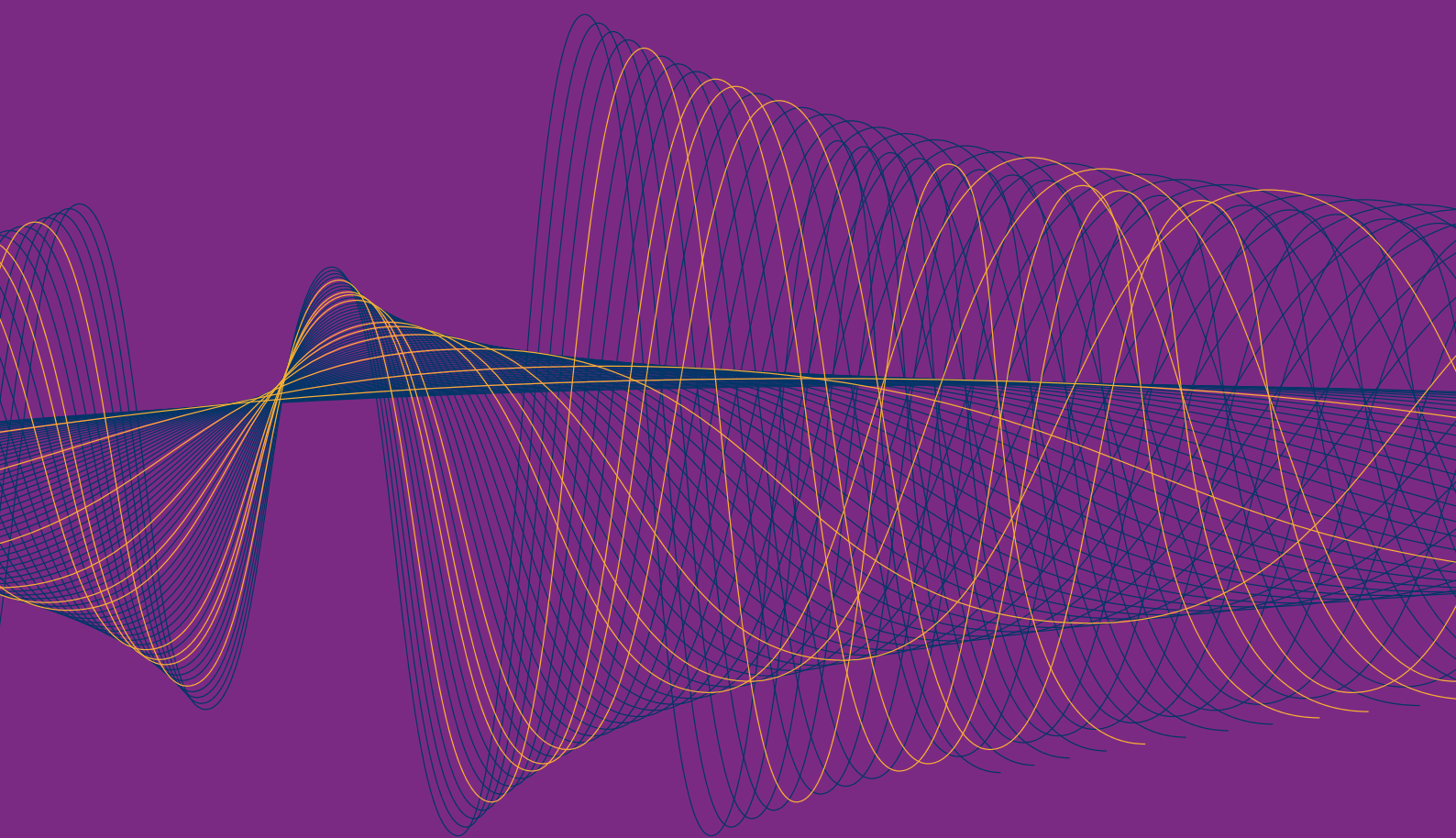




Charter for women in science
Awards handbook



Equality Challenge Unit



The Athena SWAN Charter recognises commitment to advancing women's careers in STEMM academia: science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine.

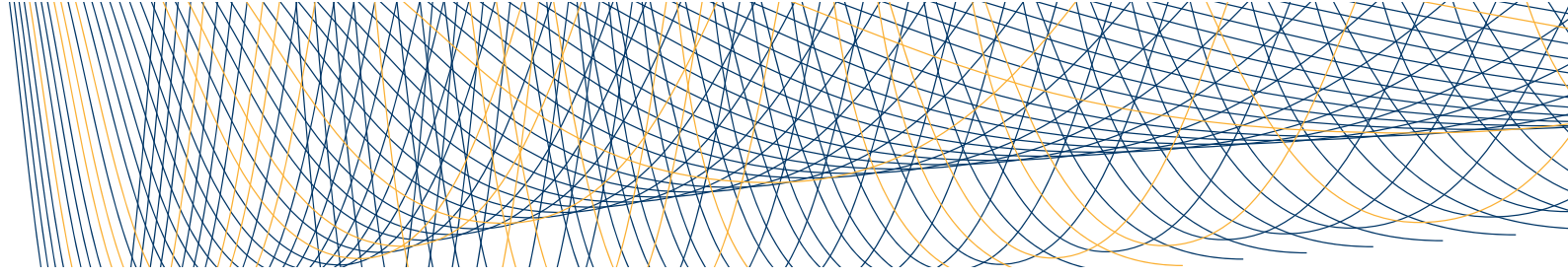
Contact the team

www.athenaswan.org.uk
athenaswan@ecu.ac.uk
[@Athena_SWAN](#)

Athena SWAN
Equality Challenge Unit
7th floor, Queens House
55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London, WC2A 3LJ

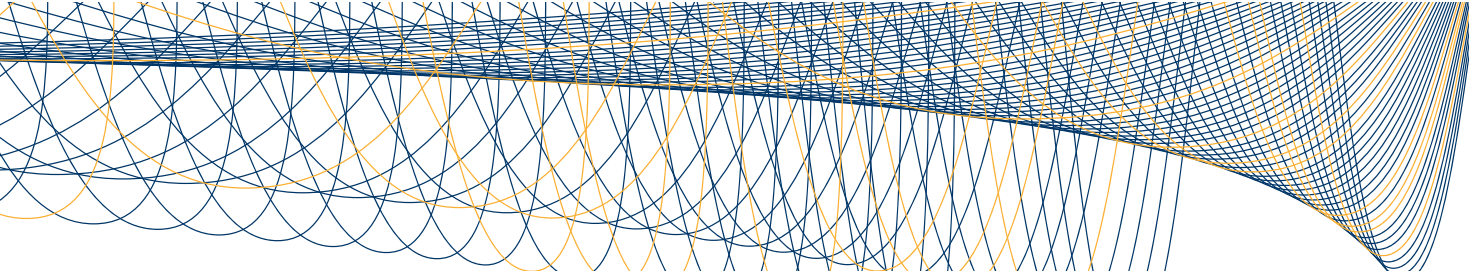
Athena SWAN Charter members network

athenaswan@jiscmail.ac.uk



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What is a department?

It can be difficult to decide which organisational unit should submit an award application. Athena SWAN recognises that universities operate a range of academic and management structures, and not all institutions use the term 'department'. There are many academic groupings with different names, sizes and compositions. It is down to the individual institution to decide the composition of units that put forward award applications.

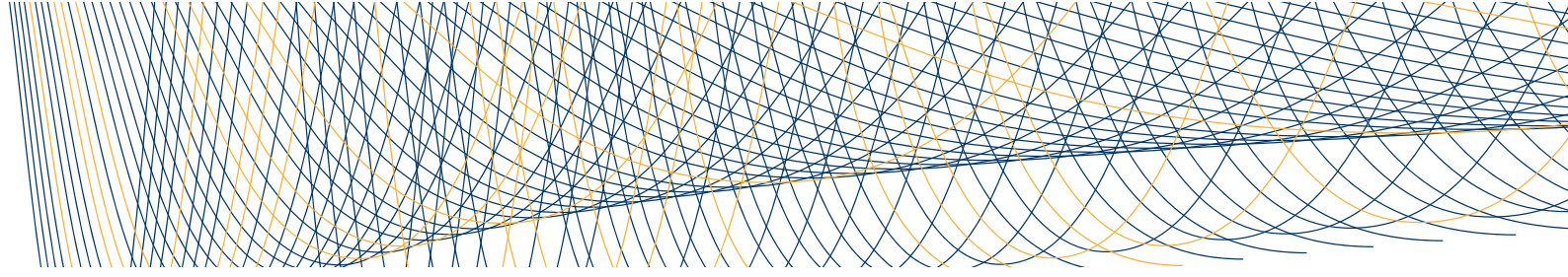
Athena SWAN will accept applications from faculties and schools, including entire medical schools, and will extend the word limit by 1000 words for larger units/schools/faculties to help with this **(the additional words must be requested by email and approved by Athena SWAN in advance of the application)**.

However, below are some areas for consideration when making an application.

Size

Size alone does not preclude a unit from submitting (there is no maximum size, but please contact us in advance of an application if you are a very small unit eg fewer than 15 academic staff) but departments should bear the following in mind:

- The panel expects data from all the constituent units in a large department, not averages.
- Large departments need to clearly demonstrate good practice (and impact for Silver awards) across all units, and that issues specific to different subject areas have been identified.



- Communication of the Charter principles needs to be apparent across the department; it should not be driven by one single unit.
- Small departments need to be able to demonstrate sufficient autonomy to implement change.
- All departments should find suitable comparators for benchmarking.
- All departments are subject to the same word limits (unless a request for additional words has been received and accepted).

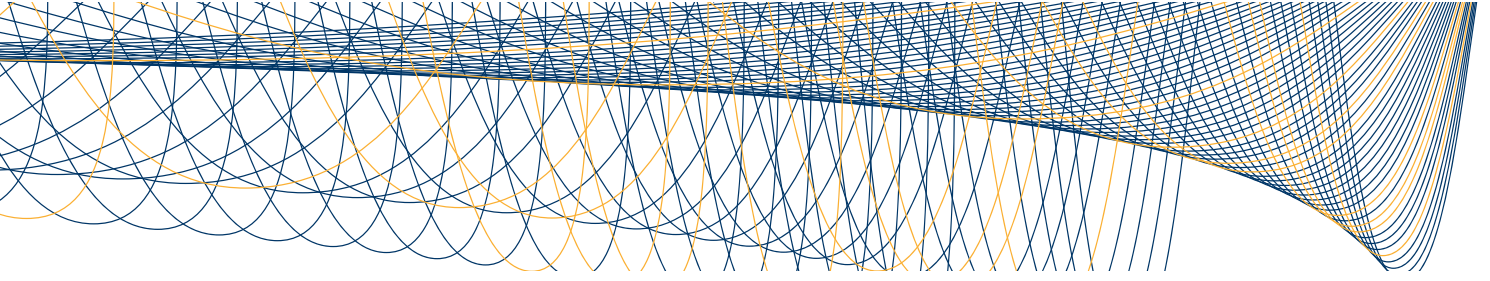
Management structures

The head of department should have overall responsibility for resource allocation, budgets, academic strategy and policy in the department, so as to be able to effect the changes set out in the action plan.

Students

Where a department has its own students (undergraduate and/or postgraduate), this data should be provided. A unit may still apply if it does not provide teaching, but this should be noted, and national student figures for that subject area should be considered in the application as this will impact on the pipeline in that area.

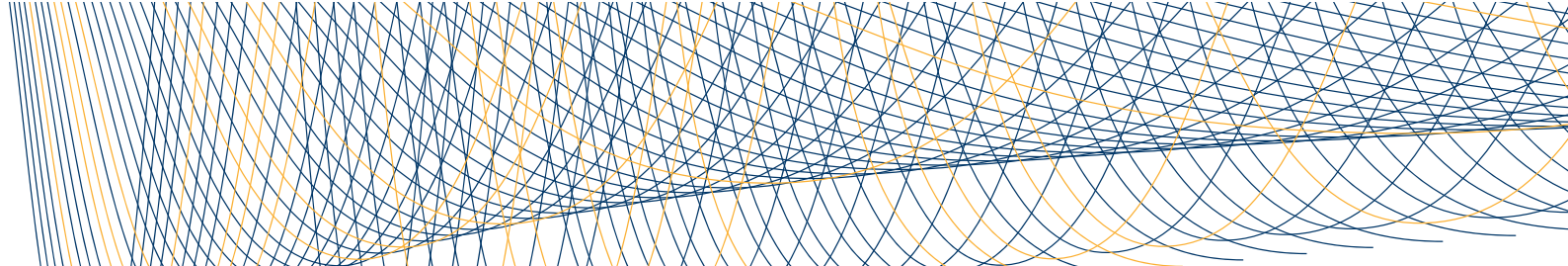
If in doubt, contact the team by email no later than two months in advance of the deadline for applications, to ascertain eligibility.



What is a research institute?

In April 2014 the Athena SWAN Charter was opened to include membership of research institutes that do not currently either hold higher education institution (HEI) status and are not a constituent unit or department of an HEI. Eligible institutes are those that are funded by RCUK, and have a focus on STEMM research, as well as RCUK-funded independent research organisations that have a focus on STEMM research.

Throughout this document, 'institute' and 'institution' should be taken to refer to both HEIs and research institutes, except where stated otherwise.



Completing the submission document

Style

Although applicants may wish to consult previously successful submissions (all successful institutions and departments are expected to publish their submission documents), there is no prescribed style for completing the various sections of the application form. It is up to individual institutions and departments to make a decision on this.

Please note that Athena SWAN staff cannot read through submissions prior to the deadline, or advise on specific content.

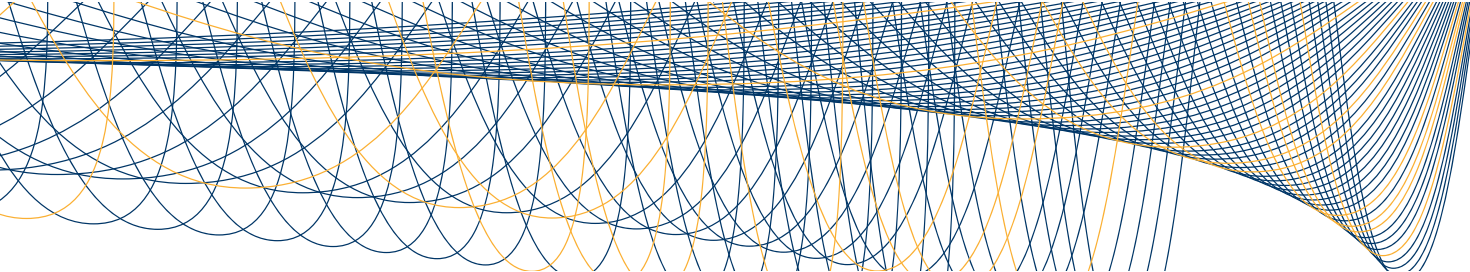
Be aware that although published successful submissions are a useful consultation tool, unless the feedback is published alongside them, they do not reveal which parts of the application were considered to be strong and which were not.

The self-assessment team and process

The self-assessment team should have a diverse membership, covering different levels of the department or institution (and, for an HEI, all areas of STEMM). It is important to balance administrative and human resources input with that of academics. Athena SWAN should be driven and led by the academic community.

The team should include men and women. Where possible the team's cumulative experience should include:

- balancing home responsibilities and work (particularly part-time/flexible working/career breaks)
- dual-career families (the partner does not have to have a STEMM background)
- recent experience of the institution or department's recruitment and promotion processes



- different stages of the career ladder (particularly at the early- and mid-career stages)
- departmental and institutional management responsibilities
- senior management

Athena SWAN does not require people to disclose their personal circumstances, but it should be clear to the panel that the team includes a balanced range of individuals.

The self-assessment team does not have to be a committee in its own right; it can be included under the umbrella of another group, as long as it undertakes to follow the Athena SWAN self-assessment process.

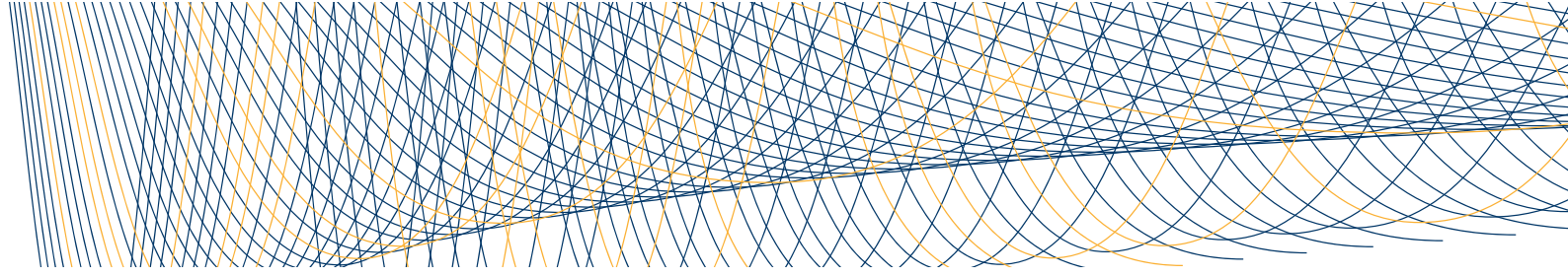
The panel expects evidence of a rigorous and thorough process, including regular meetings (at least three times a year) and varied methods of data collection and staff consultation (both qualitative and quantitative).

Data

Data should be presented in whichever way applicants consider most explanatory and appropriate (tables or graphs), as long as it clearly highlights trends and draws these out in the narrative. However, both percentages and raw numbers should be presented.

Data should correspond to the section heading and should cover the three years preceding the submission (five for renewals and Gold submissions). Reasons should be provided where data is unavailable, and, in most cases, a relevant action included.

Departments with clinical and non-clinical staff should separate these two groups when presenting staff data.



Evidence of good practice

While good practice benefits men and women, Athena SWAN awards specifically recognise what is being done to address the underrepresentation of women in STEMM, and to support and encourage their career progression. Panels expect to see some evidence of gender-specific measures if appropriate, and/or commentary and evidence on how initiatives have in particular benefited women.

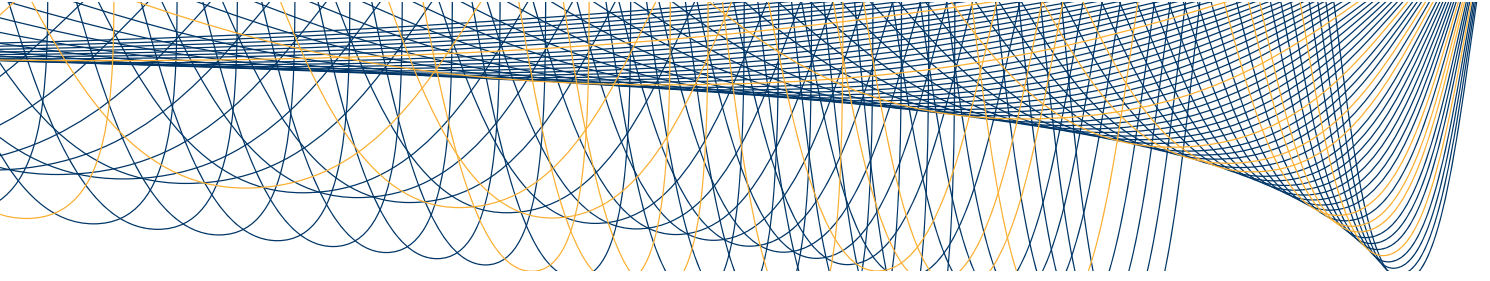
There is no prescriptive list of measures that panels expect to see in place at every institution or department, but failure to recognise issues that are fundamental to career progression will be looked upon negatively, for example issues such as universal appraisal and an equitable promotions process. For more information, please consult the Athena SWAN best practice booklets, a resource that the Athena SWAN team is developing. Panels are particularly keen to see examples of innovative and inventive good practice.

Where good practice is cited, ensure that policies are explained in sufficient detail rather than just stated as a title. Submissions should also avoid presenting legal compliance as good practice.

Web links

Panellists are asked to only consider information contained within the submission documents. Therefore, information included only as reference from web links will lead to this information being missed.

It is recognised that this represents a change from previous guidance, but the rapid increase in the number of submissions has meant that there is not sufficient time for panellists to read supplementary information.



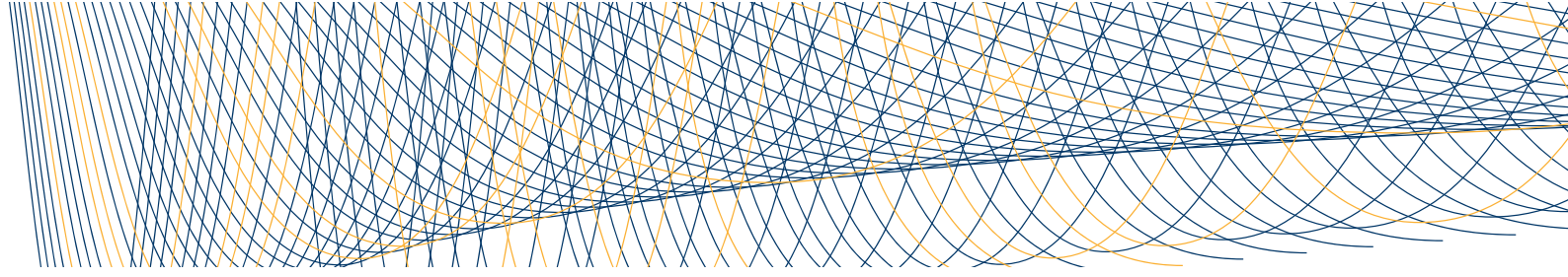
Word limits and appendices

Words limits help ensure that submissions are of a manageable length for panellists, taking into account that each panel assesses around seven submissions. The word limits are final, and may not be aggregated between sections. The number of words used in each section should be indicated.

Equally, appendices, other than the action plan and letter of endorsement, are not permitted. Any supplementary appendices will be removed from submissions and will not be considered by the assessment panels.

The only exception to this is for large faculties and colleges. An extra 1000 word allowance is available for large faculties, colleges, or other organisational units consisting of numerous departments who wish to apply for a department award. Faculties and colleges who wish to extend their word limit in this way must contact the team by email in advance of the application for approval. These words should be employed to demonstrate how Athena SWAN principles are embedded in each constituent unit, and, in the case of Silver award submissions, show their impact. These extra words can be used across the submission document, and it should be noted in the word counts at the end of each section where they have been used.

Due to the additional word allowance included in the research institute form to allow for more detailed discussion of institute structure, this additional word allowance will not be available to research institutes.



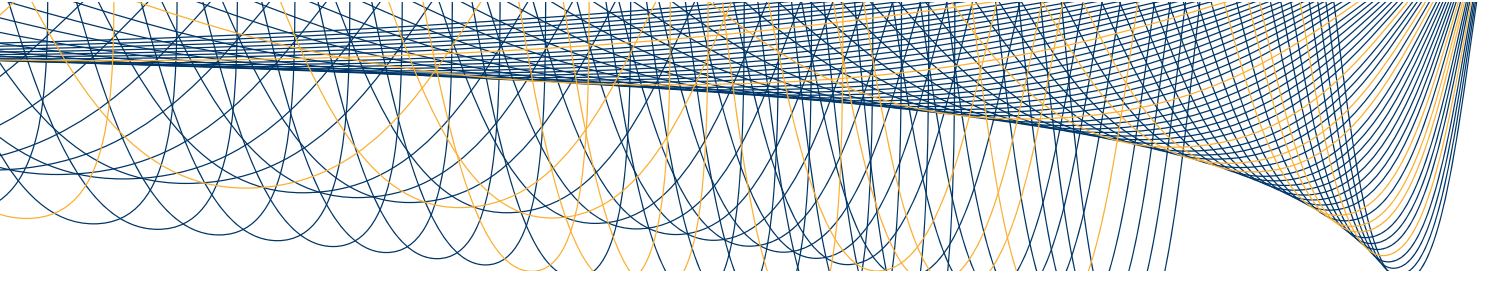
Case studies

Silver and Gold department and research institute submissions require case studies. These provide an opportunity to focus on the career progression of individuals working in the department, and to show how the inclusive culture and working practices of the department have benefited staff and enabled them to pursue a career in a STEMM subject area.

One of these case studies should be a member of the self-assessment team, and the other should be someone else in the department or research institute.

For a Silver application no more than two case studies should be put forward, even if within the word limit.

Gold applicants are asked to provide a small number of case studies. It is up to applicants how many to provide but it should be more than two. There should also be at least one case study from a male member of staff.

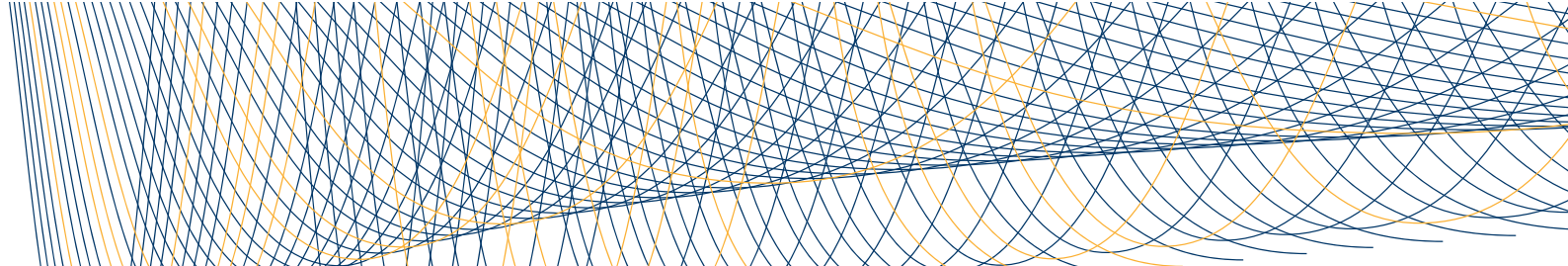


Letter of endorsement

The letter of endorsement from the head of the institution or department sets the tone for the submission.

It should be addressed to:
Athena SWAN Manager
Equality Challenge Unit
7th floor, Queens House
55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London, WC2A 3LJ

- The letter should be written by the head of the institution or department, not just signed off.
- The letter should explain why the department or institution values the Athena SWAN Charter, and how the action plan will help meet their strategic aims.
- If it is a renewal, reference should be made to the impact of the previous award.
- For higher levels of recognition, the panel will expect to hear how the department or institution has championed gender equality in STEMM.
- Although the head of the institution or department may well wish to refer to an institution's history and achievements, this should not be the focus of the letter.
- Panels are keen to get a sense of individual commitment to gender equality at the top of the organisation, so it is welcomed if the letter draws on personal experience.

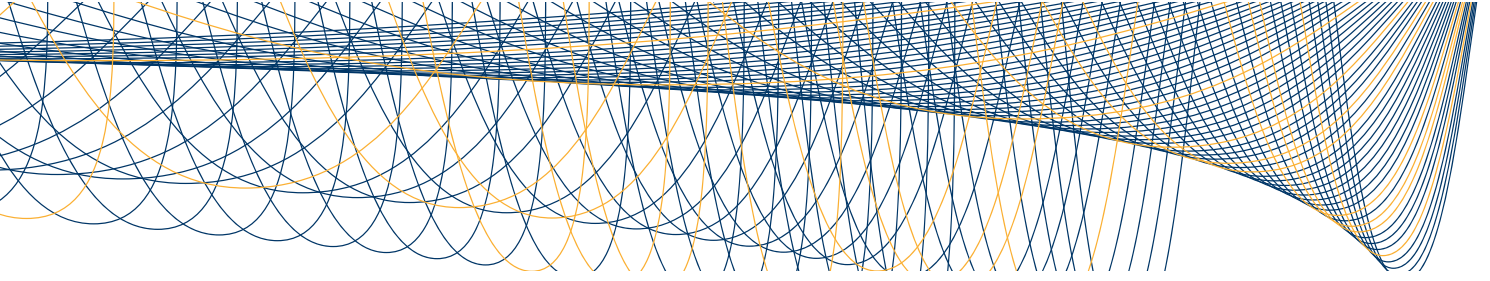


Action plans

Action plans are crucial to a submission's success; a poor action plan can cause even the best submission to be unsuccessful.

- Actions that are identified in the submission document should be clearly highlighted, so that when a panellist reads the action plan it is clear what the rationale for that action is.
- Actions should be scheduled across the three-year award period.
- Actions (and action plans) should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).
- The panel will expect to see evidence of prioritisation. Action plans may be ordered by priority level rather than chronologically or thematically.
- Responsibility for completing actions should be distributed across a range of staff; action plans where HR and equality and diversity practitioners are responsible for everything will not be well received.
- Descriptions of measures already in place should not be included in the action plan without detail on their monitoring or development.
- It is important to indicate how the success of an action will be measured. This should take the form of the column in the table.
- There is no right or wrong number of actions. However, it is important to balance conciseness with a good level of detail.
- Action plans should be aspirational and innovative, particularly at higher levels of award.
- Action plans should be organic documents, constantly reviewed and updated (not just prepared as part of an award submission).

Where awards are being renewed or upgraded, a copy of the previous action plan should be included, with indications of progress made. When awards are renewed or upgraded, panels recognise that unforeseen circumstances may mean that not every single action was completed by the deadline set out in the plan. However, they do expect to see evidence of progress responsive to the needs of the department or institution.



Submitting the form

Forms should be submitted by email by 5pm on the deadline

Institutions and departments that are preparing submissions should notify the Athena SWAN team of their intention to apply two calendar months in advance of the deadline. This enables panels to be scheduled in advance of the deadline, expediting the process. An email reminder to do this is sent to the Athena SWAN JISCmail list (as well as to institutional lead contacts), so at the earliest stages of planning, a representative from the self-assessment team should seek to join this list.

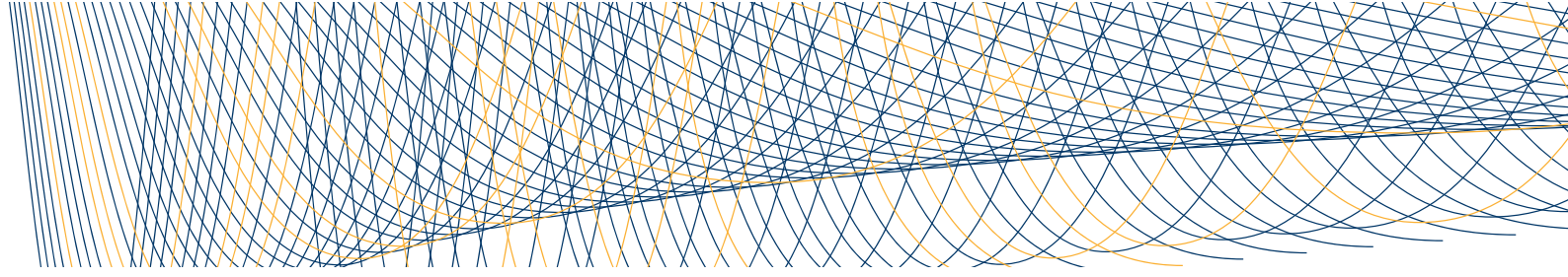
Submissions should include:

- a copy of the original letter of endorsement from the head of institution or department
- the submission document
- the action plan
- for a renewal submission, the previous updated action plan

These should be submitted as one consolidated PDF file. We no longer require a hard copy original of the letter of endorsement.

Once received, submissions will be acknowledged by the Athena SWAN team. In the case of submissions made shortly before the deadline, this might not be until after the passing of the deadline.

If you do not receive an acknowledgment that we have received your submission within five working days of the deadline please contact us via phone.



Although Athena SWAN staff are happy to field questions at any time, be aware that the team is extremely busy in the days running up to the deadline and cannot guarantee to respond to queries made at late notice. The FAQs on our website may answer any queries you have:

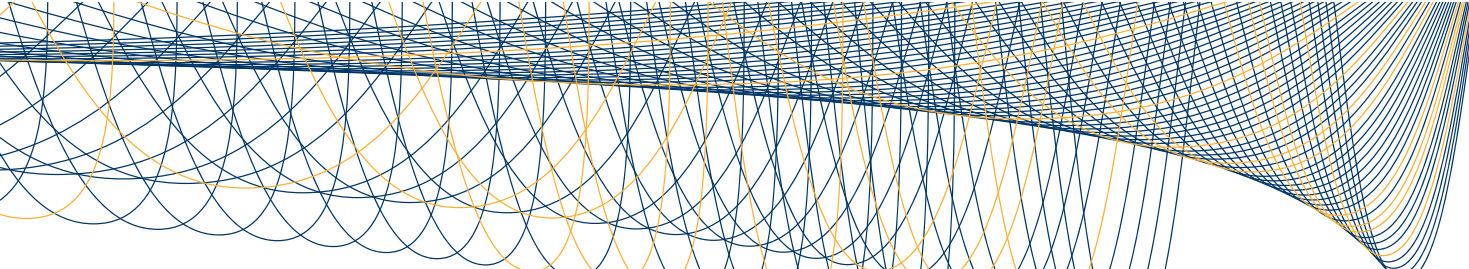
www.athenaswan.org.uk/content/faqs

Submissions will be printed in black and white for panellists. If a submission needs to be considered in colour, submitting departments and institutions should email the PDF file by the deadline and send in ten colour copies. We will accept the colour copies up to five working days after the deadline.

Panels sometimes request supplementary information before making a decision on a submission. Submitting departments and institutions should be prepared for such requests, which will normally be made two or three months after the deadline.

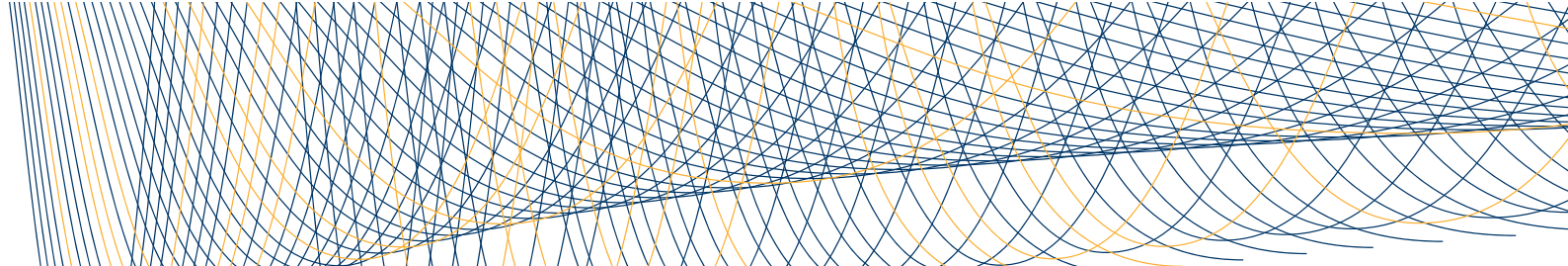
It is expected that institutions and departments that receive awards will publish their submission on their website. However, personal or confidential information or any other information you do not wish to be made public should be removed from the submission prior to doing this.

Athena SWAN does not publish the submissions. All submissions are treated as confidential by Athena SWAN and the judging panels.



Submission timeline

Timescale (+/- deadline)	Action required
-2 months	Institutions and departments that will be submitting applications should inform the Athena SWAN team of their intention by email. An email reminder to do this will be sent out to the JISCmail list and key contacts.
Deadline day spring/autumn, 5pm	Submissions (including the letter of endorsement, application document and action plan) should be sent in PDF format by email. Late submissions will not be considered.
+5 working days	Institutions and departments wishing for their submissions to be considered in colour should send 10 colour copies.
+3 months (spring) +4 months (autumn)	Assessment panels take place, and supplementary information may be requested.
+5 months (spring) +6 months (autumn)	Outcome letters for all applications and feedback for unsuccessful applications are sent to institutions and departments.
+6 months (spring) +7 months (autumn)	Feedback for award winners who received an award but at a lower level to the one they applied for is sent to institutions and departments.
+7 months (spring) +8 months (autumn)	Feedback for award winners who received an award at the level they applied for is sent to institutions and departments.
+7 months (spring) +8 months (autumn)	The awards ceremony is held.



Bronze university award

Prerequisites

The applicant institution must be an Athena SWAN Charter member, and have no outstanding membership fees.

What needs to be demonstrated

A Bronze university award recognises that the university has a solid foundation for eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff. This includes:

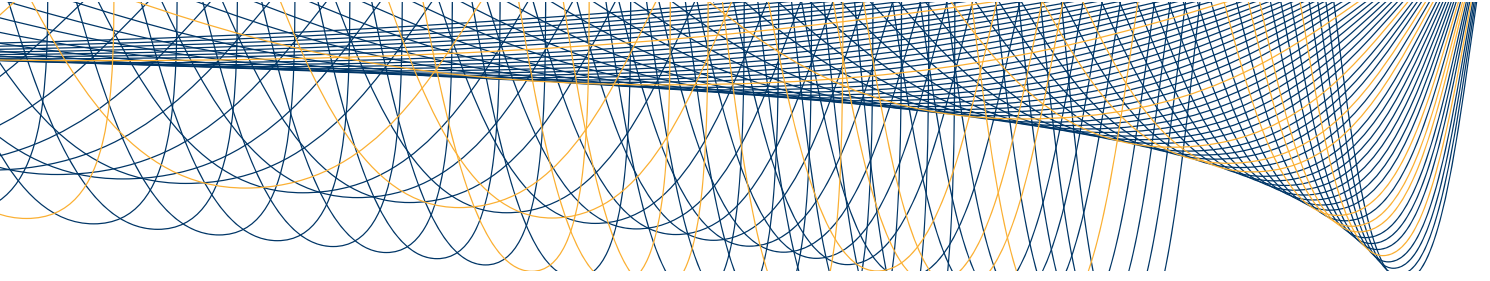
- 1 an assessment of where the university is regarding gender equality, in quantitative (staff and student data) and qualitative (policies, practices, systems and arrangements) terms, identifying both challenges and opportunities
- 2 a plan that builds on the assessment, any activities that are already in place and what has been learnt from these
- 3 an organisational structure (the self-assessment team) to carry proposed actions forward

Renewals

A Bronze university renewal award submission should show that the university remains responsive to the challenges that face women in STEMM and that the institution continues to maintain a solid foundation for eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff. The submission must show evidence that clear progress has been made against the previous Bronze university application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Bronze university award
- No award



Silver university award

Prerequisites

The institution must hold a valid Bronze award.

A majority of the institution's STEMM departments must hold department awards. Because of the differing sizes and structures of universities, please contact the Athena SWAN team for advice on eligibility. At least one of the award-holding departments must have a Silver award.

What needs to be demonstrated

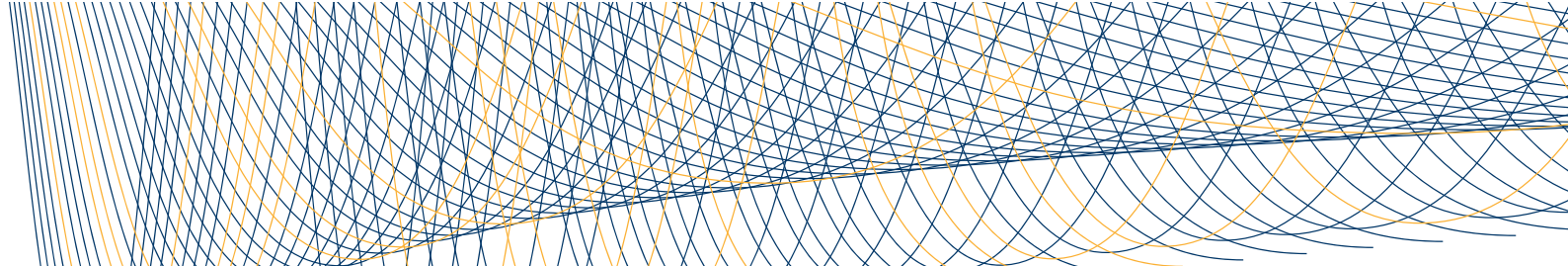
A Silver university award recognises a significant record of activity and achievement by the university in promoting gender equality and in addressing challenges across the full range of STEMM departments within the university. Applications should demonstrate that Athena SWAN is well embedded within the university with strong leadership in promoting the charter principles across it shown, and evidence the impact of Athena SWAN activities.

Renewals

In addition to the above, a renewal submission should provide evidence of progress and impact of the previous Silver university award application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Silver university award
- Bronze university award
- No award



Bronze department award

Prerequisites

The institution to which the applicant department belongs must hold a valid Bronze or Silver university award.

What needs to be demonstrated

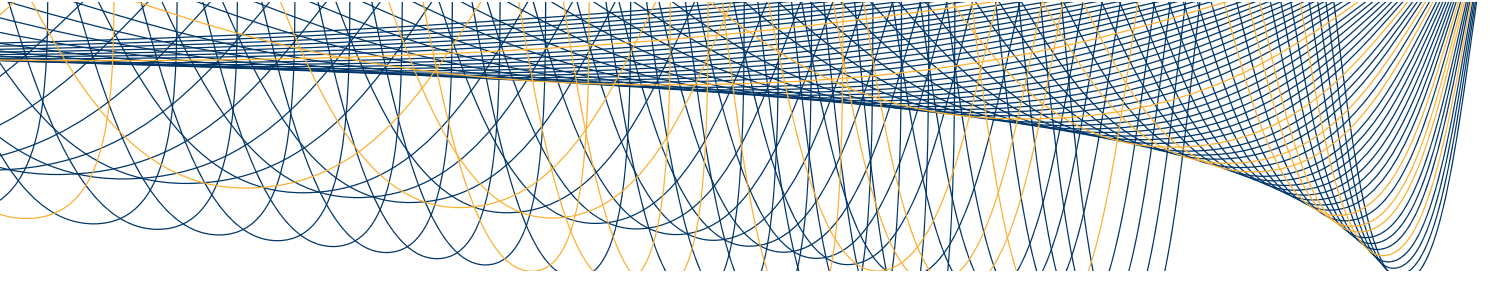
Bronze department awards recognise that in addition to university-wide policies, the department has identified particular challenges and is planning activities for the future. This includes: an assessment of where the department is regarding gender equality in quantitative (staff and student data) and qualitative (policies, practices, systems and arrangements) terms, identifying both challenges and opportunities; a plan that builds on the assessment, the activities that are already in place and what has been learnt from these; and an organisational structure (the self assessment team) to carry proposed actions forward.

Renewals

In addition to the above, a renewal submission should provide evidence of progress made against the previous Bronze department award application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Bronze department award
- No award



Silver department award

Prerequisites

The institution to which the applicant department belongs must hold a valid Bronze university award.

What needs to be demonstrated

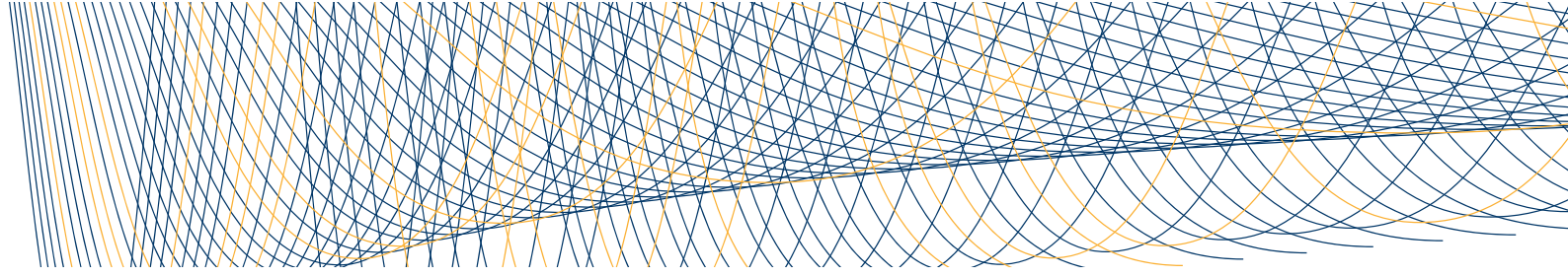
In addition to the future planning required for Bronze department recognition, a Silver department award recognises that the department has taken action in response to previously identified challenges (within or without the Athena SWAN process) and can demonstrate the impact of implemented actions.

Renewals

In addition to the above, Silver department renewal submissions must show evidence that clear progress has been made against the previous Silver department application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Silver department award
- Bronze department award
- No award



Gold department award

Prerequisites

The applicant department must hold a Silver department award.

What needs to be demonstrated

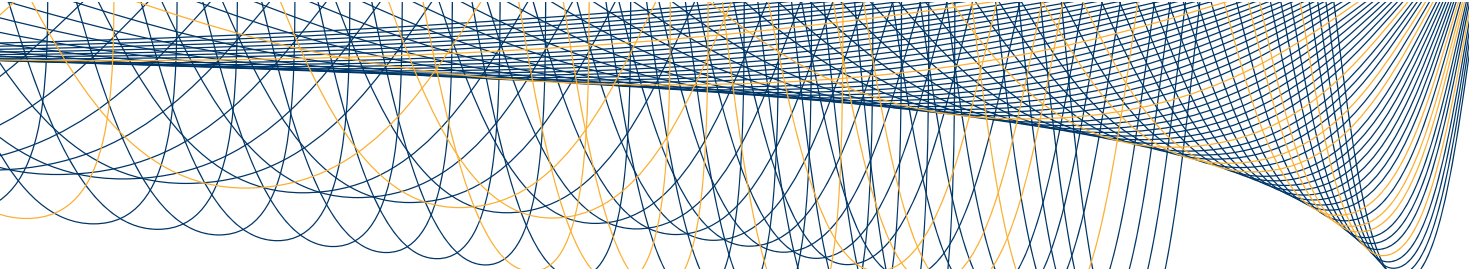
A Gold department award recognises sustained progression and achievement by the department in promoting gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline. A well-established record of activity and achievement in working towards equality in the career progression of women in STEMM should be complemented by data demonstrating continued impact. Gold departments should be beacons of achievement in gender equality and should champion and promote good practice to the wider community.

Renewals

In addition to the above, a Gold department renewal award should evidence consistent progress and impact against the previous Gold department application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Gold department award
- Silver department award
- No award



Bronze research institute award

Prerequisites

The applicant institute must be an Athena SWAN Charter member, and have no outstanding membership fees.

What needs to be demonstrated

Athena SWAN Bronze institute awards recognise that in addition to its own formal policies the institute is working to promote gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline. This includes:

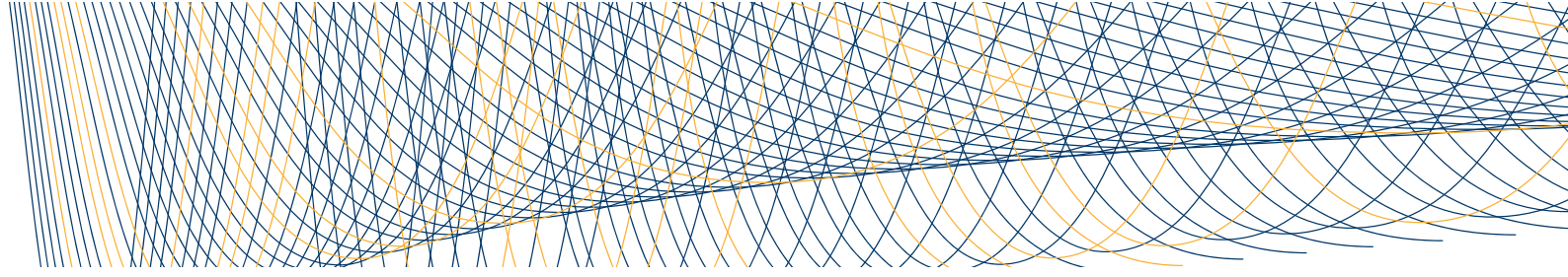
- an assessment of where the institute is regarding gender equality, in quantitative (staff and student data) and qualitative (policies, practices, systems and arrangements) terms, identifying both challenges and opportunities
- a plan that builds on the assessment, any activities that are already in place and what has been learnt from these
- an organisational structure (the self-assessment team) to carry proposed actions forward

Renewals

In addition to the above, a Bronze renewal submission should provide evidence of progress made against the previous Bronze department award application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Bronze institute award
- No award



Silver research institute award

Prerequisites

The applicant institute must be an Athena SWAN Charter member, and have no outstanding membership fees.

What needs to be demonstrated

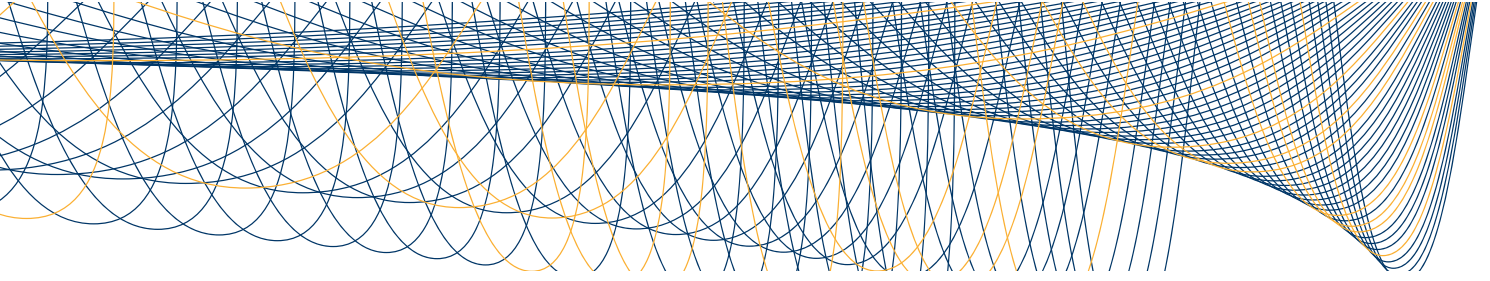
In addition to the future planning required for Bronze institute recognition, a Silver institute award recognises that the institute has taken action in response to previously identified challenges (within or without the Athena SWAN process) and can demonstrate the impact of implemented actions.

Renewals

In addition to the above, a Silver renewal submission should provide evidence of progress made against the previous Silver department award application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Silver institute award
- Bronze institute award
- No award



Gold research institute award

Prerequisites

The applicant institute must hold a Silver institute award and have no outstanding membership fees.

What needs to be demonstrated?

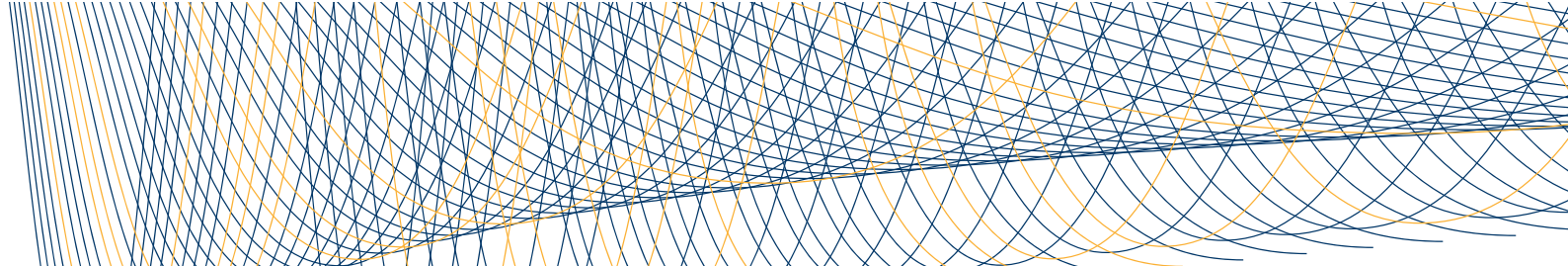
A Gold institute award recognises sustained progression and achievement by the research institute in promoting gender equality and addressing challenges particular to the discipline. A well-established record of activity and achievement in working towards equality in the career progression of women in STEMM should be complemented by data demonstrating continued impact. Gold departments should be beacons of achievement in gender equality and should champion and promote good practice to the wider community.

Renewals

In addition to the above, a Gold renewal submission should provide evidence of progress made against the previous Gold department award application and action plan.

Potential outcomes

- Gold institute award
- Silver institute award
- No award



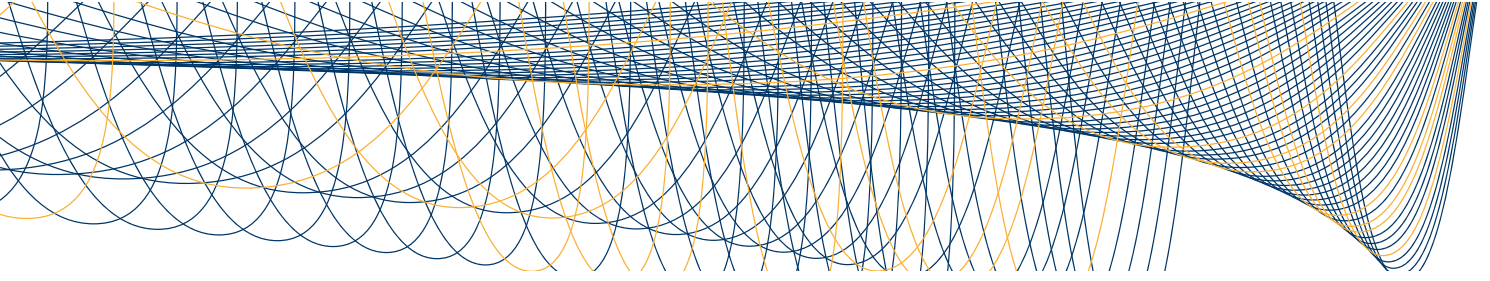
The assessment process

As well as the particular requirements at each level of award, panels make judgments on the following points:

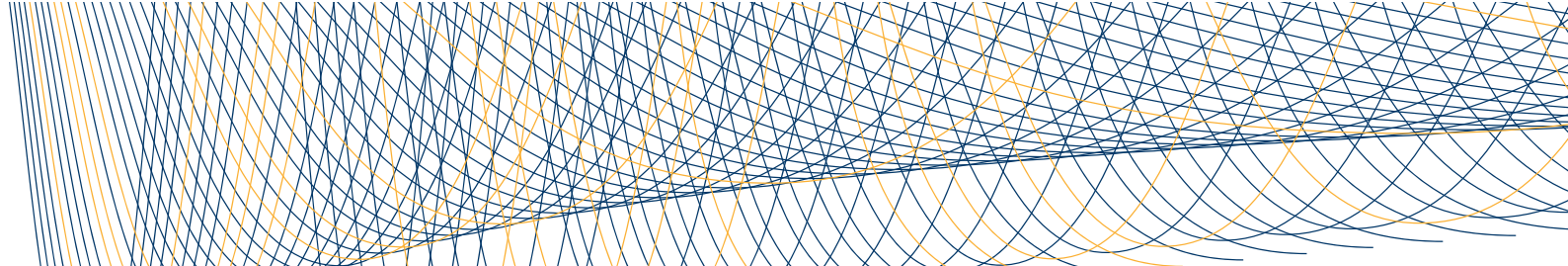
Communication	How well are policies and plans communicated to staff?
Senior or high-level commitment	Is it there, and if so, how is it communicated?
Effective analysis of the data	What does the data show, and what actions are being taken to address the issues identified? Even more importantly, how will the impact of these actions be measured?
Self-reflection and honesty	The panel accepts that there will be challenges and that mistakes may be made, but these need to be recognised openly together with the steps taken to address them.
Engagement	Are staff at every level involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies?

In reaching a decision on the appropriate level of award, panels will take account of the level applied for and will also consider:

- the clarity of the evidence provided on what has been done and what is planned
- the rationale for what has been done and what is planned and how this links to the organisation's strategic mission and goals
- how successful the actions taken have been, how that success was measured and evaluated and how the organisation and the individual women, and men, who work in it have benefited
- the linkage between the data and the action points
- the understanding demonstrated of the institutional context/ local circumstances and what the key issues are
- the significance of any changes and programmes/initiatives in terms of their anticipated outcomes, their sustainability and the likely longer term impact on the organisation, its processes and its culture

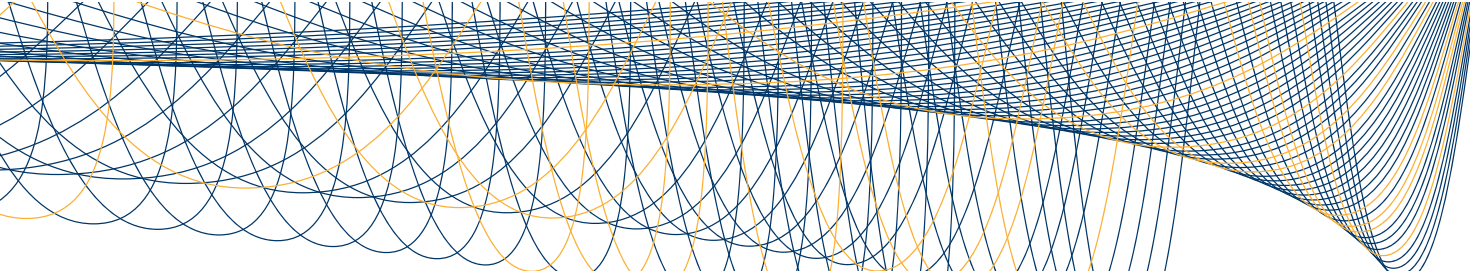


- the level of input, investment, involvement/commitment and support from senior management, heads of departments, senior academics and research team leaders (male and female)
- consultation with and input from all research and academic staff (men and women), particularly encouraging women's participation
- the extent to which what has been developed and introduced has been different, innovative or particularly challenging
- the suitability and sustainability of what has been developed and the ease with which the changes have been or are likely to become embedded in the organisational/departmental culture
- the extent to which activities, programmes, and changes have successfully addressed perceptions and expectations that shape or constrain career choices and outcomes
- the extent to which the value of what has been done is recognised, welcomed, and valued by staff generally, by managers, and by women in particular

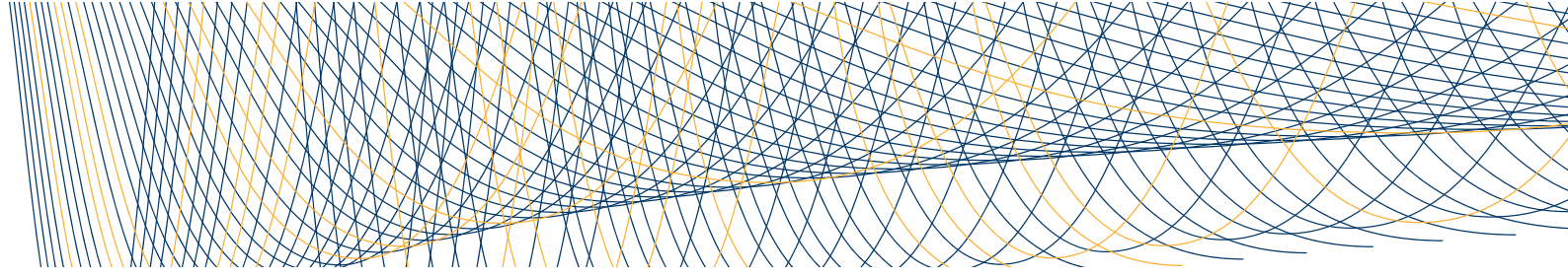


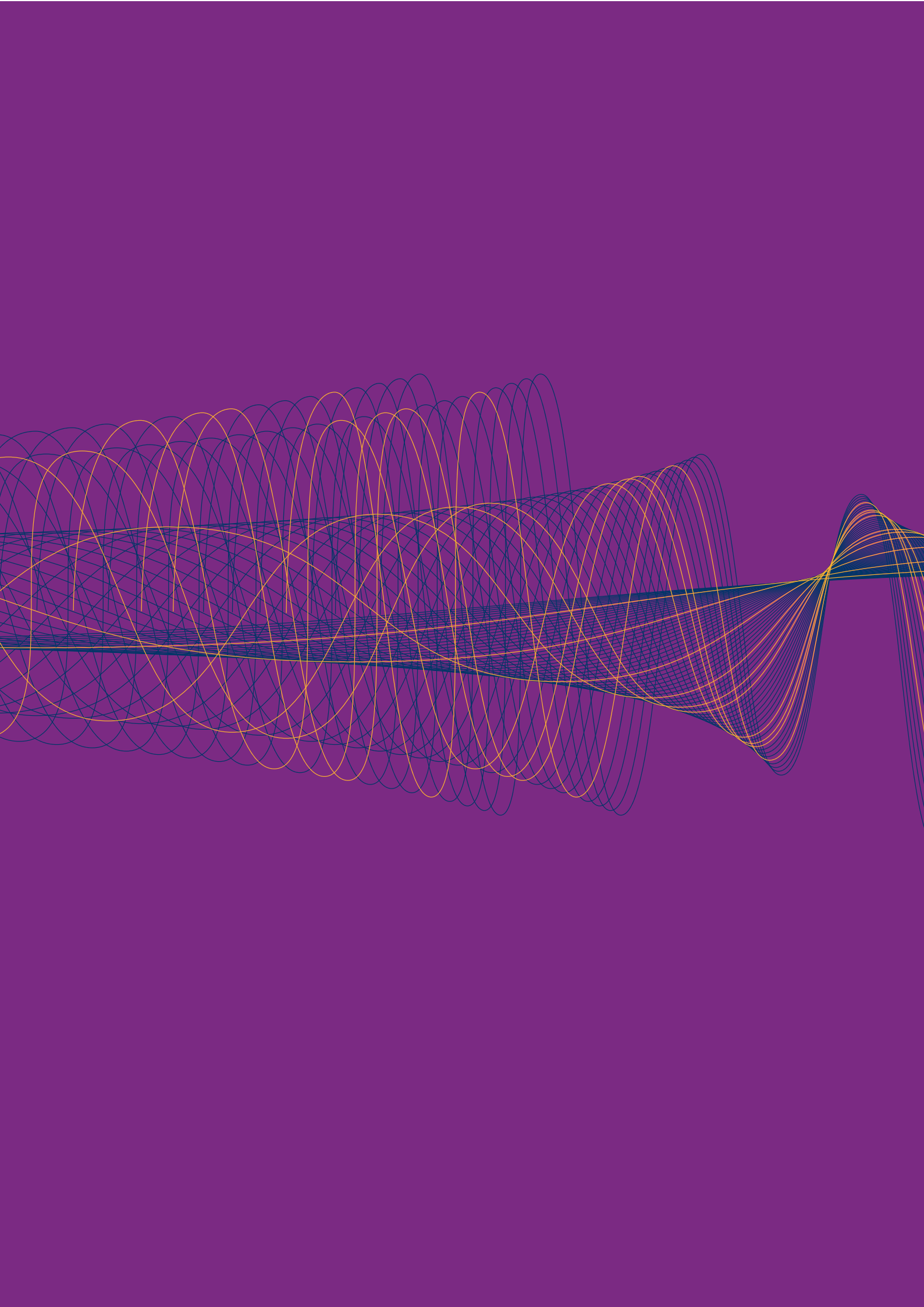
Award validity

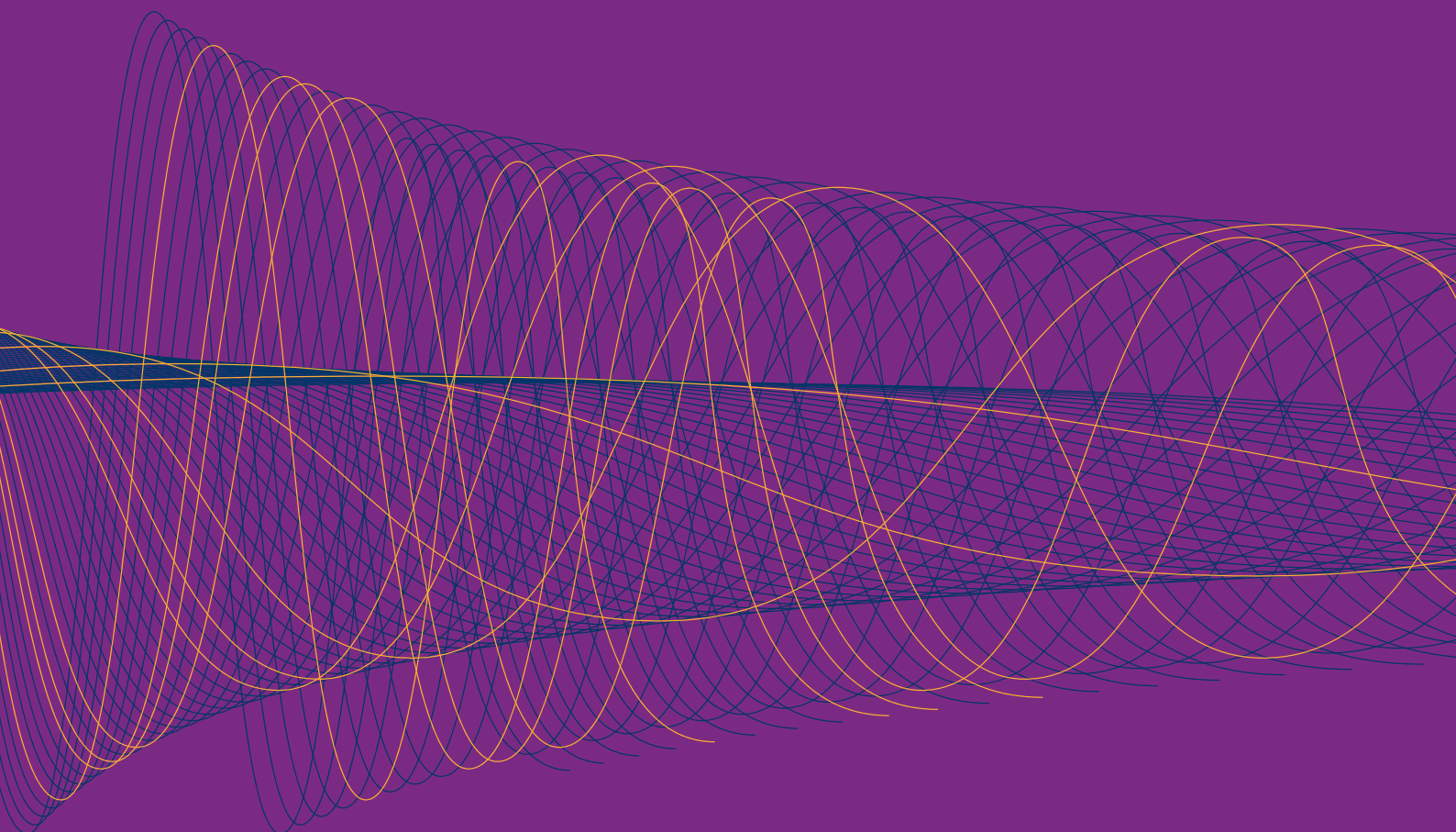
- All awards made are valid for three years from the results announcement, ie a successful award in the April 2013 round which was announced in September 2013 will be valid until November 2016. The renewal date will be specified in the letter confirming the level of award conferred.
- Awards can be renewed or upgraded in any round up to the end of the award validity. The validity period of the most recent successful renewal/upgrade supersedes the previous validity period.
- If a renewal is submitted at the end of the validity period, and this renewal is unsuccessful, the submitting institution or department will receive a year's extension to put in an improved renewal submission.
- Under exceptional circumstances, a year's extension to the validity of an award may be negotiated when no renewal is submitted before the end of the validity period. This needs to be agreed in advance with the Athena SWAN Manager and is entirely at their discretion. Note that in such circumstances, the submission would not receive another year's extension if unsuccessful.
- If, after three years, no renewal submission is made and no extension is negotiated, status as an Athena SWAN award holder will cease.



- If, after receiving a year's extension, no renewal submission is made or the renewal submission is still unsuccessful, status as an Athena SWAN award holder will cease. Where the award in question is a Silver or Gold award, the panel considering the application may choose to confer a lower-level award, should they feel the application fulfils the appropriate criteria.
- In such circumstances, the institution or department is expected to promptly change or remove all references to being Athena SWAN award holders from their website and communications (including the Athena SWAN logo). Where an institution or department's status as an award holder has ceased, the institution or department will also be removed from the list of award holders on Athena SWAN website.
- Where an institution loses its Bronze award, departments at that institution also lose the right to submit their own applications. The validity of existing department awards is unaffected, but if the institution does not regain its Bronze award by the end of a department's award validity period, that department will not be able to submit a renewal application.







Athena SWAN Champions of Science: Professor Karen Holford

Director, Cardiff School of Engineering

Karen's primary research theme is damage assessment using acoustic emission applied across a range of industrial applications. She has recently been invited to be the vice president (Europe) of the International Society on Acoustic Emission.

