior to promotion rounds.	Gendered patterns in job applications, e.g. T&S professor applications 5F:0M in 15/16, T&R professor applications 0F:3M in last recruitment round. "Increase in promotion applications" may be overstated, and there is a declining success rate, meaning that the greatest number of promotions was seen in 2013. The 2016 data will be informative. All these data should be provided by gender. Further use of qualitative feedback on the promotion process. Any outcomes of professional and support staff (PSS) applications to higher grade posts. Actions to support promotion (even if by a different name) of PSS.

Criteria not met	Lack of impact of actions against previously identified challenges.

Career development	
Commended	*For future consideration*
40% increase in applications for leadership courses since 2013. (More reflection on outcomes would be welcome, e.g. staff receiving this training being given opportunities to lead.) Increase in number of events attended by research staff. Sustained record of 100% uptake of PDR, which is particularly important given the importance ascribed to it in the submission. Contract Research Forum. Analysis of grant application rates (although action targeted to the success of women would be welcome).	Data on uptake of training, apart from the leadership/management programmes. A 2014 staff survey is referred to for the first time in this section. These data are rather out of date and completion rates are not provided. p.45 indicates that many internal appointments have been made (as promotion data, p.39, accounts for less than half of the progression data). However, the recruitment data, pp.36-37, does not appear to account for this. The outcomes are positive but some of the data may be unreliable. Further consideration of support for PGR students to progress to postdoc positions. Analysis of the sizes of grants applied for and awarded. Actions to support the career development of PSS specifically.

Criteria not met	Impact is not robustly confirmed, due to datasets being difficult to rationalise and qualitative data being out of date.

Flexibility and managing career breaks	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Active consideration and good initiatives overall. Annual briefing sessions. Breast-feeding facilities. Action to implement phased return to work. Staff avail of long periods of maternity leave, which is a positive indicator of departmental culture. Contract extensions and consideration of informing colleagues about redeployment.	No uptake of shared parental leave (although this is not atypical in academia at this stage). Further consideration of any impacts of part-time working on opportunities (e.g. through more qualitative investigation).

Retention of maternity returners. 100% uptake of paternity leave. Action to raise awareness of flexible working opportunities amongst men. Formalised flexi-time system.	

Organisation and culture	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Improved survey responses (between 2011 and 2014) and results are used to support action points. 'Culturally competent care' to be embedded in curriculum. Embedded HR officer. Workshops for line managers. Proposal to work with central HR to inform work on 'survivorship' (although this does not feature in the action plan). Athena SWAN principles form part of the terms of reference for all committees. Core hours adhered to (although could be narrowed). Involvement of postgraduate students in School activities.	More use of survey and other qualitative data. More specific examples of how Athena SWAN principles are being embedded into departmental culture. Attention to any incidences of bullying and/or harassment. Three years worth of committee data to be presented. Table 5.6.2 shows 10 male professors on the research committee. Earlier presented data do not show this many male professors in the department (pp.29-31). Clearer data on participation in external committees. Clarity regarding staff views on developing a workload model. Detail on what social activities are actually held. Men outnumber women as research seminar speakers. Men are poorly represented as student ambassadors – targeting this may support the department's student recruitment ambitions.
Criteria not met	Lack of impact of actions against previously identified challenges.

Case study: impacting on individuals	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Both case studies show personal support.	Both case studies broadly focus on maternity and flexibility – as such, this limits the amount of positive work that can be showcased here.

Further information	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Consideration of changes to provision of professional education. Ambitions to avoid providing unequal opportunities for PSS and contract research staff (although it is unclear what exactly. The panel suggests more direct PSS involvement and consideration, and notes the lack of specific actions seen in the submission. Some practices, if not policies may necessarily be different, to reflect different career structures).	

Action plan	
Commended	*For future consideration*
Actions are targeted, with clear objectives in the main. Overall, the plan stands alone. Specific actions C11 and D6 are particularly commended.	Responsibilities and timescales could be more specific. Clearer prioritisation of future activity. Some success measures reflect the 'completion of the task', e.g. A5, A6 etc., and others are not clearly measurable in current form, e.g. B1, or have poorly defined targets.

Final Comments
The application demonstrates a number of examples of good practice. However, the impact of previously implemented action is unclear throughout the submission. Some quantitative data are not clear, and qualitative data is limited and frequently not up to date, which limits the self-assessment and the extent to which the action plan can be informed. Further, the panel recognises that not all the actions defined are amenable to strictly

applying the SMART methodology, but commented that the department's ambitions could be clearer in the action plan. They recommend that the success measures be revisited, in order that focus on positive impact is renewed.

Good Practice Example

Support for redeployment, including proactive matching to opportunities, mock interviews, help with CV writing and £1,500 for any development needs

Recommended Result

Bronze

If unsuccessful at the level applied for, please explain why it failed to meet the criteria

Lack of robust evidence of impact of actions against previously identified challenges