



# Athena Swan Nordic Workshop

Sarah Dickinson Hyams – Assistant Director, International Equality Charters

Kay Steven – International Equalities Charters Manager

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# By the end of today we will have

- Got to know each other!
- Introduced the Athena Swan global community
- Discussed how Advance HE membership can enhance your gender equality, diversity and inclusion journeys
- Showcased how Athena Swan works & operates successfully in Ireland
- Mapped out the context for Athena Swan in Nordic countries, focusing on your existing achievements
- Scoped the potential for a pilot project in Nordic countries

# Introducing Advance HE



# AdvanceHE

*Our vision is that the world-class reputation and standing of HE and research is enhanced and recognised for transforming lives, enriching society, and developing the economy for the better.*

We work to:

- + Transform HE leadership and governance for the new world
- + Enhance teaching and learning for student success
- + Drive organisational cultural change to support equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing

# Advance HE Membership

- + Over 426 members worldwide
  - + 320 in the UK
  - + 106 outside of the UK
- + Members in 32 countries outside of the UK
  - + Australia
  - + the MENA region
  - + Republic of Ireland
  - + Thailand
  - + Europe

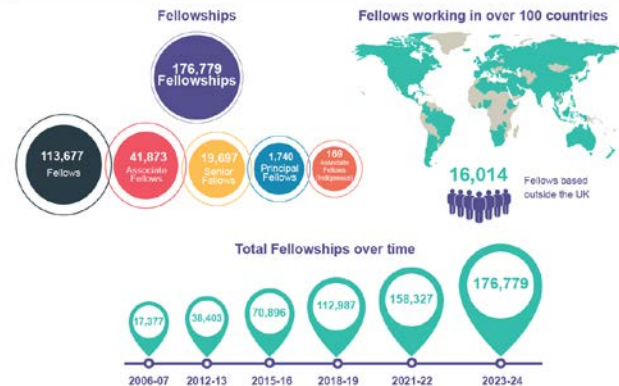
# Fellowship

Fellowship brings individuals and institutions a range of benefits:

- Consolidates personal development and evidence of professional practice in an individuals higher education career;
- Provides a valuable measure of success and is increasingly recognised by international institutions;
- Demonstrates commitment to teaching, learning and the student experience, through engagement in a practical process that encourages research, reflection and development;
- Fellowship is increasingly sought by employers (particularly in the UK sector) as a condition of appointment and/or promotion;
- For individuals, to identify their expertise with the entitlement to use post-nominal letters (AFHEA, FHEA, SFHEA, PFHEA);
- Fellowships are available to both academic staff and professional services staff.

**175,000 Fellows**

More than 175,000 fellows are now recognised around the world with a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education. All data correct as of 13 September 2023.



[www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship](http://www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship)



Professional Standards  
Framework for teaching  
and supporting learning in  
higher education: report of  
the review 2021-2023

Dr Julie Bailey Cursons PFHEA  
Delta Researcher SFHEA

# Publications, projects and resources

Membership provides institutions with access to a wealth of exclusive reports, publications and resources across key HE themes, and the latest thinking in leadership development, governance, organisation development, education and EDI. All accessed via the [Knowledge Hub](#).

[Sustainability: Realising the ambition –Beyond Flexible Learning](#)

[Good Campus Relations and Freedom of Speech](#)

[Tertiary Education](#)

[Leadership for the Future](#)

[International HE: what next?](#)

[Student Outcomes](#)



# Publications, projects and resources



## Knowledge Hub

The Advance HE Knowledge Hub brings together thousands of higher education resources covering a wide range of topics and themes all into one place. Search by keyword or use the search filters on theme, sub theme and content type to find resources relevant to you.

Keywords

athena swan

From

Select date

To

Select date

Content Type

- Any -

Theme

- Any -

Apply

Hundreds of 'searchable' Athena Swan resources that may support gender equality work including:

- Case studies
- Briefs
- Applications forms and feedback





# Publications, projects and resources

Sample resources across key HE themes, available through the Knowledge Hub:

## Report:

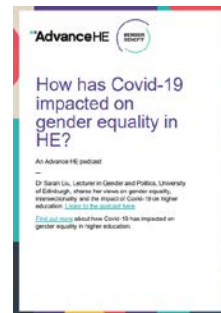
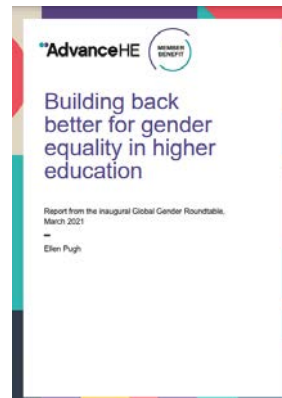
[Building back better for gender equality in higher education](#)

## Audio:

[Podcast: how has Covid-19 impacted on gender equality in HE?](#)

## Good Practice Initiatives:

The new, evidence-based [Good Practice Database](#) is for those working to advance gender and race equality in higher education through Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter.



# Connecting people: networks and communities

Advance HE Connect is an online network with more than **21,000 users** from over **100 countries** around the globe. This community platform is open to all those who work in HE and provides a space where the sector can share, connect and collaborate in one place.

In addition to the open networks, staff from member institutions benefit from **member only networks** such as the Connect Event Series Network, Athena Swan Network, the Race Equality Charter Network and the Socially Distanced Campus project. They also have exclusive access to the member benefit webinars and **the Collaborative Development Fund**



**+80%**

increase in users  
accessing Advance HE  
Connect as the sector  
moved to remote  
operations as a result of  
the Covid-19 crisis.



# Student Surveys

UK  
ENGAGEMENT  
SURVEY

POSTGRADUATE  
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE  
SURVEY

POSTGRADUATE  
TAUGHT EXPERIENCE  
SURVEY

- ✓ Designed with and for the sector
- ✓ Confidential results for enhancement
- ✓ Range of benchmarking services
- ✓ 130 institutions take part each year as a membership add-on
- ✓ Over 150,000 student responses collected

# PRES

POSTGRADUATE  
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE  
SURVEY

- ✓ Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
- ✓ The largest survey of the Postgraduate Researcher experience in the sector
- ✓ 105 institutions took part in 2023
- ✓ A wide range of benchmark comparisons available
- ✓ Full demographic reporting
- ✓ Outside UK, recent participation from Australia, Ireland, Luxembourg

# Development Programmes

Advance HE provide open development programmes across a range of areas

Some examples of open programmes include:

- + Top Management Programme
- + **Senior Women's Leadership Development - Aurora**
- + Diversifying Leadership
- + Research Team Leadership
- + Transition to Leadership
- + Leading Departments
- + Transformative Conversations
- + New to Teaching

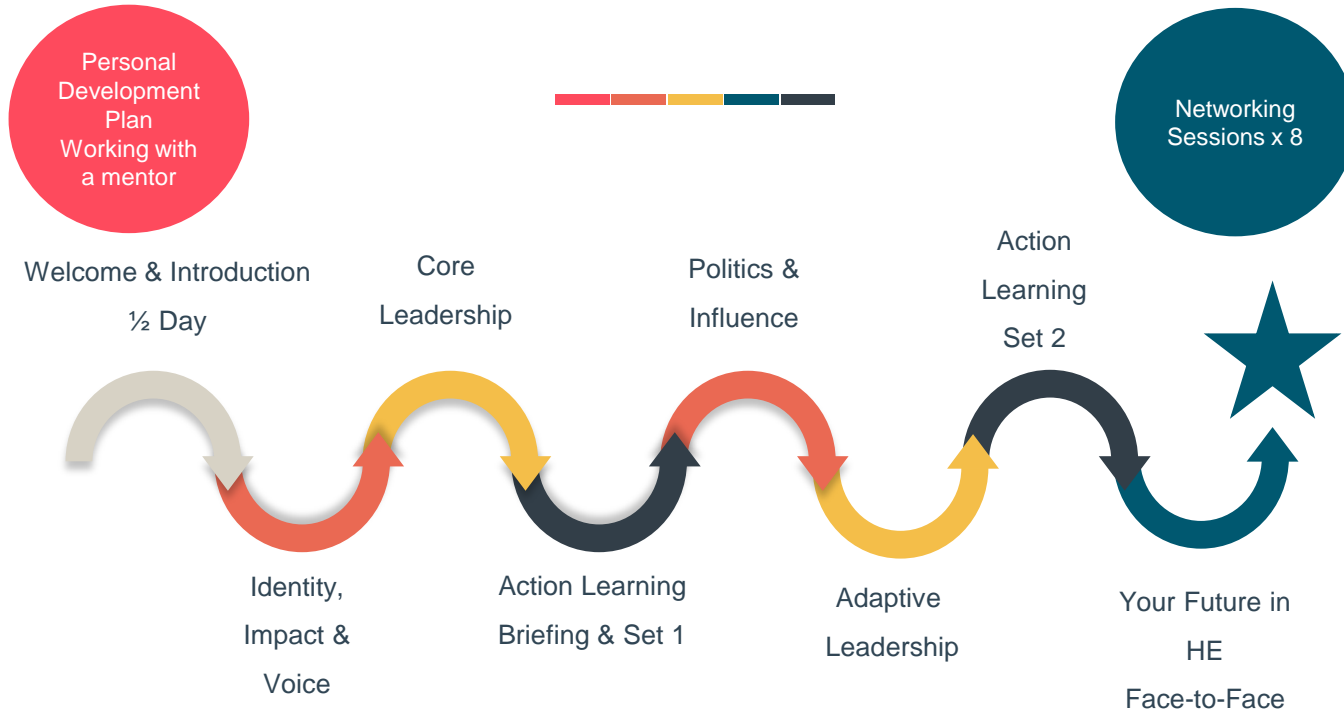


**>10,000**

women from nearly 200 different institutions have participated in Aurora since its launch, with our research showing Aurorans are twice as likely to get promoted.



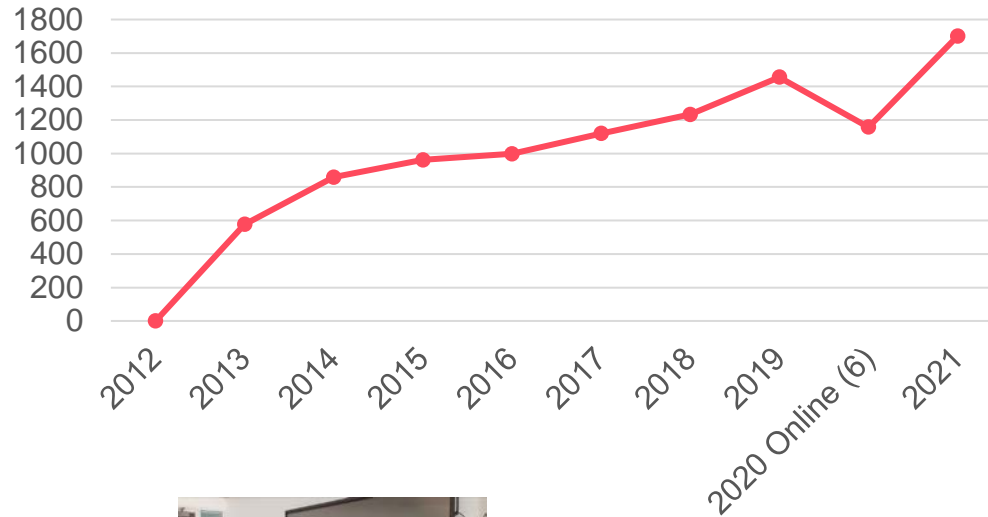
# Aurora Journey; Me – We - Us



**Aurora Women's Leadership in 2022/23**  
**7 cohorts – 1568 participants – 131 Institutions**

# Aurora Growing Community

Participant growth year on year 2012-13 (577) – 2021-22  
(1,660)



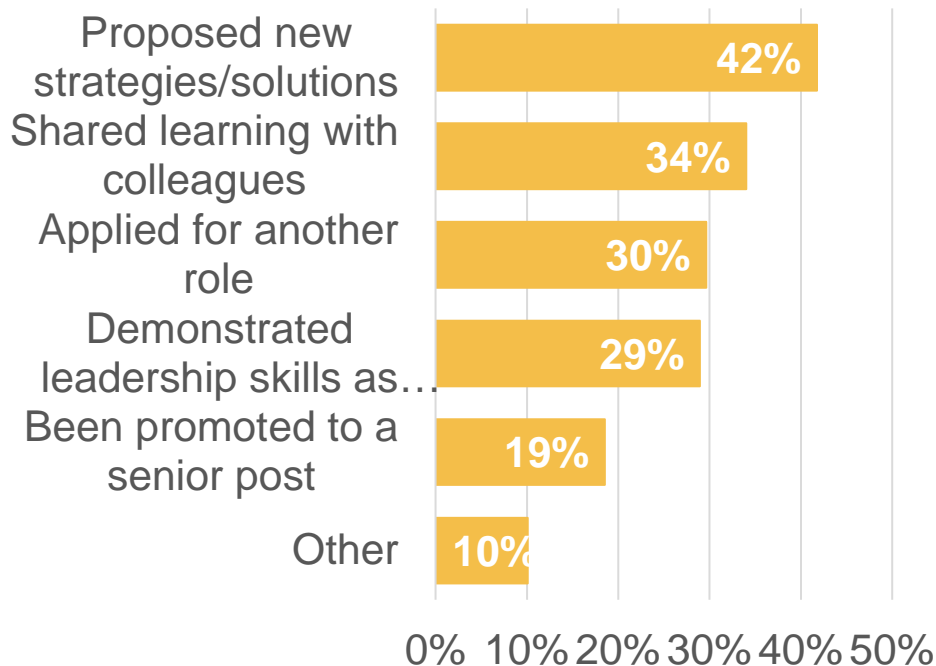
**10,000+  
alumni**



# Impact of Aurora

Since taking part in Aurora in 2022-23

- 42% of participants had
- gone on to propose new strategies
- 34% had shared learning with colleagues.
- 19% had been promoted to a senior post.



Data from 297 participants



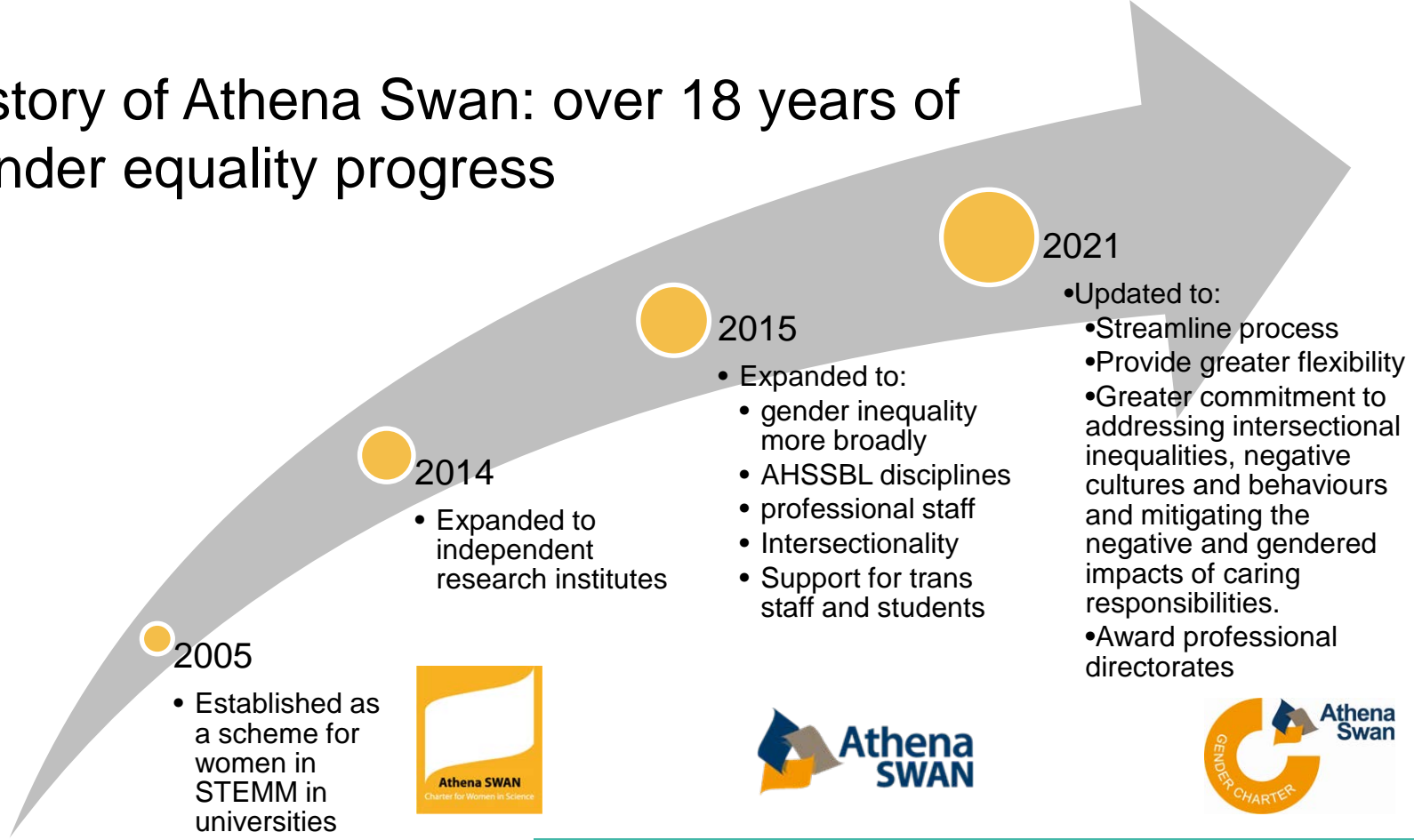
# Introduction to the Athena Swan Charter

# History of Athena Swan



- + 1999-2007: The Athena Project aimed to:
  - + Support the advancement of women in SET
  - + Encourage and recognise good practice
- + The funding came from HEFCE, SHEFC, OST DTI and the Royal Society
- + The Scientific Women Academics Network developed a Charter which aimed to:
  - + Complement existing HEI policies
  - + Enable HEIs to formally pledge support and develop actions
  - + Inform policy and practice via bottom-up approach

# History of Athena Swan: over 18 years of gender equality progress



2005: 10 members → 2023: 143 UK members

2006: 3 award holders → 2023: 1000+ award holders

- Institutions work to embed the charter principles and undertake the action plan
- Where relevant, departments may begin the self-assessment process
- Evaluation of progress and impact
- award renewal or upgrade

**Step one:**  
Commitment to the  
Charter principles

- Addressing structural inequalities & injustices
- Tackling behaviour & cultures that detract from safety
- Understanding & addressing intersectional inequalities
- Examining gendered occupational segregation
- Mitigating the gendered impact of caring responsibilities

**Step two:**  
Applicant self-  
assessment

- Assume collective responsibility
- Individualised approach to addressing inequalities
- Establish organisational structure to progress equality e.g. reward, leaders, SAT,
- Gather data and evidence
- Communication and engagement
- Analysis and reflection

**Step three:**  
Peer-review  
assessment

- Assessment metrics
- Opportunity for tailored feedback
- Monitoring and consistency
- Share good practice
- Recognition of commitment and progress
- Outcomes used to monitor progress by funders/national agencies.

**Step four:**  
Implementation and  
evaluation of  
effectiveness

Equality  
Charters  
Process

# What does this mean in practice?

- + Athena Swan provides a framework for continuous action
- + This is recognised through awards that recognise steps on the journey
- + Every applicant can be recognised for their work and commitment
- + It is necessary for the whole unit to pull together to deliver sustainable change

- = Commitment to removing barriers that contribute to underrepresentation
- = Taking a targeted approach to issues that may be of internal or external origin
- = Good practice and honesty

- ≠ Hiring or promoting people because they are underrepresented
- ≠ Producing reports and winning awards
- ≠ Planning to “suggest”
- ≠ Operating a deficit model

# Application levels

- Institutional level (university and research institute) – strategic priorities, systems, policies and processes
- Departmental (academic and professional) – local / discipline specific issues, culture experienced by staff & students

# Gold

**Sector-leading  
practice (F)**

**Supporting  
others to  
improve (F)**

## Silver

**Progress  
against  
priorities (D)**

**Evidence of  
Success (E)**

## Bronze

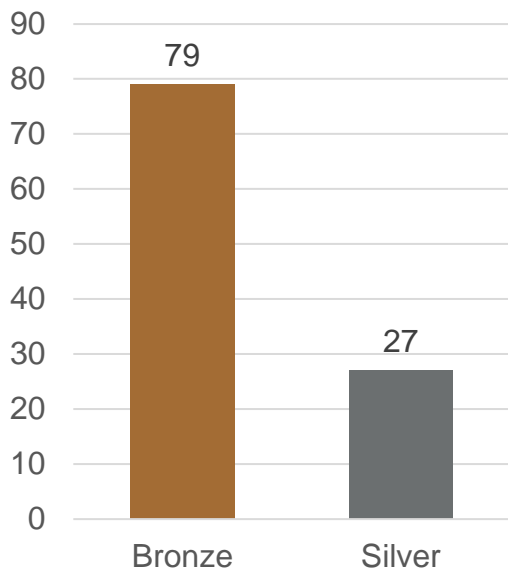
**Structures to  
recognise gender  
equality work (A)**

**Identification of  
key issues (B)**

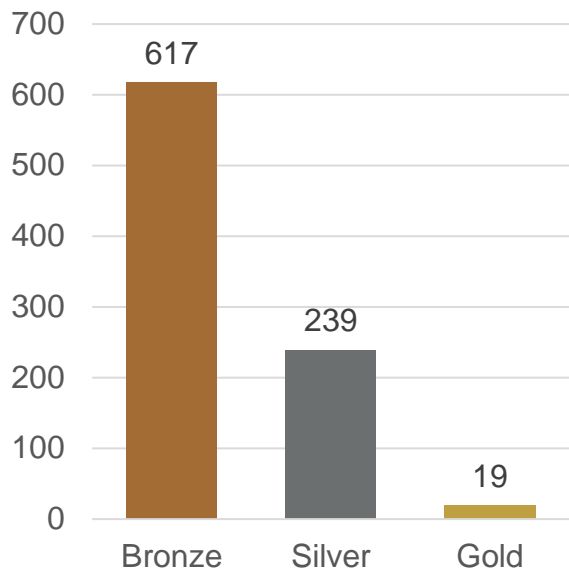
**Action plan (C)**

# Current UK awards

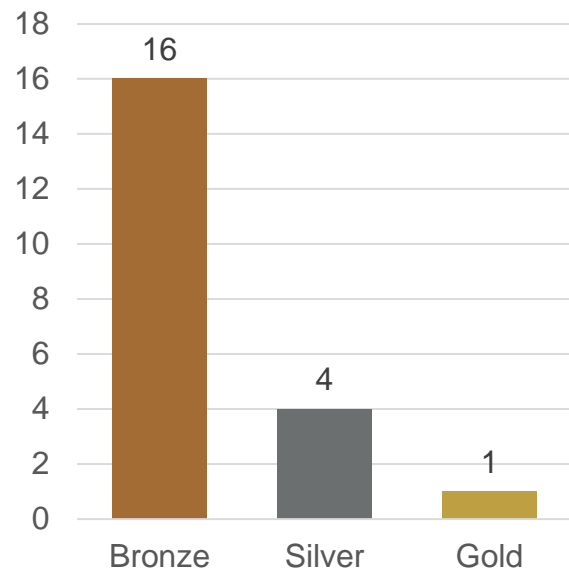
University



Department



Research institute





# Application process

Flexible to context and priorities:

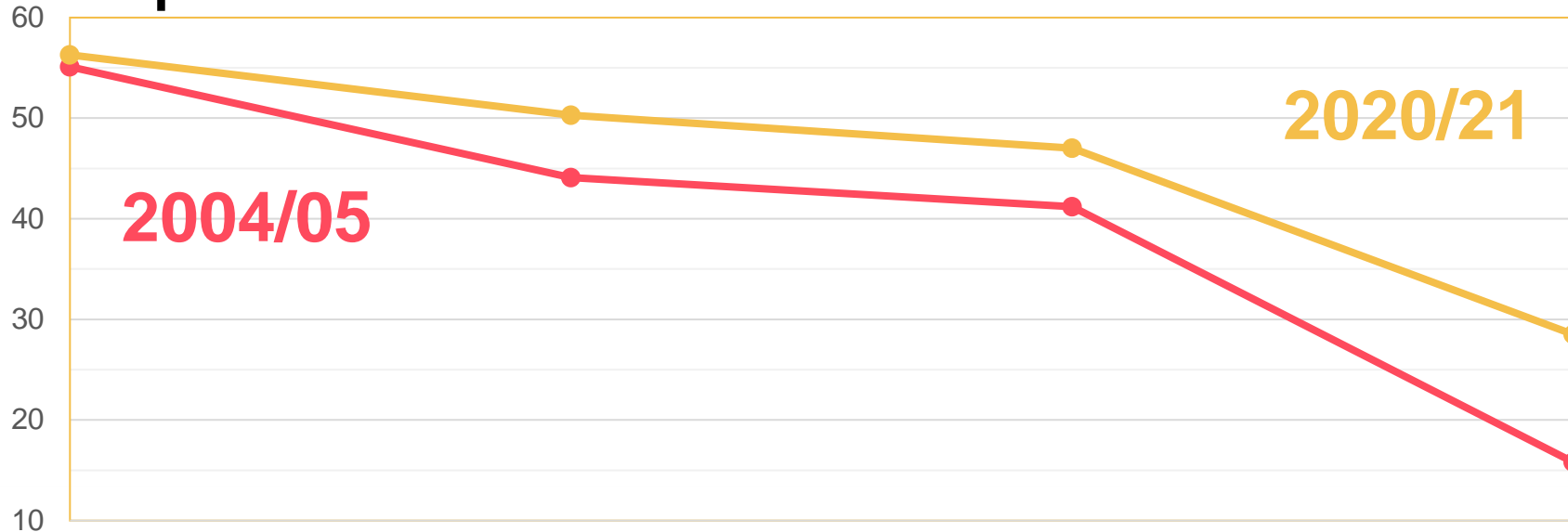
- Overview of EDI structures and approach
- Assessment of the gender equality context
- Evaluation of progress and success
- Action plan

# Why does Athena SWAN work?

- = Created by and for the academic and research community
- = Member led approach - changes driven by members' needs
- = Any changes are co-developed with the sector
- = Led and championed by senior academics: buy-in from the top
- = Requires thorough self-assessment and reflection to understand individual data and challenges
- = Promotes staff consultation and engagement
- = Awards are only valid for 5 years
- = Peer review process
- = Charter has evolved in step

# Benefits of participation

# Proportion of female students and staff



UG

55.1%

56.3%

PGR

44.1%

50.3%

Academic  
staff

41.2%

47.0%

Professor

15.8%

28.5%

# Impact of Athena Swan in the UK

Independent evaluations:  
2014, 2019



Key findings on

- Representation
- Gender balance
- Culture change

# Representation of women

- A higher proportion of female staff overall (7%) in departments with awards
- A higher proportion of female academic staff in STEMM (> 7%) & AHSSBL (> 4%)
- A higher proportion of female students: UG (2%) and PGT (4%)

# Gender balance and equity

- Trend towards more gender balanced senior level promotions, greater % women on job shortlists, and more appointments to women.
- 2020 study on Women in Economics in UK showed evidence of link between Athena Swan awards and reduced gender pay gap for senior roles

# Culture change

*‘strong evidence that the Charter processes and methodologies have supported cultural and behavioural change – not just around gender equality, but equality and diversity in all its forms’*



# Culture shift

- Women in Gold departments:
  - more **satisfied** with professional development reviews, more **optimistic** about career prospects and more likely to have a mentor
  - more familiar with promotion criteria and processes
  - more likely to have been **encouraged** to apply for promotion

# Culture change

93%

believe Charter  
has had a  
positive effect  
on gender  
issues

78%

believe Charter  
has had a  
positive impact  
on equality and  
diversity issues

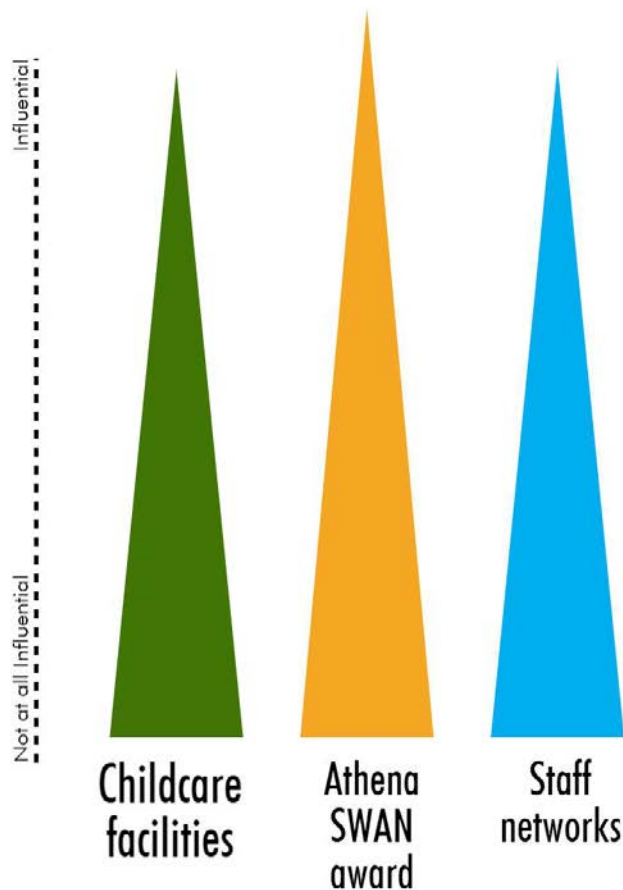
78%

believe Charter  
has had a  
positive impact  
on women's  
career  
progression

# Culture change

*“We don’t see this as a paper exercise; we see it as a process through which we can deliver real cultural and behavioural change: ensuring the attitudes and behaviours that support equality and diversity are embedded within our school and everything we do is an essential part of achieving this cultural change.”*

- Male, senior academic



**WOMEN RATED  
HOLDING AN  
ATHENA SWAN  
AWARD AS THE  
TOP EQUALITY  
ITEM TO  
CONSIDER  
WHEN DECIDING  
TO TAKE A POST**

# Advance HE's International Equality Charters

# Global take up

## 2023

### CANADA

Launched in 2019, the Government runs the Dimensions pilot. 17 Institutions participate and 11 hold awards. It covers five marginalised groups.

### IRELAND

Launched in 2015, 27 institutions participate. 19 institutions and 99 departments hold awards. Core and research funding linked to awards.

### UK

Launched in 2005, 164 institutions participate. 1000+ award holders in universities, departments and research institutes.

### CYPRUS

Launched in 2023, working with CYQAA and 6 institutions to pilot Athena Swan

### JAPAN

MEXT are supporting ROIS to carry out feasibility study for Japan.

### USA

Launched in 2017, the AAAS runs the STEM Equity Achievement (SEA) Change programme. 26 institutions participate and 5 hold Bronze awards. It covers race and gender.

### INDIA

Launched in 2020, the Department of Science and Technology and the British Council set up GATI. 36 Institutions are taking part in the pilot

### BRAZIL

Launched in 2022, the British Council and Advance HE developed a framework for use in 18 Brazilian institutions. 35 Brazilian institution are now piloting the framework.

### AUSTRALIA

Launched in 2015 by Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE); 43 institutions participate and 39 hold Bronze institutional awards.

### NEW ZEALAND

MIBE considering what a pilot would look like for New Zealand.



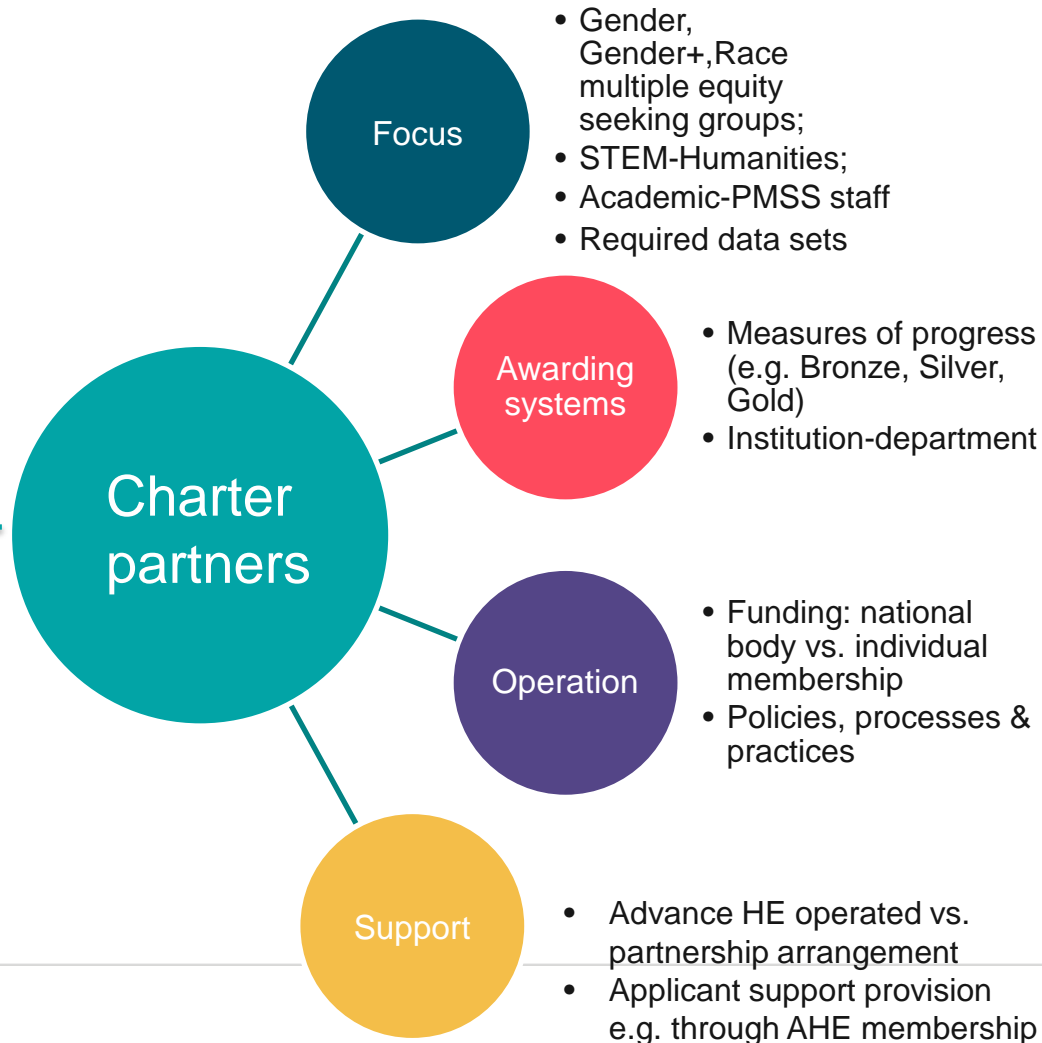
Currently participate



Committed to participating

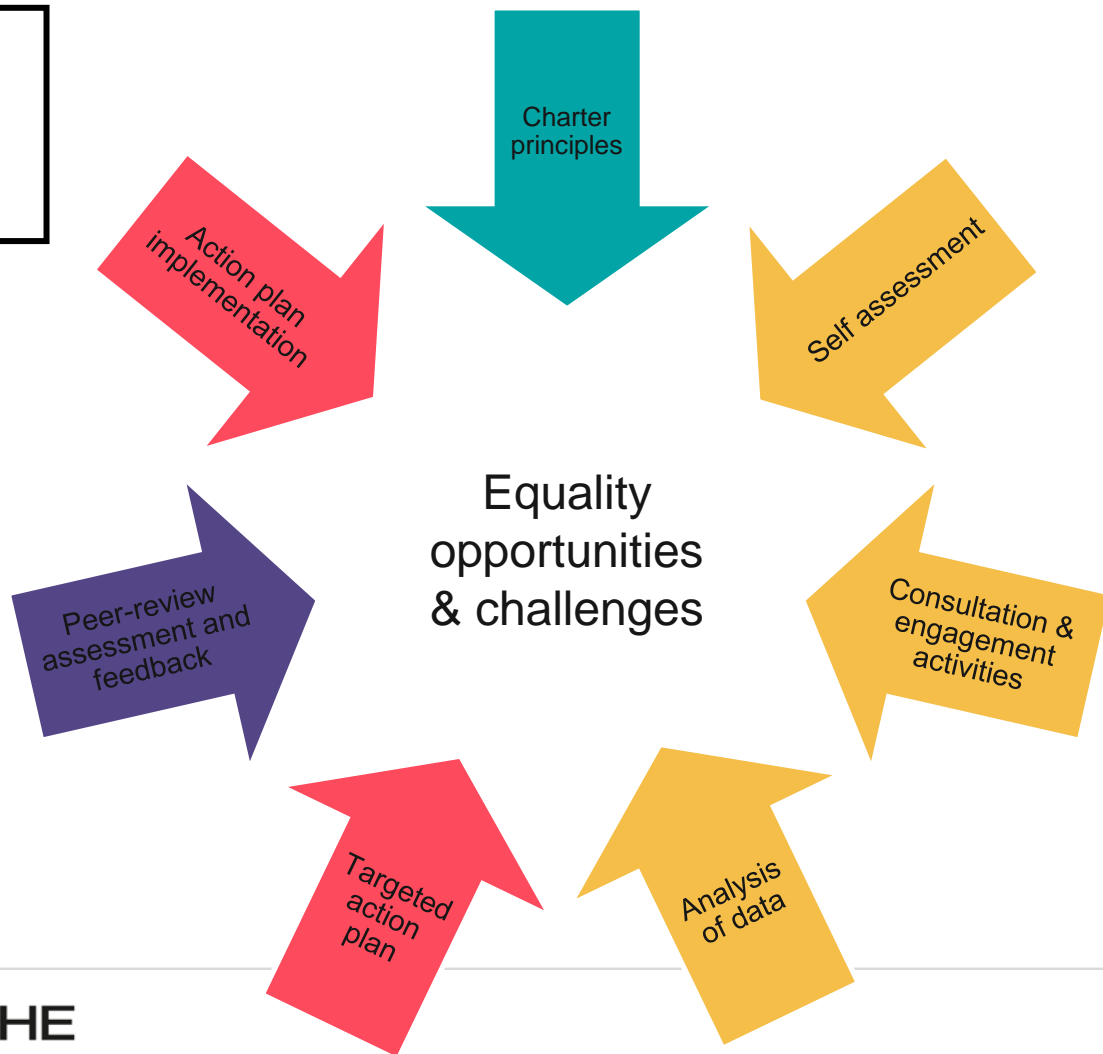
Charter	Focus	Equality Grounds	Award Type
Australia (SAGE Athena Swan)	All disciplines	Gender (intersectional)	Institution, Cygnet
Brazil (Gender Equality in Higher Education)	STEMM	Gender (intersectional)	Framework only (no award)
Canada (Dimensions)	STEMM (plus social science)	Gender, Indigenous Peoples, Race, LGBTQ2S+, Disability	Institution
Cyprus (Athena Swan)	TBC	TBC	TBC
India (GATI)	STEMM	Gender (intersectional)	Institution
Ireland (Athena Swan)	All disciplines	Gender (intersectional), building capacity across other equality grounds	Institution, Department
United States of America (SEA-Change)	STEMM	Gender and Race	Institution, Bio-medical units

# Local Contextualisation

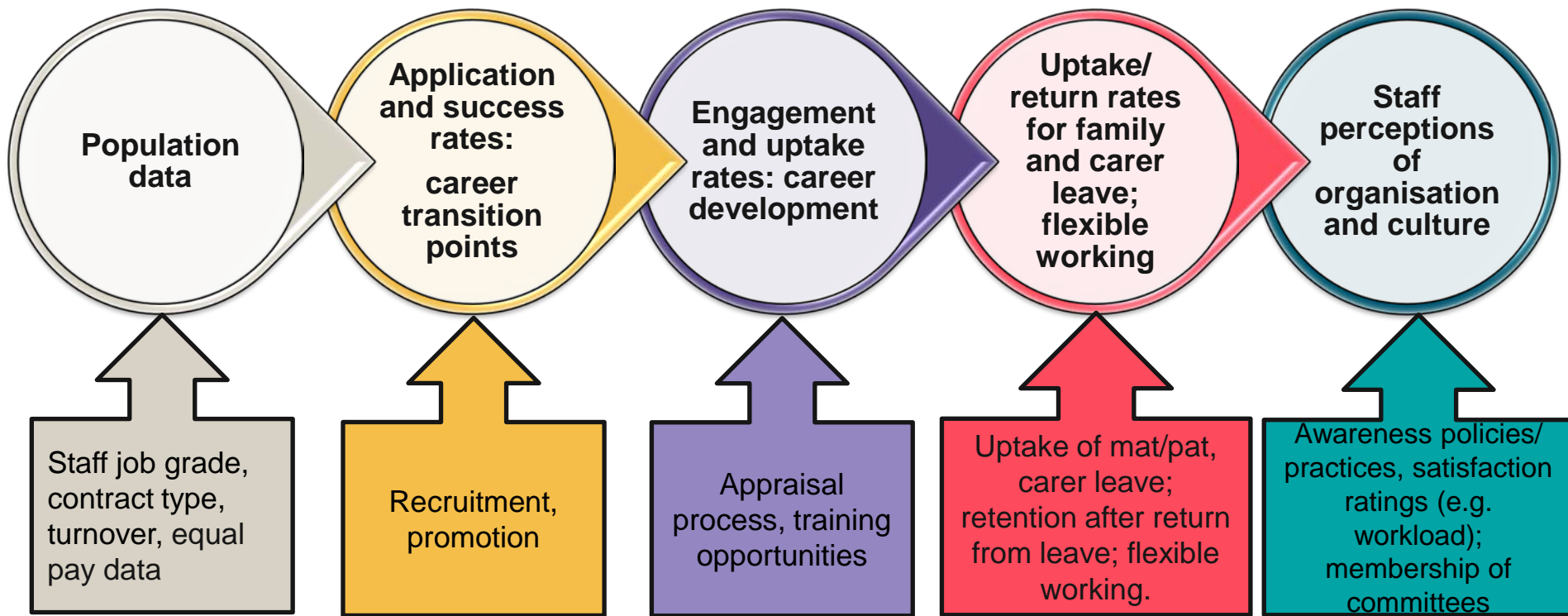




Commonality  
and  
comparability



# Typical data sets for applicant self-assessment



# Key steps in applicant self-assessment



Critically reflect  
on a range of  
quantitative  
and qualitative  
data



Evaluate  
policies,  
practices &  
activities



Establish  
equality priority  
areas &  
aspirations



Develop an  
evidence-  
based action  
plan



Ensure the  
effectiveness  
of the actions

# Shared charters objectives













- Demonstrate transformative change in EDI that delivers inclusive cultures across HE and research globally
- Establish evidence based, international peer review and accreditation standards around equity and diversity
- Develop data frameworks and effective data points and metrics to guide benchmarking, enable impact measurement and inform policy and system reforms
- Create global communities of practice, networks and global EDI centre(s) of excellence to increase awareness of EDI and career progression issues and share good practice.



**Dimensions**  
Equity, diversity and  
inclusion Canada



# Additive assessment criteria

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
A thorough self-assessment using qualitative and quantitative analysis			
Identify key issues			
Actions in place to address key issues and carry the institution forward			
Demonstrates the impact or progress of previous activity			
Sustained impact and serves as a beacon in the sector and beyond			

# Key Thematic Areas

Governance  
and  
Leadership

Pay Equity

Recruitment

Caring  
Responsibilities

Flexible  
Working

Gender Based  
Violence

Career  
development  
and  
progression

Culture

Intersectionality

# Process of establishing an Athena Swan charter pilot

Critical mass of institutions

In-country partner organisation

Pilot institutions join as Advance HE members

Work together to co-develop and trial contextualised charter over a set period

Roll out and expand charter

# Being part of Advance HE's global charter family

Networking and sharing good practice

Events and conferences

Communities of practice

Thematic resources to support equality goals

Opportunities to collaborate

Potential to develop global benchmarking for equality



# Stay in touch

Kay Steven, International Equalities Charters Manager, Advance HE,  
[kay.steven@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:kay.steven@advance-he.ac.uk)

Sarah Dickinson-Hyams, Assistant Director International Equalities  
Charters, Advance HE [sarah.Dickinsonhyams@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.Dickinsonhyams@advance-he.ac.uk)

Jennie Rothwell, Senior Manager at Higher Education Authority's Centre of  
Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, [jrothwell@hea.ie](mailto:jrothwell@hea.ie)



For more information  
[www.advance-he.ac.uk](http://www.advance-he.ac.uk)  
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