Athena SWAN Bronze and Silver Department award renewal application

Name of institution: University of York       Date of application: 29.11.11
Department: Psychology
Contact for application: Beth Jefferies
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Date of previous award: Silver Department award 2007
Date of university Bronze and/or Silver SWAN award: Bronze 2006
Level of award applied for: Silver

1. Letter of endorsement from the Head of Department – maximum 500 words

An accompanying letter of endorsement from the Head of Department should explain how the SWAN action plan and activities in the department have and will in future contribute to the overall department strategy and academic mission.

The letter is an opportunity for the Head of Department to confirm their support for the renewal application and to endorse and commend any women and SET activities that have made a significant contribution to the achievement of the departmental mission.

I wish to lend my strongest support to this application for an Athena SWAN Silver Award renewal. The Department of Psychology has enthusiastically embraced the University of York’s commitment to fairness and facilitation of women in science, and has made significant progress since 2007 when we first received a Silver Award. I would like to single out the following key features of our continuing pledge to ensuring that all staff receive the support and encouragement that they need to flourish regardless of personal circumstance.

First, strong support and investment is provided for the Early Career Researchers (ECR) Forum which is a vibrant driving force for innovation and change within the Department, and which is recognized as an example of excellent practice by the University. This Forum has been extremely effective in raising consciousness concerning the many thorny employment and support issues around young
researchers on short-term contracts, and has been an important modernizing force within the department.

Second, we encourage staff to take advantage of flexible working practices. Since our 2007 Athena SWAN application, there have been ten requests for formal flexible working practices, all of which were granted, and over 80% of staff take advantage of some kind of flexible working arrangements, which are enormously beneficial when combining work with family commitments.

Third, we provide a highly supportive environment for female faculty. We continue to hold teaching and administrative loads at a minimum for junior staff (who are typically female) on entry to the department in order to allow them to establish a strong research base before sharing fully in other areas of departmental activity, and we have established Athena SWAN social events and workshops to provide a support network and practical advice for female faculty at all levels.

Fourth, the department has become increasingly proactive with respect to gender and family issues in internal promotion bids and in generating potential candidates for new posts. A recent example of our success in this area was the award of an Anniversary Lectureship for 2011/12 by the University, which buys out teaching and administrative duties for one year for a Grade 7 academic, to a member of staff who has a .6 FTE post and was about to go on maternity leave. Our internal criteria for nominating the staff for this lectureship included pro rata evaluations of research productivity, allowing the excellence of this candidate to be revealed and fairly rewarded.

Finally, we have moved to change the committee structure within the department to ensure that Athena SWAN issues will always receive the attention they deserve. The new Committee for Professional and Personal Development (CPPD) will be able to promote the Athena agenda widely, since this committee has oversight of staff forums (including the ECR forum), the Performance Review system, mentoring schemes and the department’s action plan arising from the staff survey. The Chair of the CPPD will also Chair the Athena SWAN working group and will report to three times a year to the wider department.

(496 words)

2. The self-assessment process – maximum 1000 words

Describe the Self-Assessment Process. This should include:

a) A description of the self assessment team: members’ roles (both within the department and as part of the team) and their experiences of work-life balance, parental leave, flexible working etc;

Gerry Altmann chairs the Athena SWAN committee and the newly-formed Professional and Personal Development Committee. He is a Professor of Psycholinguistics, works full-time and has two children. He is passionate
about equality and personal development issues following his efforts to support female RAs in his research group. His appointment, as a senior male professor, sends a clear signal to the wider department that gender-equality is everybody’s business.

**Sarah Barnes** is a *PhD Student Representative* and assists with teaching undergraduates. Sarah works part time on an in-patient ward with mentally ill offenders and volunteers for the charities Victim Support and Circles UK. She enjoys the benefits of flexible working to accommodate her work, voluntary and social commitments.

**Jo Clarke** is Course Director for the MSc in Forensic Psychology and previously worked for the Prison Service. She is a single-parent working full time with a teenage daughter and has recently started fostering.

**Sarah Cunnold** is the Departmental Operations Manager. She is responsible for HR and contractual matters and the first point of contact for many issues relevant to Athena SWAN. She collated the data for this application.

**Fiona Duff** is a full-time post-doctoral Research Fellow. She is *Chair of the Early Careers Research (ECR) Forum*, which organises training and networking opportunities for those at the beginning stages of their research careers. Fiona recently spent a three month placement at the Department of Science and Technology.

**Emma Hayiou-Thomas** is a lecturer in the department studying children's language development. She recently returned from 12 months' maternity leave with her second child and works part-time (60% FTE). Emma holds an Anniversary Lectureship, which relieves her of significant teaching and administrative responsibilities in 2011-2012. The timing, so soon after a long maternity leave, is particularly valuable. Emma was previously Chair of the Athena Swan Committee.

**Liat Levita** is a fixed-term lecturer and joined the department in 2009. She investigates changes in the brain throughout development with particular emphasis on emotional regulation. During the 2010/11 academic year she won both the Vice-Chancellor’s Teaching Award and the Supervisor of the Year Award.

**Beth Jefferies** is a Reader (promoted in 2011) and leads a research group examining the neural basis of semantic memory. She has administrative responsibilities as Chair of Graduate Studies. Beth works full-time, has two young children, and returned from maternity leave in 2010. Beth was the lead pen on this application.

**Rebecca Millman** is a member of staff at the York Neuroimaging Centre (YNiC). She manages the magnetoencephalography laboratory and provides
support to researchers carrying out a diverse range of neuroimaging projects. She also conducts her own independent research on auditory processing in the human brain. Rebecca works full-time and flexible working arrangements help her balance the demands of work and family life.

**Maggie Snowling** is the most senior woman Professor in the Department. She leads a large research group and is involved in national and international policy initiatives in Education. She firmly believes that work has to be fun and her group enjoy many social activities together; they go away for an annual three-day 'writing workshop', and they walked the Yorkshire coastline to raise £3K for the children's charity AFASIC. Maggie has four grown-up children and during university vacations she spends a day a week looking after her granddaughter.

**Quentin Summerfield** is a Professor of Psychology and Head of Department. He leads a research group which studies problems of hearing loss and which provides advice to policy makers. He has two teenage children.

b) an account of the self assessment process, with reference to year-on-year activities since the original Department award application, details of the self assessment team meetings, including any consultation with staff or individuals inside or outside of the university, and how these have fed into the submission;

An Athena SWAN working group has been meeting in the department approximately once per term since 2006 although the members of this team have changed due to staff leaving (in 2010, Sue Gathercole became director of the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit; Silke Fricke, a key player in the ECR forum, took a lectureship at Sheffield; Graham Hitch, one of the originators of the Athena SWAN process, retired). Several new members joined the working group to replace these individuals.

The feedback from our unsuccessful 2010 bid for a Gold award suggested that in 2008-2009 the Athena SWAN working group was not as active as it should have been. We acknowledge this problem and have taken important steps to prevent a reoccurrence. Specifically, the Athena SWAN process will be fully integrated in departmental decision-making via a new committee, the Committee for Professional and Personal Development (CPPD), which will constitute the third major Departmental committee (the others having oversight over teaching and research; details below).

**Departmental engagement**: The working group has facilitated discussion of gender issues and highlighted Athena SWAN policies at several staff meetings. In 2010, we held a consultation about gender issues via a questionnaire-based survey of staff and PhD students, which identified areas of good practice and issues that still need attention (see below).
We have contributed to **University-level meetings** that drive the Athena agenda forwards at the institutional level. We have been able to adapt policies from other departments to fit our needs (e.g., proactive approaches to promotion; changes to the committee structure). We have also had discussions with HR about their maternity policy for research staff on University-funded fixed term contracts, following an issue that arose with one of our RAs. This led to HR revisiting their policy (see below).

c) **Plans for the future of the self assessment team**, such as how often the team will continue to meet, any reporting mechanisms and in particular how the self assessment team intends to monitor implementation of the action plan.

From January 2012, the **CPPD will** (i) consider the types of data presented in this application, split by gender, (ii) have **oversight of all the policies and practices related to personnel**, ensuring that new and existing policies (such as those in the action plan) are **effectively implemented and monitored**, (iii) will ensure that **all key people are present for discussions**, including the Head of Department, the Chair of the Athena SWAN working group, the Chair of the Early Career Researcher Forum, the Chair of the Graduate School Board and the Departmental Operations Manager, (iv) maintain a **formal timetable** for meetings (once per term), and (v) have a **formal reporting structure**: it will publish minutes on our website alongside other key committees, and report to the staff meeting.

(999 words)

3. **A picture of the department – maximum 2000 words**

   a) **Provide a pen-picture of the department** to set the context for the application, outlining in particular any significant changes since the original award.

   The Department of Psychology at the University of York is one of the leading centres for research and training in Experimental Psychology in the UK. Founded in 1974, it is a medium-sized department, with 30 members of academic staff, 20 research associates and fellows, and 35 PhD students undertaking research across a broad range of topics, including perception and cognition, social psychology, developmental and comparative approaches, cognitive neuroscience and applied research. The department was in the top ten for research quality in RAE 2008 and came 11th in the UK in the National Student Survey.

   The department has traditionally had a low turnover, resulting in a relatively high proportion of academic staff at professorial grades. In the last 5 years or so, however, there has been an active program of recruitment, mostly at lecturer level, which has at least partly been prompted by a wave of retirements in senior staff, with more to follow. This generational change in the profile of the department also involves a change in the gender profile, in that most of the senior staff are male.
while most of the newly-recruited junior staff are women. With this changing profile, the Athena SWAN objectives are increasingly relevant, given the need to nurture this group of women and ensure that they develop into more senior roles, able to sustain and lead the cutting-edge research program that the department prides itself on.

b) Provide data and a short analysis for at least the last three years for **Bronze** or the last five years for **Silver** (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following, commenting on changes and progress made against the original action plan and application, and initiatives intended for the action plan going forward.

**Student data**

(i) **Access and foundation male and female numbers** – full and part time.
   Not applicable.

(ii) **Undergraduate male and female numbers** – full and part-time.

   The female:male ratio in our undergraduate student body is high (more than 80% female), and has been stable for many years. This is comparable to the national picture for Psychology (81% female).

(iii) **Postgraduate male and female numbers on and completing taught courses** – full and part-time.

   The number of women on taught postgraduate courses is relatively stable and similar to the undergraduate course: 81% female over the last 5 years, which is again in line with national picture (78% female). The MSc in Forensic Psychology is the one taught course in this department which can be pursued on a part-time basis, and in the last five years there have been 51 female and 7 male part-time students. The vast majority of both full and part-time students have completed their studies successfully.
(iv) Postgraduate male and female numbers on research degrees and completion times – full and part-time.

The proportion of female to male PhD students varies from year to year due to the small numbers involved. Overall, the proportion of female research students at York (68%) is similar to the national level (73%) and slightly lower than undergraduate and MSc levels (80%). Almost all PhD students complete their PhDs with 3-4 years, irrespective of gender (94% of students complete on time). In the last five years there have been 4 female and 3 male students undertaking PhDs on a part-time basis.
Destinations survey data:
Since our 2010 submission, we have completed a survey of the destinations of PhD students who have left (from 2000-2010). This revealed that while 76% of men become postdoctoral researchers or university lecturers, only 56% of women enter these fields after completing their PhD. The numbers in this analysis are relatively low and it is unclear if this is a real difference, but the data indicate that we should look more carefully at the motivations and expectations of our PhD students. In particular, we want to establish whether women are less confident about their potential to succeed in a research/academic career than men. We are planning to introduce new training sessions for PhD students, focussing on academic and personal development, plus careers. This will provide an excellent opportunity to collect further questionnaire data about intended destinations and the motivations underlying these, and to introduce role models designed to show that women can succeed in research and can combine an academic career with family life.
The proportion of women who are offered and accept a place on a course is in line with the proportion who apply. This has been consistently the case across undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research degrees (bearing in mind that the number of research students is relatively small, leading to more annual variation).

(v) **Ratio of course applications to offers and acceptances by gender for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research degrees**

The proportion of women who are offered and accept a place on a course is in line with the proportion who apply. This has been consistently the case across undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research degrees (bearing in mind that the number of research students is relatively small, leading to more annual variation).
Staff data

(vi) **Female:male ratio of academic staff and research staff** – researcher, lecturer, senior lecturer, reader, professor (or equivalent).

**Research staff**

The large number of women studying Psychology is broadly maintained at the level of research staff: 88% of grade 5 (largely pre-doctoral) researchers, and 70% of grade 6 (post-doctoral) researchers in our department are female. The **percentage of female research staff at York is now similar to the national average for Psychology (69%)**. This represents a **striking change over time**: from 2001-2006, the proportion of female researchers was close to 50%, and in our 2007 application for a Silver Award we commented that the drop-off in women pursuing an academic career in Psychology in our department began at post-doctoral level. We are delighted to note that this no longer seems to be the case – and we believe that our Athena-inspired policies made a difference in this regard (particularly the ECR forum; see below). We will continue to monitor this situation closely.

We also have 8 research staff at grade 7 who are all men. We believe these data reflect a peculiarity of our department – these research fellows arrived in 2005 with the Director of the newly-created York Neuroimaging Centre and have permanent contracts as they are instrumental to the smooth running of our neuroimaging facilities. Promotion from Grade 6 to 7 is much more difficult for research staff in general, since the overwhelming majority are employed on fixed-term contracts funded by grants. The absence of senior female researchers within the field of neuroimaging is a potential cause for concern although this gender difference is weaker at faculty level (67% of male faculty are engaged in neuroimaging research, compared with 45% of female faculty).

**Destinations survey data:**

Since our 2010 submission, we have also completed a survey of the destinations of RAs who have left. Amongst female RAs (N=14), seven became lecturers, four moved into other postdoctoral research jobs, two took jobs research-related posts (science manager; psychological assessment), and one became a full-time mum. We have data on four male RAs: three became lecturers and one stayed in research.
Academic staff

In terms of academic staff, women are in the majority at the junior levels, and in the minority at senior levels (from Senior Lecturer/Reader upwards). As noted above, this largely reflects the fact that many of our (male) professors have been serving the department for many years. These demographic issues have been made worse by the departure of Professors Sue Gathercole in 2010 and Maggie Snowling (planned for 2012). Unless women are appointed at this level in the coming year, the department will be
without female professors within the teaching staff, and we are mindful of the consequences of this on the perceptions of more junior colleagues. However, there have been some notable successes by female academic staff over the last year: two have secured major research grants, and one was promoted to Reader in 2011. We continue to highlight these successes achieved by women in research, both on our website and on the electronic display of departmental news in the reception area.

It is encouraging that there has been a strong increase in female academics at lecturer level (from N=4 in 2006, to N=8 in 2011). The overall proportion of female academic staff is 36%, which is a small but stable increase on previous years. We therefore believe that women are continuing to increase their representation and the crucial issue for us is to ensure that the department provides a supportive working environment so that these women have every chance to develop their careers to the most senior levels.
For this submission, for the first time, we have been able to compare our department to national benchmarking statistics for Psychology (see below). The data are crude in that they only allow a comparison of Professors vs. non-Professors (and data are only available for three years, from 2008-2010) but this confirms that the lack of female professors is a common problem across the discipline. A total of 20% of our Professors are female, compared with a national benchmark of 27%. Within the department, 44% of non-professorial academic staff are female, compared with a national average of 60%. The department still has some way to go, even to reach the national benchmarks, and our action plan therefore focuses on ways that we can continue to increase the number of female academics at both junior and senior levels.

![Academic staff compared with HESA benchmarks](image)

(vii) **Turnover by grade and gender** – where numbers are small, comment why individuals left

We have a **low turnover rate**. Since 2007, six members of academic staff have accepted academic jobs elsewhere: three females (teaching fellow, senior lecturer and professor), and three males (lecturer, senior lecturer and professor). Three further male academics retired and gained emeritus status. There are no instances of academic staff, either male or female, leaving the profession prior to retirement age.

(1434 words)

**Supporting and advancing women's careers – maximum 5000 words**

Please provide a report covering the following sections 4 – 7. Within each section provide data and a short analysis for at least the last three years (including clearly labelled graphical illustrations where possible) on the data
sets listed, commenting on changes and progress made since the original application, and including details of successes and where actions have not worked and planned initiatives going forward.

Please also attach the action plan from your last application with an additional column indicating the level of progress achieved (e.g. zero, limited, excellent, completed).

4. Key career transition points

(i) Job application and success rates by gender and grade

The data presented below cover the period from 2008 to 2011; there are currently insufficient data to permit a proper analysis of changes over time.

At researcher grades, more women than men submitted applications, and female applicants were actually more likely to be shortlisted and appointed than male applicants, suggesting that the female candidates may have been better qualified.

At academic grades 7 and 8, we advertised a Lectureship in 2008, a Lectureship and Senior Lectureship in 2009 and two Lecturer posts in 2010. 50% of the applicants were female, but 65% of the appointees were female. This contributed to our success in increasing the number of female lecturers from 4 to 8.
At senior academic levels, three chair positions were advertised in 2011. Noticeably fewer women have applied for these positions. The short-listing and interviewing process is ongoing.

In short, when women have applied for research or academic posts in this department, they have had a good chance of success. The most noticeable absence of women is in the pool of applicants for senior positions (and this is also reflected in the national data). Increasing the number of female applicants to Readerships and Chairs is therefore a major focus in our 2011 Action Plan. We have already taken steps to ensure that the department is attractive to female applicants (see below). The Athena SWAN working group now intends to be more proactive in working with the wider faculty to encourage applications for women. We will approach research leaders at other universities and ask them to recommend potential applicants to Readerships/Chairs, noting that we are keen to attract high calibre female applicants. We will then approach these people and promote all aspects of our department to them, including our Athena SWAN status and our flexible, family-friendly working policies.

(ii) Applications for promotion and success rates by gender and grade

Since 2007, we have had three female applications for promotion, all of which have been successful (one to a Senior Lectureship, one to Reader and one to Professorial Band 3). In the same period, there have been 8 male applications for promotion, two of which were successful (to Reader and Professor). When women apply for promotion, they are very likely to be successful. Men may be more likely to apply at an earlier stage, before they have fully met all the criteria.

(iii) Impact of activities to support the recruitment of staff – how the department’s recruitment processes ensure that female candidates are attracted to apply, and how the department ensures its short listing, selection processes and criteria comply with the university’s equal opportunities policies

Making the department attractive to female applicants: We have put in place a number of schemes to maximise the attractiveness of the department to female researchers and academic staff. (1) The department has a friendly, supportive and inclusive culture, which is frequently commented on by visiting speakers and students. This is supported by regular social events, departmental lunches and away days. (2) The Athena SWAN logo is displayed prominently on our homepage and links to an Athena SWAN website which showcases the achievements of our female faculty and the department’s family-friendly policies. (3) We produced a new website in 2009 and the images for it were carefully selected to ensure a good gender balance. (4) In 2011, we added photographs to the Reception area, which again showcase both female and male researchers. (5) The ECR forum (see below) makes the
department more attractive to junior female (and male) postdoctoral and lecturing staff.

**Equal opportunities policy:** The department always strives to shortlist and to appoint the best candidates, irrespective of gender or any other personal characteristics. Short-listing and interview panels always include at least one woman, in line with University policy. Appointment committees evaluate productivity *pro rata* and ensure that part-time working and career breaks do not disadvantage candidates. The data above on the numbers of female applicants short-listed and appointed, relative to the number of applications, demonstrate that our procedures are not biased against female applicants.

(iv) Impact of activities to support staff at key career transition points – interventions, programmes and activities that support women at the crucial stages, such as personal development training, opportunities for networking, mentoring programmes and leadership training.

**Support for research staff:**

In preparing our Silver Award application in 2006, it became apparent from the data that the transition from RA to lecturer was one of the points when there was a sharp decline in the number of women. In response to this, we set up an Early Careers Researchers (ECR) Forum in 2007, to support this vulnerable group both professionally and socially ([http://www.york.ac.uk/psychology/research/ecrf/](http://www.york.ac.uk/psychology/research/ecrf/)).

The ECR Forum has been a major success, and is now an important part of departmental life: there are now 68 women and 33 men involved (a mixture of PhD students, postdocs and lecturers). The ECR forum provides social and academic networking opportunities for early-career researchers, plus workshops designed to enhance employability and personal development. It also provides a stronger ‘voice’ for early career researchers – postdoctoral researchers are now represented on key departmental committees which encourages their needs to be properly considered during decision-making.

The department provides substantial financial support to the ECR forum (≈£2k per year), allowing it to host 4-6 academic events and 3-5 social events per year. The focus of the workshops is determined by ECR forum members: events have addressed issues as diverse as academic publishing and grant writing, interviews and CVs, teaching skills, study visits, an alumni event (involving female and male researchers with successful careers), introductions to research facilities in the department (e.g., sleep lab; York Neuroimaging Centre; EEG workshop) and a brain dissection workshop. Two recent highlights include a talk on gender issues in academia by Prof. Dorothy Bishop (May 2011; attended by approximately 60 people; 25% male; hosted jointly with the Athena SWAN working group) and a Families in Science event (December 2009; including PhD, postdoctoral and faculty speakers with...
children). Social events organised by the ECR forum are also frequent and well-attended, and include an annual Christmas party attended by PhD students, RAs, faculty and support staff, a welcome event at the start of each academic year, and a family-friendly summer picnic at the races.

In 2009, the ECR forum launched a website providing details of forthcoming events plus useful links to web resources of particular use to ECR members. The forum also provides “Welcome packs” designed to support new RAs and PhD students. These support our other induction activities and ensure high levels of engagement with the ECR forum.

**Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers:** We brought together a working group to prepare and implement our response to the Concordat; this included four members of the Athena SWAN team. The working group developed good practice guidelines (covering key aspects of recruitment and selection; research training and development) and identified areas needing further attention (career development outside academia; researchers’ responsibilities). These will be taken forward by the CPPD.

**Support for faculty staff:**

1) **Departmental policy on reduced teaching and administrative duties for new/returning members of faculty:** The department has a long-standing policy of allocating light teaching and administrative loads to new members of academic staff, staff returning from career breaks (e.g., maternity leave), and staff who have held a large administrative job within the department for a few years. **This policy has been highly successful at supporting faculty who are trying to establish or re-establish a research group/lab** (see case study 1).

2) **Mentoring:** The department routinely assigns academic mentors to newly appointed faculty. Feedback on this system indicated that while the scheme was helpful, it could still be improved – in particular, while academic mentors were found to be highly successful in helping recently appointed staff understand the organisation of teaching and administration in the department, they were providing less support for research. In 2010, the decision was taken to provide all faculty at lecturer level with a separate research mentor, drawn from the professorial staff. These focus on helping lecturers achieve a successful research programme, including discussion of grant applications and journal articles in preparation. **This scheme will support our objective to increase the number of senior female academic staff through internal promotions.** The assignment of research mentors is complete; in our 2011 Action Plan, we include details of how the newly formed CPPD will review the effectiveness of these polices (via staff feedback) and consider how they could be amended to provide even better support to female academics during their transition to positions of leadership.
3) **Athena SWAN events:** Since 2007, we have held a series of Athena SWAN meetings specifically involving female faculty (two informal social events; three discussion events over dinner; and conversations with Prof. Uta Frith, FRS, FBA, a leading female academic in Psychology). These meetings have generated good feedback. Given our key objective to increase the numbers of senior female academics, we plan a series of more frequent and structured events for 2012 (once per month, over lunch), covering topics such as leadership, dealing with difficult relationships, managing poor performance, preparing for promotion and building a research group. In this way, we will strengthen an existing support forum for female academics and establish a mechanism to make their needs and concerns more transparent to the Senior Management Team.

4) **Research groups:** Research group meetings provide a mechanism whereby PhD students, RAs and faculty staff interested in a particular field get together regularly to discuss their latest results, ideas for funding applications, or exciting developments in the literature. These groups are an important source of support for researchers at all levels. In late 2011, the department began to discuss ways in which this system could be extended to benefit all staff (including those whose research interests lie outside areas covered by existing groups).

5) **Anniversary lectureships:** We have used the University’s Anniversary lectureship scheme to support our Athena SWAN objectives. Anniversary lectureships provide funding for a one year buy-out of teaching and administrative duties. This provides a dedicated period to focus on research and allows networking via conference travel and study visits. Several female lecturers have received support from this scheme, including a member of staff who has a .6 FTE post and who was about to go on maternity leave.

6) Several schemes provide **funding for research** via the Departmental Research Committee. (1) There is an annual allocation of research funds based on the previous year’s research activity, including the number of PhD students, grant applications submitted and papers published. Feedback from the Athena SWAN committee on our application in 2010 expressed concern that this could favour people who are competitive and self-promoting. In light of these comments, we undertook an analysis of the funds dispersed, split by gender. From 2008-2011, female professors were awarded an average of £2690 (vs. £1930 for male professors). Other female academic staff were awarded £1450 (vs. £1370 for male non-professor faculty). Therefore, females receive higher research allowances from this scheme than male academics. (2) There is a **summer bursary scheme for undergraduates** who wish to gain research experience. This benefits our undergraduates (who are predominately female) and female faculty (who, between 2008 and 2010, were awarded 75 bursary weeks,
compared with 52 weeks for male faculty). (3) The **Innovation, Research and Priming Fund** from the University, supplemented with departmental funds when budgets allow, has awarded a total of £28.2k to female researchers and £29.2k to male researchers since 2008. Applications for bids to schemes (2) and (3) are evaluated on the basis of merit and track-record (pro-rata) and are an important source of support for lecturers who do not yet have research grant income.

7) The University provides **training in, for example, personal development and leadership**. In our 2011 Action Plan, we propose modifications to the system of **Performance Review** so that training needs identified during these meetings are followed up (see below).

8) A range of other initiatives exist to support faculty staff, including a **flexible working policy** that has a good uptake rate (see below), and the use of **“teaching teams”** to promote flexible working and peer-support for teaching (see below).

9) Lecturers on **fixed-term contracts** are treated in the same way as permanent lecturers (for example, in the allocation of research resources and in the division of marking loads), in order to encourage and support their research ambitions, and to allow them to use the post as a stepping-stone to a permanent contract.

5. Career development

(i) Impact of activities to support **promotion and career development** – appraisal, career development process, promotion criteria.

**Performance Review:**

The current annual performance review scheme, which has **consistently high uptake** (90% or above participation rate for all staff groups), provides an effective way for members of staff to review research, teaching and administrative activity, discuss their plans for the upcoming year and identify opportunities for professional development. In the recent staff survey, 70% of staff said that they valued the opportunity to have a performance review. Staff who carry out performance review receive training from the University to equip them for the task. We plan to revamp the system in 2012 to include (i) better monitoring of the completion of performance review at the level of individuals (including research staff); (ii) better use of performance review to identify suitable candidates for promotion, so that these people can be brought to the attention of the Head of Department and encouraged to apply; (iii) better feedback from reviewers to individuals about what would be required for promotion, if the criteria are not yet met; and (iv) better follow-up of training needs that have been identified. This will encourage staff to prioritise their own personal and professional development, despite the conflicting demands on their time.
Promotion:
Promotion is major focus in our action plan: this mechanism is vital to the career progression of junior faculty (who are predominately female) and has great potential to increase the number of female senior academics. We have already taken a number of actions to encourage applications for promotion: these include (i) assigning academic and research mentors to lecturers, (ii) ensuring that all staff engage in performance review, (iii) circulating the criteria for promotion annually to all staff and (iv) encouraging staff who are unsure about whether they should apply to make informal enquiries to the Head of Department. However, the data suggest relatively few women are applying for promotion. The newly formed Committee for Professional and Personal Development Committee (CPPD) will consider ways in which suitably qualified female staff could be encouraged to apply, particularly through a more effective use of Performance Review to identify potential candidates for promotion and to bring these to the attention of Head of Department, and to provide guidance to individual staff on what they would need to do to meet the criteria for promotion.

Deputy academic leadership positions:
We have created Deputy roles for Chair of Board of Studies, Chair of Graduate School Board, Chair of Examiners, and Chair of Ethics Committee. These roles have been successful in enhancing promotion prospects: one female academic was Deputy Chair of Graduate School Board and later promoted to Reader (see case study 1). This role was then taken on by another female lecturer who has also applied for promotion. There is potential to increase this scheme as new lecturers join the department.

(ii) Impact of activities to support induction and training – support provided to new staff at all levels, and any gender equality training.

RAs: (1) The ECR forum produces ‘welcome packs’ for new RAs and PhD students. This encourages high levels of engagement with the ECR forum from an early stage. (2) Supervisors/lab groups take responsibility for training that is required to use research laboratories (and a record of this training is retained by the Departmental Operations Manager when there are health and safety implications). (3) The Researcher Development Team within the University provides training that is specifically targeted at PhD students and RAs. (4) The department also provides some in-house training sessions for these groups: e.g., annual introductions to ethics procedures and teaching and learning policies within the department.

Faculty: (1) Faculty induction with the department is organised by the Departmental Operations Manager, who meets new staff personally to show them around and introduce key people. (2) Additional induction mechanisms include (i) dedicated web pages and (ii) academic mentors, assigned by the HoD, who provide an invaluable source of support over the first few terms. Since our department is currently expanding, from 30 to around 40 faculty, it is critical to maximise the effectiveness of our induction procedures and to obtain feedback from staff who are joining us. The mechanisms for achieving this are detailed in our 2011 action plan.
(3) All new faculty also attend induction events organised by the University. These sessions run for 1-2 days, and cover the administrative organisation of the University, equal opportunities and data protection amongst other things.

(4) New lecturers who have not previously obtained significant teaching, research and administration experience complete a Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice (PGCAP) during their first two years in post. The PGCAP programme provides training via lectures, workshops and assignments in all areas of academic work and is tailored to suit the needs of individual staff.

(5) Ongoing training and support is provided for all staff by POD (The Professional and Organisational Development Team), who run courses on leadership, financial management, dealing with poor performance, work-related stress, building a research group, applying for grants and many other topics. In the University’s 2011 staff survey, 56% of staff had taken part in development and training activities paid for by the University.

(6) We also provide per-support for teaching activities through the department’s teaching teams, who come together regularly to discuss what has gone well and any problems that may have arisen.

(iii) Impact of activities that support female students – support (formal and informal) provided for female students to enable them to make the transition to a sustainable academic career, particularly from postgraduate to researcher, such as mentoring, seminars and pastoral support and the right to request a female personal tutor.

We pride ourselves on being a highly supportive department for PhD students. (1) In addition to support from their supervisor, PhD students have a Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP), which meets once per term. The TAP members comment on the student’s progress, give suggestions for the future, and can step in if there are personal problems or tensions with the supervisor. (2) PhD students are assigned a “buddy” on arrival, who helps them settle in, and who can provide sympathetic (but non-threatening) advice. (3) PhD students play an active part in the ECR forum and help to run the group alongside RAs. (4) PhD representatives attend key committees within the department (Board of Studies, Graduate School Board), ensuring that their needs are considered during decision-making. A PhD representative is also a member of the Athena SWAN working group. (5) We plan to provide additional workshops for PhD students, focussed on personal development, academic progression and careers, that will include positive female role models, and examine issues of confidence and aspiration (from 2012). These meetings were suggested by PhD students at focus groups held following the PhD destination survey (see above) and Postgraduate Research Experience survey (PRES). Students from Leeds and Sheffield funded by the ESRC White Rose DTC will also be invited. (6) The Researcher Development Team (RDT) runs central training events that cover all aspects of the Research Development Framework. A small number of
these sessions are compulsory at the start of the PhD. Others are optional but students are expected to do at least 30 hours of training activities over the course of their studies, and these are monitored and discussed by each student’s Thesis Advisory Panel.

6. Organisation and culture

In our 2011 Action Plan, we propose a new high-level departmental committee, the Committee for Professional and Personal Development (CPPD). This will sit alongside Research Committee and Board of Studies (Teaching Committee), ensuring that the department has efficient structures in place to oversee policies and procedures related to personnel. The proposal to create this committee arose from the Athena SWAN Working Group as we considered policies that could bring about further change and procedures that could facilitate monitoring of progress on our Action Plan. The CPPD will have oversight of the ECR forum, mentoring schemes, performance review, staff training and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, as well as Athena SWAN activities.

(i) Male and female representation on committees – provide a breakdown by committee.

The gender balance of our committees is line with the department overall. If anything, female representation is higher than expected on the Graduate School Board, Undergraduate Teaching Committee and Research Committee. The smaller number of women on the Senior Management Team is a natural consequence of the gender breakdown of senior academics in the department. RAs (who are typically female) are now represented on three key committees: Research Committee, the Science Committee of the York Neuroimaging Centre and the newly formed CPPD.

One key departmental committee (Graduate School Board) is chaired by a woman.

Table below shows committee membership within the department:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board of Studies</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other staff</td>
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<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student reps</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate School Board</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student reps</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N | % female
### Undergraduate Teaching Committee

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student reps</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>

### Research Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-docs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other staff</td>
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<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
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</table>

### Senior Management Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff</td>
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<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = number of staff on each committee overall.

(ii) **Female:Male ratio of academic and research staff on fixed-term contracts and open-ended (permanent) contracts**

Research staff within the department are predominately on fixed-term contracts funded by grants, irrespective of gender.

Fixed-term contracts are rare amongst academic staff. From 2007-2011, there were between 23 and 26 male academic staff, with only one fixed-term appointment. Over the same period, the number of women on fixed-term contracts rose from 2 to 4, but the overall number of female academic staff increased from 5 to 14 and therefore the proportion of female academics on this type of contract has fallen.

We continue to provide high levels of support to lecturers on fixed-term contracts and we have an excellent track-record of retaining these staff (three women on fixed-term contracts moved into permanent contracts or research positions since 2008).

(iii) **Representation on decision-making committees** – evidence of gender equality in the mechanism for selecting representatives.

Committee membership is reviewed annually in the department by Head of Department and from 2012, additional advice/monitoring related to equal opportunities will be provided by the CPPD. It is important to ensure that women are not ‘overloaded’ with committee work, while also making sure that they have a voice in decision-making. To this end, (i) the Head of Department has constituted the Senior Management Team so that it must always include women; the female
members are explicitly empowered and encouraged to draw gender-related issues to the attention of the HoD; and (ii) the HoD will be an active member of CPPD.

(iv) **Workload model** – describe the systems in place to ensure that workload allocations, including pastoral and administrative responsibilities (including the responsibility for work on women and science) are transparent, fairly applied and are taken into account at appraisal and in promotion criteria.

Teaching, marking and administrative responsibilities are circulated annually in October by the Head of Department, who has overall responsibility for workload allocations. Teaching and marking are divided evenly across staff (with pro rata allocations for part-time staff). There is no evidence of any gender bias in these data. Male faculty contributed an average of 24 teaching hours, while female faculty contributed an average of 20. Administrative duties are also allocated in a transparent way, with lighter loads for newer and more junior staff.

Pastoral and administrative duties (including work on women and science) are highly valued, both within the department and the University. These duties are discussed during Performance Review and are critical when applying for promotion – for example, the University’s criteria for promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer state that applicants must demonstrate “an effective and continuing contribution to other forms of service (i.e., beyond research and teaching), including departmental and other leadership or administrative responsibilities”.

The department is working towards a formal workload model, which is expected to be available for the start of the academic year 2012/13.

(v) **Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings** – evidence of consideration for those with family responsibilities, for example what the department considers to be core hours and whether there is a more flexible system in place.

The department does not have a formal “office hours” although these can be established by individual staff at their convenience, in order to facilitate meetings with students whilst still preserving research time. Departmental meetings are scheduled between the hours of 10am and 4pm, and most occur in the middle of the day (1.15pm or 2.15pm start). This system, combined with the organisation of faculty into “teaching teams” means that there is a large degree of flexibility about when staff are in the department. There is already evidence that our approach is supporting female staff with caring commitments: a member of the Athena SWAN working group (Jo Clarke) who wanted to start fostering a child received substantial support from her teaching team, who flexibly reorganised their duties around the family’s needs.

We held a further consultation about the timing of the external seminars (4.15pm) but there was little appetite amongst women or men for holding these talks earlier
in the day. The Athena SWAN working group will continue to consult staff every couple of years, to determine that the timing of these seminars is optimal and does not disadvantage particular groups within the department.

(vi) **Culture**—demonstrate how the department is female-friendly and inclusive and ensures visibility of women, for example external speakers. ‘Culture’ refers to the language, behaviours and other informal interactions that characterise the atmosphere of the department, and includes all staff (academic, technical and support) and students.

We are a friendly and inclusive department, in which staff treat each other with courtesy and respect. In the recent Staff Survey, 94% of respondents stated that “my manager treats me with respect” and 92% agreed with the statement “I have the freedom to work in a way that suits me”. 69% of people felt able to voice their opinions (+28% compared with UK benchmark). 94% noted that they had not experienced discrimination at work in the previous 12 months (in line with the UK benchmark).

In 2010, the Athena SWAN working group organised a gender survey (completed by 34 people, 68% of them female). 97% of respondents agreed that “the Department of Psychology has a gender inclusive culture”. This survey asked whether men and women are treated equally in 17 different areas of departmental activity, including recruitment and selection, remuneration, performance management, promotion, flexible working, representation in decision-making and allocation of resources. There were very few areas where women were considered to be treated less favourably, with the possible exception of appraisal/performance management (33% of respondents indicated less favourable treatment for women; 67% indicated equal treatment for men and women). This could reflect the fact that our existing system does not encourage women and men to apply for promotion at equal rates (see above).

Our supportive culture is maintained through social events, departmental lunches, and away days, amongst other things. However, our Athena survey and the subsequent University staff survey identified a need to make the rationale behind key decisions even more transparent and to allow wider discussion of departmental strategy. In response to these comments, the Head of Department (i) reconfigured staff meetings so that one per year has an open agenda; (ii) proposed additional staff forums for lecturers and senior faculty, allowing issues affecting these groups to be flagged more easily and (iii) reconfigured the Senior Management Team (SMT) to include more members.

**Visibility of women:**

1. **External seminars**: 28% of speakers at the external seminar series are female, reflecting the relative lack of senior female academics in Psychology nationally. There is significant variation from year-to-year reflecting the small numbers of speakers overall. The organiser of the talks is aware of the need to ensure a good
gender balance. We will continue to be proactive in approaching female speakers and in encouraging other members of the department to do the same.

2. **We advertise the successes of our female staff widely**, including via the Departmental Athena SWAN website, news items on the departmental homepage, announcements at staff meetings, and emails circulated to staff. Our aim is to provide excellent female role-models of successful researchers to other members of the department.

3. **We encourage women to take up leadership roles**: Jane Clarbour is Provost of Goodricke College, Beth Jefferies is Chair of the Graduate School Board, with Katie Slocombe as deputy; and three directors of our MSc courses are female (Jo Clark, Silvia Gennari, Silke Gobel).

4. Our **website** was redesigned in 2009 and carefully scrutinised to ensure a good gender balance. In 2011, we added **photographs of research to the Reception area**: again, these were designed to showcase research done by female as well as male faculty, RAs and PhD students.

(vii) **Outreach activities** – level of participation by female and male staff in outreach activities with schools and colleges and other centres, and how the department ensures that this is recognised and rewarded (e.g. in appraisal and promotion).

Both men and women are involved in outreach activities including schools visits and public engagement events. (i) Katie Slocombe has shown tremendous ability in this area, speaking on BBC Radio 4 and meeting the Science Minister at the BA Festival of Science. (ii) Beth Jefferies gave a public lecture in 2011 as part of the York Festival of Science and Technology. (iii) One of our female PhD students is a STEM ambassador. (iv) At a recent school visit to the department, the organisers explicitly considered the need to ensure a good gender balance within the speakers (5/9 were female), since 70% of the students attending this event were female.
Public outreach and wider educational activities can contribute to promotion applications – there is a section of the form where these details are requested.

7. Flexibility and managing career breaks

(i) Maternity return rate

Since 2007, six staff have taken maternity leave. All of them returned to work with flexible working arrangements in place.

(ii) Paternity, adoption and parental leave uptake

During the period 2007-2011, two members of staff have taken paternity leave. There have been no instances of adoption leave. No members of staff have formally requested parental leave but this is likely to reflect the prevalence of informal flexible working arrangements. For example, one member of staff recently began fostering a child, which required flexible leave from work.

(iii) Numbers of applications and success rates for flexible working by gender and grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Flexible working request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pre-retirement flexible working arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reduced hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Flexible working following maternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Flexible working following maternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Flexible working following maternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Flexible working for family reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100% success rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iv) Flexible working – numbers of staff working flexibly and their grades and gender, whether there is a formal or informal system, the support and training provided for managers in promoting and managing flexible working arrangements, and how the department raises awareness of the options available.
There has been an excellent uptake of the flexible working policies introduced in our 2007 Athena SWAN application; ten requests for formal flexible working practices have all been granted, including a job share for two temporary lecturers with family commitments. Many other staff benefit from informal flexible working, such as occasionally working from home, or arriving early or late in order to look after children. In the University’s staff survey, 83% of staff said they took advantage of formal or informal flexible working arrangements.

In 2009, information was added to the departmental website about flexible working and family friendly policies. The departmental point of contact for all such issues is the Departmental Operations Manager. She has considerable accumulated expertise, and works closely with members of staff to implement appropriate arrangements.

(v) **Cover for maternity and adoption leave and support on return** – what the department does, beyond the university maternity policy package, to support female staff before they go on maternity leave, arrangements for covering work during absence, and to help them achieve a suitable work-life balance on their return.

**Faculty:** Academic staff returning from maternity leave are typically given a reduced administrative load for at least one term and all have benefitted from flexible working arrangements. For example, one member of academic staff reduced her hours to 60% when she returned to work after her first child, and continued at this level when she returned to work following the birth of her second child.

**Research staff:** In several recent cases, the department has negotiated directly with the University’s HR department and research funders to enable researchers on fixed-term contracts to extend their contracts by the full term of their maternity leave. The additional costs (from salary increments) have been covered by the department when necessary. On their return, research staff also benefit from flexible working: in one case, return to work was on a part-time basis, starting at 0.4FTE, increasing after two months to 0.6 FTE to the end of the contract.

(4911 words)

8. **Any other comments – maximum 500 words**

Please comment here on any other elements which are relevant to the application, e.g. other SET-specific initiatives of special interest implemented since the original application that have not been covered in the previous sections.

**Changes made since 2010 submission:**

We have worked hard to address the negative feedback we received on our Gold application from 2010.
(1) We were asked to provide additional commentary on how the data have changed since 2007. This is provided on pages 11, 13 and 15.

(2) We have reflected further on the increase in female postdoctoral researchers since 2007. We believe that the ECR forum is key, and plan to adapt some of its best elements to create an effective support network for female faculty.

(3) We have now undertaken the destination survey for PhD students and RAs, and a survey of gender issues amongst staff.

(4) We have thought hard about how to present the data in the clearest way and hope that the committee will find this aspect improved.

(5) We have obtained benchmarking data, although it does not provide the level of detail we would wish for.

(6) We have been monitoring attendance at ECR and Athena events when possible.

(7) The panel expressed concern at the Research Funds allocation (“Points=Prizes”) formula, and wondered whether this encourages the over-competitive nature of academia. We have now undertaken an analysis of the way these funds have been dispersed (page 21), which established that female academics gained more money per head than males. Rather than favouring people who are particularly competitive or confident, this system appears to reward quiet industry.

(8) We have consulted widely about the timing of the External Seminar series (moved from 4.30pm to 4.15pm in 2010). There was little enthusiasm for scheduling the talks for earlier in the afternoon amongst either men or women, although we will continue to review this situation every two years.

(9) We acknowledge that the Athena SWAN working group was not as active as it could have been in 2008 and 2009. To prevent this problem from reoccurring, we have created a new high-level departmental committee, the Committee for Professional and Personal Development (CPPD), which will regularly (i) consider the types of data presented in this application, split by gender, (ii) perform monitoring of the effectiveness of existing policies and structures in our Action Plan, (iii) help to implement new schemes to increase the representation of women amongst our faculty. The CPPD will have oversight of the Athena SWAN working group and related areas of policy. It will maintain a formal timetable for meetings, publish minutes, and report to the staff meeting, allowing broad dissemination and discussion of developments.

(10) Our new Action Plan contains some important new initiatives (creation of CPPD; Athena SWAN support forum for female faculty; revamped Performance Review system designed to identify potential candidates for promotion and to
ensure training/development needs are followed up; a new initiative to encourage senior female academics to apply for posts created as part of our expansion plan; and a push towards improved induction procedures for new academic staff). We have also taken care to include impact measures for every action.

(491 words)

9. Action plan

Provide a new action plan as an appendix. An action plan template is available on the Athena SWAN website.

The Action Plan should be a table or a spreadsheet comprising actions to address the priorities identified by the analysis of relevant data presented in this application, success/outcome measures, the post holder responsible for each action and a timeline for completion. The Plan should cover current initiatives and your aspirations for the next three years.

For Silver Department awards only

10. Case study: impacting on individuals – maximum 1000 words

Describe how the department’s SWAN activities have benefitted two individuals working in the department. One of these case studies should be a member of the self assessment team, the other someone else in the department. More information on case studies is available in the guidance.

Beth Jefferies, Reader, Member of self-assessment team

I joined the department in the summer of 2007 as a Senior Lecturer, having moved to York with my husband and one-year old child shortly after the department’s first Athena SWAN application was submitted. This was my first faculty position; I was previously a Research Fellow in Manchester. The award made a difference to me in several practical ways: I particularly benefitted from having a light teaching and administrative load for the first year, since my primary focus at that stage was on setting up my lab and research group. I found the department an enormously supportive place in which to do this: all of my formal and informal interactions fostered the impression that this was as much the department’s priority for me as it was for myself. I was encouraged to apply for (and subsequently secured) pump priming funds for my first research projects and was given the freedom I needed to get things off the ground. Perhaps most importantly, I was never made to feel that being female and a mother was an issue at work, and the Athena SWAN award underlined this attitude and increased my confidence.

I was assigned an academic mentor as soon as I arrived. This proved to be extremely helpful. I was able to meet my mentor whenever I felt I needed support and, in the first few weeks, we met for lunch several times, which gave us a chance
to discuss issues that had cropped up in an informal way. Four years later, I still consult my mentor quite frequently about career development and research strategy issues and he is an invaluable source of good advice.

In 2008, I became deputy Chair of the Graduate School Board. It was good to play a more active role in the running of the department and the position gave me a gentle introduction to leadership roles.

In May 2009, I had a second child and took 5.5 months maternity leave. The department was very supportive. My period of leave did not coincide with teaching commitments but cover was provided for my administrative duties for eleven months; this greatly eased my transition back to work. I had a postdoctoral RA and a PhD student by that stage and a colleague kindly agreed to be ‘acting supervisor’ while I was away. I didn’t want to have a complete break from research and I was allowed to continue supervising my MSc project students with the help of my RA. I came to work frequently with my newborn baby to meet my research team and my colleagues accepted this without question.

In April 2010, I was asked to take on the role of Chair of the Graduate School Board. This position of responsibility played an important part in my successful application for promotion to Reader in 2010-11. While it can be a challenge to combine a busy work life with the care of two young children, it is hard to imagine a more supportive work environment in which to do this.

Lisa Henderson, Post-doctoral Research Fellow

I joined the department in 2005 as a PhD student. After a one year RA position in 2009, I was employed as a Research Fellow with Professor Gareth Gaskell and Dr Anna Weighall on 3-year grant funded by the Leverhulme Trust from October 2010. In April 2011 I became pregnant with my first child. Despite some trepidation about announcing my news, I was incredibly encouraged by Gareth’s positive and supportive response.

I am a member of both the Departmental Research Committee and the Early Career Researchers forum; both have been highly accommodating in allowing me to continue these roles as I wish. The Head of Department also asked me to chair a meeting of Research Fellows to discuss the outcomes of a recent staff survey, and to participate in a working group on the Concordant to Support the Career Development of Researchers, even after my pregnancy was known. This reassured me that my colleagues have not altered their views of my commitment to an academic career.

I initially liaised with HR regarding maternity leave, who communicated with the Leverhulme Trust. I was informed that I was entitled to take up to one year of maternity leave with 4.5 months of full pay, 1.5 months of 90% pay, and 3 months of statutory maternity pay. However, Leverhulme would only extend the grant deadline by 6 months, meaning that instead of a total of three years’ research (spread over 4 years, one of which would be spent on maternity leave), I would only have two and a half years’ research. This would have disadvantaged my career and the progression of the grant; hence, I felt I was left with no option but to accept only 6 months of leave.

When Professor Gerry Altmann, chair of the Athena Swan working group, learned of my dissatisfaction with this outcome, he suggested asking Leverhulme
whether they would consider extending the grant by a year if the Department could cover the additional costs incurred through inflationary increases to the pay scale. Professor Altmann liaised with the Head of Department, who rapidly approved these costs, and then helped me draft the email. We received a swift reply agreeing to these arrangements. Consequently, I am able to take a full year’s maternity leave, and to pursue the full three years’ research.

This pleasing outcome means that by starting a family, I am not disadvantaging my career. I would like to conclude by strongly emphasising that as my pregnancy has progressed I have become even more determined to pursue a career in academia, in large part due to the incredibly kind, supportive and encouraging response of key members of faculty.

(943 words)