Athena Swan renewal application form for departments

Applicant information

Name of institution	University of Hertfordshire
Name of department	Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics
Date of current application	30 November 2023
Level of previous award	Silver
Date of previous award	18 October 2018
Contact name	Redacted
Contact email	Redacted
Contact telephone	Redacted

Section	**Words used**
An overview of the department and its approach to gender equality	1,970
An evaluation of the department's progress and issues	3,515
Future action plan*	
Appendix 1: Culture survey data*	
Appendix 2: Data tables*	
Appendix 3: Glossary*	
Overall word count	5,485

*These sections and appendices should not contain any commentary contributing to the overall word limit

Overall word limit: 5500 words

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Section 1: An overview of the department and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

- *Structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work*

Recommended word count: 2500 words

1.1 Letter of endorsement from the head of the department

Please insert (with appropriate letterhead) a signed letter of endorsement from the head of the department.

University of Hertfordshire UH

[redacted]

21st October 2023

Athena Swan Charter
Advance HE
Innovation Way
York Science Park
York YO10 5BR

Dear Head of Athena Swan,

As Head of the Department of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics (PAM) I am very happy to support the Department's application for renewal of our Athena Swan Silver Award.

I took over the headship of PAM in 2020 just as we were merged into a larger School, the School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science, and throughout my time in the role, and through some challenging times for the Department, I have striven to live up to the principles of the Athena Swan Charter and to continue the standards set by the Athena Swan Silver award to the former

[redacted]

Our department faces the challenges of continued (though improving) gender imbalance at senior levels, and a rapidly growing and more diverse than ever student population with our vastly increased international recruitment. However, I think we have made real progress in continuing to embed a culture of diversity and inclusion in the Department. Women and non-binary people make up a quarter of all staff and around a third of postdoctoral researchers and postgraduate students. We have seen our first two female professors and two out of our three non-white professors appointed in the past few years, and women continue to progress at good rates to Senior Lecturer, Principal Lecturer and Associate Professor. I would also highlight the newly established grade of Technical Tutor, providing a hybrid academic/technical progression route for senior technical staff; a non-binary person in PAM was the first person promoted to this grade. While staff surveys highlight some areas for improvement, there is evidence that all staff understand the promotions process better than before and are engaging with it.

The Department's senior management team, consisting primarily of the subject group leads and the heads of research groups in PAM together with a few other key role holders, reflects the relatively low proportion of women in the academic staff, but the head of the largest research group in PAM and one of our four subject group leads are female. The co-chairs of the Equality Committee

also participate in senior management team meetings. EDI news and updates are routinely shared through my regular update e-mails, demonstrating buy-in to these actions at senior management level.

Something that I think we can be particularly proud of is the use of family-friendly policies and flexible working within the department: we have been able to use the university's flexible working policy and parental leave policies to support staff with a variety of life situations and caring responsibilities. In the past years we have been able both to reduce and to increase staff FTE to accommodate their changing personal needs.

As a member of the Equality Committee I have participated in commenting on and editing the self-assessment and action plan that form part of this submission, and am very happy to confirm that the information presented in the application is an honest, accurate and true representation of the Department. Continuing our Silver Award status would recognise our long-standing and deepening commitment to gender equality and EDI more generally and the clear progress we have made over the past decade.



Head of Department of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics

1.2 Description of the department and its context

Please provide an introduction to the department.

The Department of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics (PAM) offers a stimulating and inclusive learning community which prepares our students for careers with top organisations. We are strongly teaching and research focused, with excellent facilities, including our Bayfordbury Observatory which is regarded as one of the best astronomical teaching observatories in the country.

At the time of our last Athena Swan award in 2018, PAM was a School in the University of Hertfordshire (UH). With effect from 1 August 2020, PAM became a department within a larger School, which was subsequently named the School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science (SPECS). It is worth noting that Engineering and Computer Science were previously separate Schools and merged in 2019 before PAM was incorporated. The management structure of SPECS is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Management structure of SPECS in Aug 2023 REDACTED

There is a SPECS EDIT, chaired by the Deputy Dean of School (DDoS) and attended by the co-Chairs of the PAM Equality Committee (EC) and their equivalent role-holders in the other SPECS departments.

Within PAM, the main decision-making committee is the PAM Operations Group (Ops Group), which meets once a month. The committee organisation structure is shown in Figure 2 and the membership of Ops Group (3F, 9M, 2NB) is shown in Figure 3. The co-Chairs of the EC take it in turns to attend.

In terms of student numbers, at the end of the 2021-22 academic year, there were 177 UG students (60F, 117M), 53 PGR students (12F, 41M) and 165 PGT students (37F, 128M) in PAM. A significant recent change for the department is the introduction of Data Science MSc and BSc programmes in 2020. The Data Science MSc has been popular with students, including large numbers of international students, so we expect PGT numbers to increase going forwards. The Subject Group Leaders (SGLs) (1F, 3M) attend the Ops Group meetings.

An area of excellence for PAM is the research environment, which has expanded since our last Athena Swan award. There are now four research centres: the Centre for Astrophysics Research (CAR); the Centre for Atmospheric and Climate Physics (CACP); the Centre of Data Innovation Research (CoDIR) and the inter-School Centre for Climate Change Research (C3R). There are also two research groups: Mathematics and Theoretical Physics (MTP) and Particle Instruments and Diagnostics (PID). A total of 43 PAM staff (7F, 36M) were submitted to REF2021, a significant increase compared to the figure of 35 (7F, 28M) in REF2014. The leaders of the research centres / groups (1F, 4M) attend the Ops Group meetings.

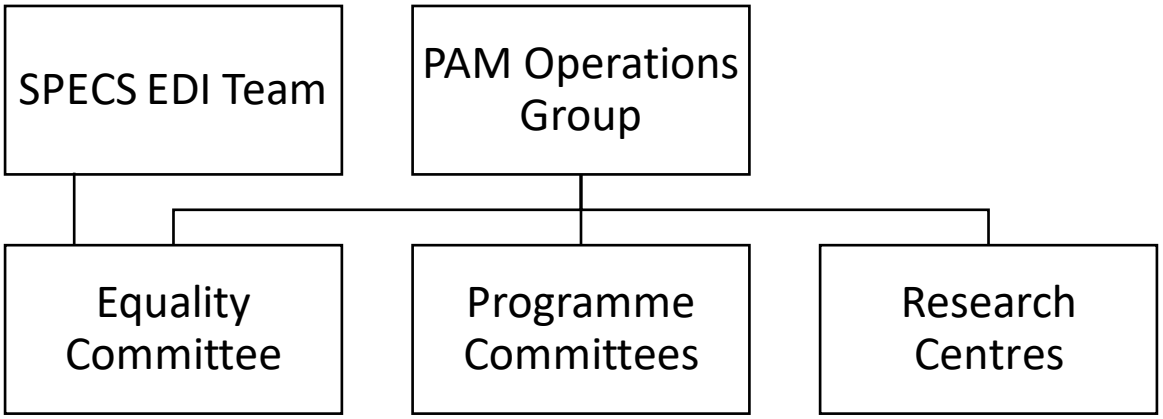


Figure 2: Committee organisational structure REDACTED

Figure 3: Membership of PAM Operations Group REDACTED

Student input to the management of the department is via the Programme Committee meetings, which are held twice a year chaired by the SGLs and attended by module leaders and student reps. There is also student representation on the EC.

Following a UH review of student administration services, administration staff are no longer based within PAM and were moved to central hubs in 2020. This has altered the professional staff profile, such that there are now very few (less than five) professional staff within PAM.

The department is spread across two sites. Nearly all PAM staff are based at the College Lane site in Hatfield, plus a small (less than five) staff presence at Bayfordbury Observatory situated about six miles away from the College Lane campus (Figure 4). Communications are kept open by cross-campus in-person visits and Microsoft Teams chats.



Figure 4: Bayfordbury Observatory at Bayfordbury campus

1.3 Athena Swan self-assessment process

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the department's future gender equality work.

PAM created its EC in 2013 and we have held regular meetings three times a year since then. During Covid-19 meetings went online and have now become hybrid to provide more flexibility for committee members, especially those at Bayfordbury campus. The EC is the SAT for the department.

Membership of the EC is open to any PAM staff member or PGR student with an interest in equality, diversity and inclusion. The composition of EC includes certain representatives or role-holders specified in the Terms of Reference (shown in Table 1). The EC is co-chaired by two people as of 2019, who are the responsible persons for EC actions.

PAM received a Bronze Athena Swan award in 2015, followed by a Silver Athena Swan award in 2018. We also received a Juno Practitioner award from the Institute of Physics (IoP) in 2015 (renewed in 2018), followed by a Juno Champion award in 2019. The IoP is currently designing a new inclusion model to replace Juno, and PAM is one of the departments actively participating in the pilot scheme to develop and test this model.

We welcome people with a diverse range of backgrounds to the EC. The current membership includes a balanced gender split with 10 women, 12 men and two non-binary people. Several members come from a minority ethnic background. Some members experience intersectional inequalities, including one transwoman and four non-white or minority white women. Three members work part-time. Six members are the primary carers, or one of a dual-income partnership, with children under the age of 18. We have a strong presence of technical and professional, as well as academic, staff. Every year the agenda for the September Welcome Back Day includes an update from the EC and a request for new members.

Membership Table REDACTED

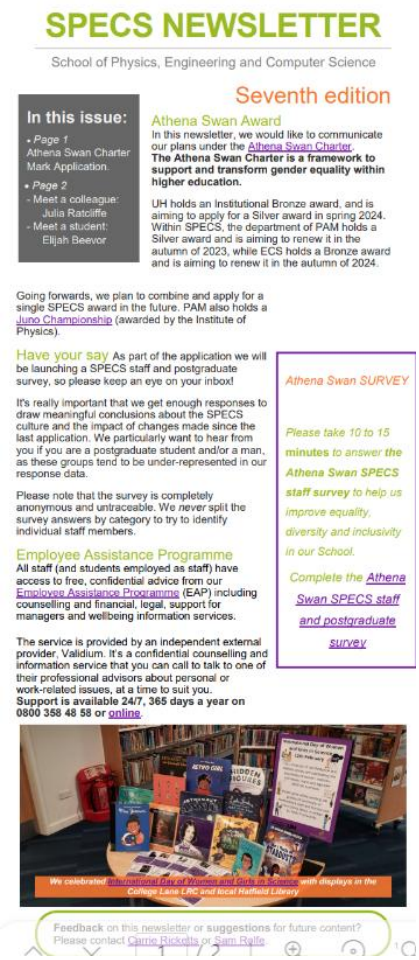
Table 1: PAM EC membership as of September 2023. Roles denoted by * are included in the EC Terms of Reference. REDACTED

At the time of writing, PAM had not yet filled the undergraduate School Communications Officer (SCO) position for the current academic year. This is a paid role involving the organisation of the student reps. Active recruitment is taking place, and the new SCO will join the EC as soon as they are in post. The postgraduate SCO is already a member.

EC work is recognised in the department workload allocation for the co-Chairs. Activities requiring a budget, such as events organised in the past year to celebrate International Day of Women and Girls in Science and STEM LGBT+ Day, are proposed to and approved by the DDoS.

EC meetings are regularly attended by senior management. In particular, the Head of Department (HoD) prioritises attendance, as this is recognised as being key to ensuring effective implementation of the matters discussed. Minutes are taken by the co-Chairs and are circulated to EC members after the meeting.

The EC communicates with the rest of the department and School by producing a termly SPECS newsletter (Figure 5), as well as ad hoc communications by email. The newsletter includes items such as EDI news, upcoming activities, tips for making our teaching and research more inclusive, reminders of support services, requests for feedback and links to bite-size surveys to gather views on specific EDI issues. These bite-size surveys add to our understanding of EDI work in the department and complement the more in-depth culture surveys.



SPECS NEWSLETTER

School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science

Seventh edition

In this issue:

- Page 1 Athena Swan Charter Mark Application.
- Page 2 - Meet a colleague: Julia Ratcliffe - Meet a student: Elijah Beevor

Athena Swan Award

In this newsletter, we would like to communicate our plans under the Athena Swan Charter. **The Athena Swan Charter is a framework to support and transform gender equality within higher education.**

UH holds an Institutional Bronze award, and is aiming to apply for a Silver award in spring 2024. Within SPECS, the department of PAM holds a Silver award and is aiming to renew it in the autumn of 2023, while ECS holds a Bronze award and is aiming to renew it in the autumn of 2024.

Going forwards, we plan to combine and apply for a single SPECS award in the future. PAM also holds a Juno Championship (awarded by the Institute of Physics).

Have your say As part of the application we will be launching a SPECS staff and postgraduate survey, so please keep an eye on your inbox!

It's really important that we get enough responses to draw meaningful conclusions about the SPECS culture and the impact of changes made since the last application. We particularly want to hear from you if you are a postgraduate student and/or a man, as these groups tend to be under-represented in our response data.

Please note that the survey is completely anonymous and untraceable. We *never* split the survey answers by category to try to identify individual staff members.

Athena Swan SURVEY

Please take 10 to 15 **minutes** to answer **the Athena Swan SPECS staff survey** to help us improve equality, diversity and inclusivity in our School.

Complete the Athena Swan SPECS staff and postgraduate survey

Employee Assistance Programme

All staff (and students employed as staff) have access to free, confidential advice from our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) including counselling and financial, legal, support for managers and wellbeing information services.

The service is provided by an independent external provider, Validium. It's a confidential counselling and information service that you can call to talk to one of their professional advisors about personal or work-related issues, at a time to suit you. **Support is available 24/7, 365 days a year on 0800 358 48 58 or online.**

Feedback on this newsletter or suggestions for future content? Please contact Carrie Ricketts or Sam Rolfe

Figure 5: Example of the SPECS EDI newsletter.

The EC has undertaken the self-assessment process by considering staff and student data produced by the UH HR department (see Appendix 2) and data from the culture survey sent to all PAM staff and PGR students (see Appendix 1).

The culture survey takes place every two years, so there have been three surveys since the last Athena Swan submission (in 2019, 2021 and 2023), providing us with the means to benchmark and track our progress in key areas. The response rate has been maintained at approximately 50%. The survey includes the core Athena Swan questions, plus several additional questions chosen to explore a range of EDI issues within PAM.

Feedback from our previous application included comments that we needed to improve our evaluation and be more focused on objectives rather than processes. We have reflected this feedback by identifying “Main Learnings” in Section 2.1 of this document, and by ensuring that the actions in our new action plan are measurable in terms of outcomes, rather than processes.

Figure 6 shows how the EC fits in to the UH EDI structure, as one of the SBU EDI teams.

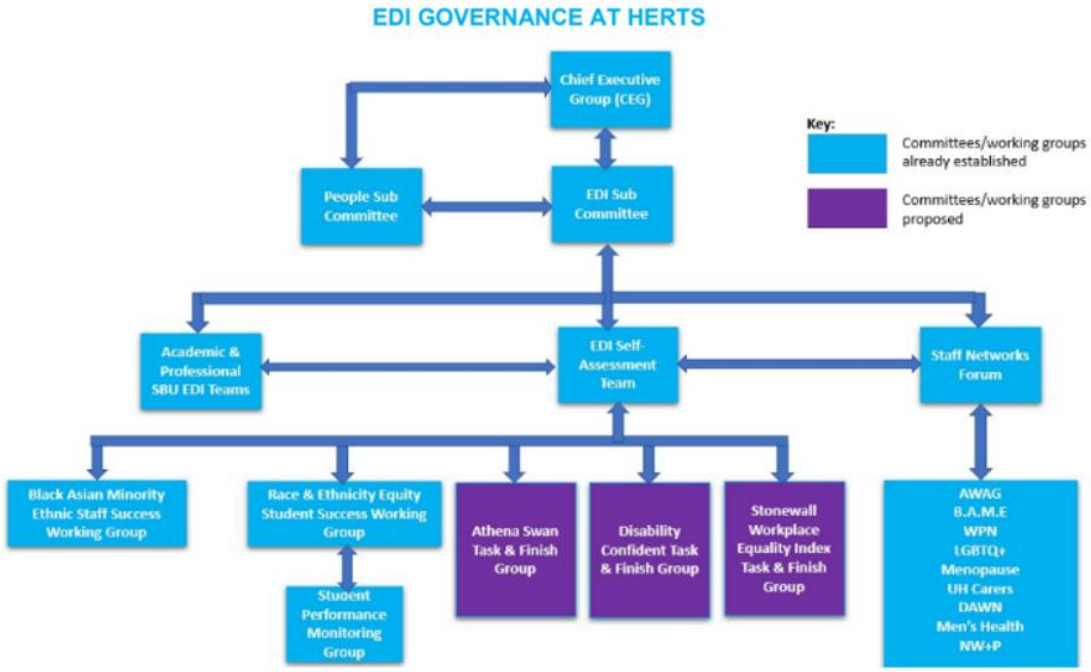


Figure 6: Structure of EDI Governance at UH.

Over the coming five years, the EC will continue to meet three times a year and work on implementing the new Action Plan given in Section 3. The co-Chairs are both intending to continue in their roles in the medium term.

Section 2: An evaluation of the department's progress and issues

In Section 2, applicants should evidence how they meet Criteria B and D:

- *Progress against the applicant's previously identified priorities has been demonstrated*
- *Evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant*

Recommended word count: 3000 words

2.1 Evaluating progress against the previous action plan

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

2.1 (a) Previous Action Plan

	High Priority Action		**Mid Priority Action**		**Low Priority Action**

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
Section 3: The Self-Assessment Process								
A01	Raise awareness amongst staff and students of E&D activities and positive outcomes for both men and women.	2017 Equality Staff Survey and UG/PGR focus groups revealed some lack of awareness/belief in the positive effect of Juno/AS initiatives on both men and women.	E&D briefings at each School meeting (3x / year) Annual E&D lunchtime seminar for staff+PGR, and timetabled seminar for UG, established presenting E&D data and actions/progress Add a wider range of case studies of flexible-working by men (not just women) to wiki & Equality website	Already occurs Autumn 2018 Autumn 2018	In perpetuity Annually Spring 2019	EC Chair EC Chair, Dean & EC data working groups EC website/wiki working group	2019 & 2021 staff surveys and UG/PGR focus groups show a 50% increase in awareness and positive views of E&D compared to 2017 survey	In 2023, 98% of people were aware of Athena Swan work and typically agreed that work for Athena Swan had positive effects on the department (78% women and 47% men).
A02	Continue our biennial PAM Equality Staff Survey and UG/PGR focus groups.	Will enable us to measure the perception of equality in the School and the effectiveness of our action plan at all levels over a long baseline.	Survey results to be analysed by the EC and actions either revised or created as needed (on a biennial basis)	2017 (inaugurals urvey)	February 2019, 2021, …	EC survey working group including student reps	EC Survey response rate maintains an increase from 50% (in 2017) to >75% in 2021 UG/PGR focus group participation to increase by 50% by 2021	Surveys were continued every other year with response rate maintained at ~ 50%.

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
A03	Continue our series of women's forums and similar activities.	To enable networking for women UG/PGR/staff and to collect and monitor equality issues relevant to women's career progression.	Continue with termly Equality lunches (with 1 out of 2 open to all) Annual induction event for UGs run by female staff/PGRs Lead an annual IWD event open to all	Underway 2015 Underway Autumn 2017 Underway Spring 2017	Annually Annually Autumn Annually Spring	WIP Events working group	>75% of women staff and PGRs, and >25% of women UGs, attend one or more events per year and give positive feedback to organisers	Women staff not only attend but organise events, inc. regular SPECS Women+ network.
A04	Ensure that E&D matters are incorporated into strategic and operational planning in the School, and that these address students directly, not just indirectly.	To increase awareness among staff and students of E&D matters and embed it in the culture of the School.	Provide E&D awareness training during UG/PGR induction Hold leadership workshops for senior female UG/PGRs (via SEPnet)	Autumn 2017 2019/ 2020	Annually Biannually	WIP Events working group.	Staff/UG/PGR engagement with E&D issues increases by 50% compared with 2017 Equality Staff Survey and student focus groups	Unclear how to measure EDI engagement, but increased visibility of staff EDI roles to student body.
A05	Further promote our PAM Equality Champion as a confidential contact to staff and students.	High proportion of (predominantly) UG/PGR are unaware of who the Equality Champion is and the purpose of the role.	Maintain an "open door" policy and monitor uptake Encourage engagement via termly AS/Juno drop-in sessions	Underway2016; monitor from Autumn 2018 Autumn 2019	In perpetuity Termly (review annually)	PAM Equality Champion	50% increase in awareness of the Equality Champion and role reflected in surveys/focus groups	Promotion of EDI roles through now regular departmental comms. 66% of women agree or strongly agreed they were aware of UH Dignity and Respect advisors.

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
Section 4: A Picture of the Department								
A06	Ensure continued high visibility of women on outreach and recruitment activities – recognising that achieving social change of the required magnitude is a long-term activity.	UG focus groups revealed awareness of female role models in the School at open days, leading to a positive impression of the School.	Women account for >1/3rd of outreach & recruitment hours Women account for >2/3rd of outreach & recruitment events Women account for >1/3rd of School imagery (websites, brochures, etc.)	Autumn 2018 Autumn 2018 Autumn 2018	Monitored and reviewed annually	Admissions Tutor and Outreach Officer	UG focus groups continue to cite visibility of female role models and a positive impression of the School >20% increase in fraction of applications from female UGs by 2021	Not met as UG applicant data provided from central reporting is not split by gender for this specific item; and focus groups stopped during the Covid-19 pandemic and have not restarted
A07	Participate in University's BME Success Project to understand and overcome factors that influence lower success rates for some BME students.	Failure rates on modules are higher for Asian and Black students than for Chinese and White students.	Investigate data for factors 1st and 2nd year tutors advised by BME Advocate on risk factors, and pre-empt risky behaviours	Already occurring Autumn 2019	Monitored and reviewed annually	Programme tutors	Failure rates no longer dependent on ethnicity	**[removed]**
A08	Ensure that the School environment is one in which women interviewed for PGR places will wish to join as they embark upon their research careers as PGR students.	Feedback from PGR applicants suggests that the School seems friendly and supportive of women's careers through visibility of female staff at interviews.	Women interviewed for PGR places: Meet other women during their visit (staff or other PGRs, and that interview panel includes at least one female staff member) Are made aware of support for women scientists in the School	Winter 2019	Reviewed annually	Director of CAR (member of EC) PG Tutor	>30% rise in acceptances from female applicants by 2021 Positive feedback from PGR interviewees and biennial PGR focus groups	Gendered data regarding acceptances vs. declined for PGR places was not recorded, but female appointment percentage was relatively high and positive

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
			Receive a link to the PAM E&D pages and wiki in their offer letter					feedback was received.
A09	Encourage more women (and other underrepresented groups) to take up posts in the School.	Both female and male staff cite a notable deficit of senior female role models in the School (2017 Equality Survey)	Ensure at least 40% female representation on interview panels (typically 2+ women in a 5-member panel) Ensure that interview panels are diverse in other respects (e.g. experience, age, ethnicity) Promote UH and School family-friendly policies to applicants and positive E&D statements in job adverts Continue work towards UH Equality Objective to increase number of BME staff at UH9 and above	Autumn 2018	In perpetuity	Dean of School	>20% increase in the proportion of female applicants and hence fraction of staff by 2022	Interview panels have minimum of 40% women since 2019 as standard practice. EDI policies are included in job adverts as standard. BAME staff objectives are included in Race Equality Charter work, i.e. removed from here.
A10	Ensure that promotions criteria are understood by all staff and staff are encouraged to plan their progression to higher grades.	Promotions criteria are already on the UH intranet and PAM wiki, yet 2017 Equality Staff Survey reveals lack of clarity of the process/criteria and also a lack of women in more senior roles (which is also apparent in the data).	Annual promotions seminar established Promotion planning evident in appraisal actions plans	Winter 2019 Winter 2020	Annually Reviewed annually	Dean of School Line managers	>20% higher fraction of women in more senior roles in the School by 2021 >50% increase in awareness of promotions processes and criteria in future staff surveys	More women in senior roles and grades as of Sept 2023. Culture survey in 2023 indicated 78% women understood progression

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
								processes compared to 60% in 2019.
A11	Understand the basis of perceptions that part-time and flexible working delay career progression, staff experience of induction (see below), and act to ensure that part-time and flexible working options are promoted to staff and potential applicants.	There is a perception among staff from the Equality Survey that P/T and flexible working delay career progression.	Focus groups held to further understand staff perceptions around P/T and flex working Examples of P/T and flex working to be shared on the staff wiki/webpages Ensure that P/T and flexible working options are promoted to staff and potential applicants in job wording, e.g via "happy to talk flexible working" logo	Winter 2019 Autumn 2018	2020	AS Officer / EC Survey Working Group EC webpage/wiki working group	Equality Survey demonstrates a 50% increase in positive perception around flexible and P/T working	In 2019, 60% of women and 78% of men thought part time work would negatively affect their career. In 2023, this improved to 11% of women and 23% of men.
Section 5: Supporting and Advancing Women's Careers								
A12	Increase the proportion of females (at least two women) on staff recruitment interview panels.	It was raised via a Women in PAM Network lunch that female staff may feel outnumbered on selection/interview panels and that there was a desire to maintain an increased female proportion on such panels (but without causing "committee overload").	Minimum of 2 female staff on each staff recruitment panel (aim is for 40%, but minimum of 2) Workload will be retroactively adjusted for staff undertaking this work, or borrowing female staff from another School or institute if appropriate	Autumn 2018 Summer 2019	2021 (for review)	Dean of School	Female staff report in focus groups that they no longer feel outnumbered on recruitment panels and that work-loading is being appropriately adjusted	Interview panels have minimum of 40% women since 2019 as standard practice within constraints of staff pool.

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
A13	Raise awareness of different pathways available of how to develop one's career to work towards promotion.	2017 Staff Equality Survey revealed that 20-30% of staff did not feel supported or encouraged to go for promotion.	Annual promotions awareness seminar EC Chair to raise at SEG whether the School should hold an annual promotions readiness review, which could serve to encourage and offer practical support to people who might be reluctant to put themselves forward for promotion	winter 2019 Winter 2019	Annually	Dean of School Dean of School / SEG (which includes all line managers)	2021 Staff Equality Survey shows a 50% improvement in how staff feel supported in their careers and clarity on how to work towards promotion	In 2019 42% of staff (no discernible gender difference) did not feel supported when considering or applying for promotion. In 2023 staff survey results showed 78% and 83% of women and men respectively said they felt supported in their career development.
A14	Ensure that female (and male) researchers are supported in their career development through a wide range of professional (RDF) and E&D (Juno/AS) activities.	PAM now has a significantly higher fraction of women researchers than in the past and we want to help support their development and retention for the future.	The wide range of professional (RDF) and E&D (Juno/AS) activities/ opportunities taken up (monitored at appraisals and reported to SEG)	Summer 2019	Annually	Line managers and SEG	2019 Staff Equality survey shows >90% staff feel adequately supported and offered career development training and opportunities and know how to access them; Staff on fixed term contracts secure further employment	As above for A13, but the >90% outcome not met.

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
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A15	Review effectiveness of the revised appraisal system.	In response to the Equality Survey, the appraisal system was overhauled and rolled out in fall 2017 to be fit for purpose.	Appraisal effectiveness evaluation to be a standing item on SEG and reviewed annually	Autumn 2018	Annually	Dean of School and SEG	Future Staff Equality survey show a >75% improvement in frequency and perceived value of appraisals by 2021	Overall impression of appraisals has improved year on year, but not reached >75%.
A16	Evaluate and maximise usefulness of the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) to postdocs (specifically).	We have not yet monitored postdoc take up for RDF and wish to establish its utilisation and effectiveness to this group	Hold postdoc focus groups (based on registration records) to ascertain value of RDF to them Work with line managers to identify higher priority development courses	Summer 2020	2021	AS Officer PGR Tutor and line managers	Postdoc focus groups cite the RDF as being of value and relevant for personal career development	Focus groups weren't held, but postdocs were asked to comment on RDF offering. Respondents cited lack of awareness, but new (2023-24) booking system should make attendance monitoring simpler.
A17	Develop reinvigorated mentorship programme for new staff and PGR students (also open to existing staff).	Staff Equality survey and WIP network lunch revealed female postdocs and PGRs desire a formalised mentorship programme.	EC to set up a pilot mentorship scheme Full scheme would be rolled out and opened up to everyone	Summer 2019	Reviewed fall 2020	New EC working group to set this up	Feedback from pilot scheme is positive Mentorship take up of at least 25% of female PGRs and postdocs by 2021	Offer of informal mentoring has always existed but no official scheme was implemented, in part due to Covid-19

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
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A18	Create opportunities to help UGs learn about PGR opportunities and research in PAM and beyond.	2017 UG focus groups revealed a desire to know more about the academic/research pathways and for more interaction with research staff.	Establish annual UG research odyssey in the School calendar and monitor participation Ensure UGs are informed about and welcomed to research seminars (via the PAM foyer display, emails, VLE)	2018 (inaugural)	Annually	Programme tutors / PAMSoc Seminar organisers / PAMSoc	Future UG focus groups indicate high level of awareness and opportunities to learn about the research path and opportunities in the School (such as UG Summer Research project)	Focus groups were not held but research seminars and talk programmes are publicised to UGs and a summer school has run annually since 2018.
A19	Promote and review the gender balance in the new 2018 UG Summer Research project.	Students tend to approach lecturers informally to do summer research and School desires to try out formalising it to create equal opportunity for all (and potentially attract more female applicants into research PGR degrees).	Collect statistics on projects offered, applicants and matches, broken down by gender to look for any biases or trends	Summer 2018	Annually	PG Tutor	Uptake by female UGs at least representative of the student body (>25%)	Percentage of female UGs in the programme increased from 41% in 2018 to 67% in 2023.
A20	Lobby University-wide SAT to help better support women's careers through teaching cover and carers' fund during/after leave.	Teaching is normally covered by existing staff and creates a negative perception that the burden lies on an unlucky few. Cited as good practice by Averil MacDonald's talk and by our IOP Juno panel visit.	Establish UH policy that Schools can appoint teaching and research cover for duration of maternity leave Establishment of a University-level Carers' fund for regularise support for occasional work demands that conflict significantly with caring responsibilities	Winter 2019	Until achieved	EC Chair and AS Officer	Policies implemented and future Equality surveys reveal all staff aware of new policies on cover and carers fund	**[removed]**

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
			Affirm the principle that maternity and caring absences should not weaken promotional cases					
A21	Help research-active women's transition back to work from long career breaks via teaching relief (workload tapering).	Female staff interview data cited the usefulness of this to help offset loss of momentum to research after long absences. Cited as good practice by Averil MacDonald's AS workshop and our IOP Juno panel visit.	Develop agreed principles regarding workload tapering for staff returning from long-term leave (e.g. maternity or shared-parental leave) Publicise policy via the wiki and School meetings	Spring 2019 Summer 2019	2019 2019	Dean of School and SEG EC Chair	Female staff interview and survey data demonstrate the usefulness via positive feedback (e.g. more papers published, recognition of research collaborations, more time for travel/conferences, etc.)	In 2021 and 2023, just under 5% of respondents to the culture survey reported that they disagreed and did not feel supported.

Ref.	Planned action/ objective	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeline		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome	2023 evaluation (RAG rated)
				Start date	End date			
A22	Increase awareness of 0% tolerance policy towards B&H and how to deal with issues.	2017 Staff Equality Survey revealed a small proportion of staff feel that some may be treated unfavourably (B&H) and 1/3rd of staff would not feel confident in reporting any instances.	Provide local guidance/ procedures for dealing with B&H issues if encountered or reported by others & continue to raise awareness B&H training to be mandatory for all managers B&H training mandatory for all staff	2018 (done) Autumn 2018 Summer 2019	2019 2019 2020	EC wiki/webpage working group PG Tutor Dean of School Line Managers	>90% of staff/PGR aware complete training by Autumn 2019, and 2021 Staff Equality Survey & PGR focus groups affirms staff confident to assert 0% tolerance policy and feel confident to recognise and seek help with B&H issues	In 2023, 78% of women and 91% of men would feel confident reporting B&H, up from 73% and 87% respectively in 2021.
A23	Review gender balance on committees and in important School roles to help revise and consider processes for filling vacancies.	Notable lack of gender diversity in Research Committee and other School-specific roles which contribute to promotion/career progression.	Review whether all committee posts and roles of responsibility should be filled by an open call for expressions of interest Consider if School should seek to systematically nominate individuals for external committee posts, and if so, the role of the appraisal system in achieving this	Spring 2018	2019	EC Chair + SEG	Committee membership reflects at least the proportion of women in the School and nominations to specific roles or committees is felt by staff to be fair and transparent (via future Staff Equality Surveys)	The Ops Group has a current (Sept 2023) membership of nine men, three women and two non-binary people. This is a fair reflection of the gender balance within the department.

2.1 (b) Methodology of action implementation

The entries in our previous action plan were given a High (red), Mid (yellow) or Low (blue) priority rating (see Section 2.1 (a)), grouped by application section. Actions were assigned to responsible persons, such as the EC Chair, HoD (previously the Dean of School (DoS)), working groups etc. All reported back with updates and feedback during EC meetings, discussions were held to work on any barriers, and successes celebrated.

Success was evaluated by checking expected outcomes against the annual data rollouts and responses to the culture surveys, and assessing whether we had been able to implement the outputs and hit milestones in the action plan.

2.1 (c) Reflection on red and amber actions, main barriers to achieving success, and main learnings

Of 23 actions, 52% were evaluated as green, 30% were amber and 9% were red (Figure 7). Where we were hitting obstacles to success, the EC discussed the further work that was required to overcome them.

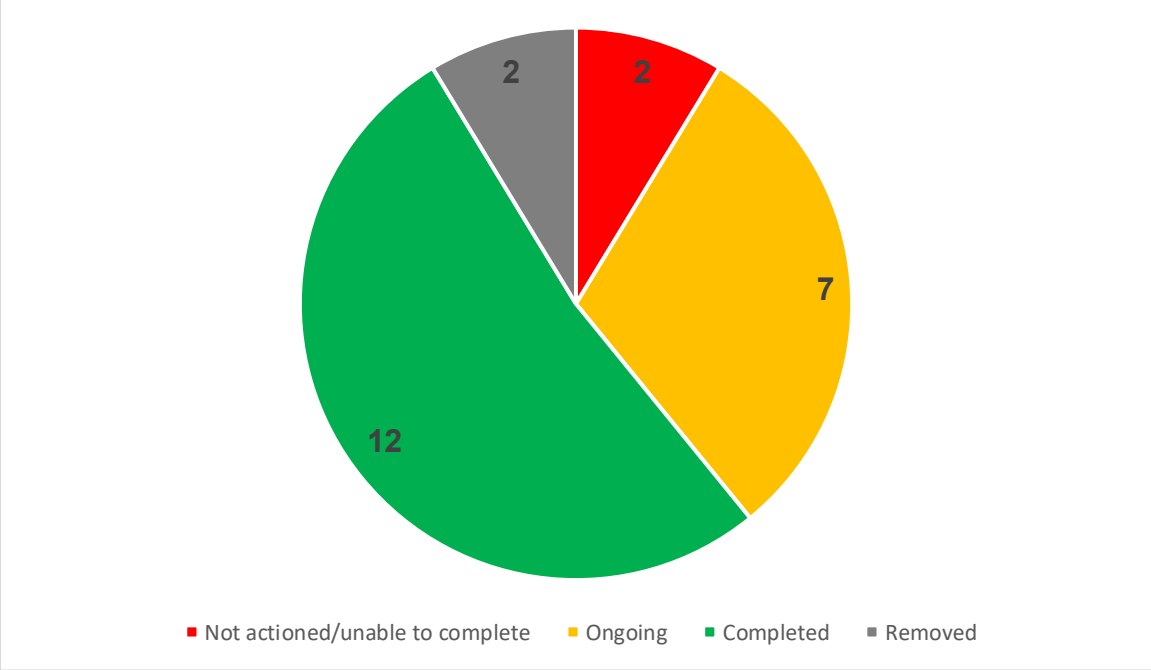


Figure 7: status of previous actions.

Two actions were removed; A07 was incorporated into the Race Equality Charter action plan and A20 is dealt with by HR on a case-by-case basis.

The actions rated red were A06 and A17. For A06, the success criteria were not useful or met but the number of UG female students has remained above the HESA benchmark (Figure 2.14). We have women staffing PAM activities during Open Days as often as possible to provide representation and website, social media and other

imagery includes a diverse range of people. The uptake at PG level by women is around the HESA benchmark (Figures 2.15, 2.16), but could be improved and is included in our new priorities.

A17: discussion around a more official mentoring scheme has occurred for many years, and women have consistently responded in surveys that they would like a mentor (44% in 2023, 46% in 2021 and 50% in 2019). Informal mentoring is offered, including at the most recent celebration of International Women's Day, but due to increased workload and lack of a point of contact for a scheme, it has not been officially organised.

Actions rated amber were A04, A08, A14, A15, A16, A18, A21 and A22, the reasoning or alternative actions that were implemented are as follows.

A04: Since 2016 we have held a "Women in PAM" session at UG induction week, which in 2020 became a "PAM community" session. This has had the positive effect of including people such as the Wellbeing and LGBT+ Champions and other staff with an EDI focus in their role. Leadership workshops for PGRs are provided centrally and are promoted through departmental communications encouraging attendance.

A08: The gender split of people invited to PGR interviews and appointments made were recorded (Figures 2.19 and 2.20). This data demonstrates that a very high percentage of all applicants are invited to interview, and a healthy percentage of women applicants are successfully appointed. As per action A09, it is standard practice to have a minimum of 40% women on interview panels and interviewees meet other staff during lunch or other set time.

A14: in 2019, 80% of staff (90% of women and 76% of men) felt able to access training and development. In 2023, this improved to 100% and 96% respectively. Furthermore, in 2023, 78% of women and 83% of men agreed that their career development was supported by their line manager, whereas 22% of women and 4% of men disagreed. This was marked amber due to the higher percentage of women feeling unsupported in their career development, and included in the new action plan as part of Priority 1.

A15: in 2019, 33% of women and 67% of men did not find their appraisal useful for discussion of career development. In 2023, the corresponding figures were 33% and 5%, so it appears that the appraisal process has improved for men but not for women. This is reflected in the new action plan with targeted actions for women.

A16: when postdoc staff were asked if they had attended Research Development Framework (RDF) training, four responded (all male) and none had taken RDF courses, citing lack of awareness and lack of time or other training taking priority as their main reasons. They all agreed that the offering looks useful, and one has booked onto two courses. Line managers promote the RDF at induction and there is a new booking system from September 2023 so this can be monitored more easily going forwards. This is included in the new action plan (action 1.9).

A21: most respondents to the survey in 2021 and 2023 reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were supported when returning from a career break. However, just under 5% of respondents reported that they disagreed and did not feel supported. Further promotion of UH policies and the Working Parents Network could help address this (see new action point 1.6).

A22: focus groups did not take place. Instead, departmental communications such as the EDI newsletter mentioned in Section 1.3 regularly raise awareness of the B&H policy and the zero-tolerance stance of the department. In 2023, 78% of women and 91% of men would feel confident reporting B&H.

From this evaluation, our main learnings are recognising the importance of having SMART actions going forward, as much of the outcomes couldn't be easily assessed due to not having access to the specific data requirements set in the original outcomes and milestones. This was particularly in the areas of recruitment and progression.

Furthermore, the merger of the PAM into SPECS created new challenges, including some centralised data became less granulated without our knowledge. We continue to work with the HR team to ensure data remains available at a departmental level. Following this, we have tried to ensure that data requirements in the success measures in our new action plan are typically available data sets or will be specified to the responsible person to collect over the next AS period.

Culture surveys have continued in 2019, 2021 and 2023 (A02) and response rate has been maintained at approximately 50%. Improved communications and EC agenda items at departmental meetings have helped raise the profile of Athena Swan work. Despite this increased awareness, a clear objective over the next few years is to conduct some deeper work into understanding why some people, especially men, fail to engage with EDI work. See action 2.4 in the new action plan.

2.1 (d) Meeting success measures

Notable successes were increased numbers of women at senior levels, embedding EDI processes during recruitment, improving people's perceptions of the effect of part time work on their career, and regular meetings of the SPECS Women+ Network (SWN), including organising events for the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (A03). The PAM workload model has become more transparent, as it is now readily accessible on the intranet and is more user friendly than the previous spreadsheet model.

A significant area of progress is the improved quality and quantity of communications from senior management to staff and postgraduate students. Since the 2020-21 academic year, following lobbying from the EC, regular weekly HoD emails are sent. All department-wide emails are now sent using a broad PAM mailing list rather than attempting to capture relevant staff on smaller, niche lists. Those that may have previously been missed no longer feel excluded. This includes raised awareness of the Equality Champions (A05). Vacant departmental roles are now advertised as

expressions of interest via open communications to the staff mailing list, rather than individuals being approached informally.

A10: the proportion of women in senior roles has significantly increased (Figure 2.4 and the narrative in the following section). Moreover, in 2023 9% of men and 22% of women responded that they did not understand the promotions criteria, an improvement, compared to 2019 when 28% of men and 40% of women gave the same response; this was achieved by communications and workshops about progression processes. Several actions incorporating improved progression for women+ are included in the new action plan.

Improved communications also enhanced the perception of part time work (A11).

A18: the specified success criteria were not met (as UG focus groups were not held), but instead, staff frequently publicise research seminars and talks to UG students and PGR students run a student journal club. PAM also runs an annual research summer school, with the percentage of female UGs in the programme increasing from 41% in 2018 to 67% in 2023.

In 2023, 50% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they received support and encouragement to apply for progression (A13).

Regarding gender balance on departmental committees (A23), the EC has always been reasonably balanced, and as of September 2023 there are three women in the Ops Group, including a female SGL and a female head of a research centre. This is an improvement over past years when sometimes the only woman in SEG (now superseded by the Ops Group) was the EC Chair.

2.2 Key priorities for future action

Please describe the department's key issues relating to gender equality, and explain the key priorities for action.

Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing PAM

To identify the key priorities for our 2023-2028 Action Plan, we have collated, reviewed and analysed staff data and student data (see Appendix 2), the results of the culture survey in June 2023 (see Appendix 1) and informal feedback gathered by the EC. Our Action Plan focuses on four areas of particular importance for PAM over the next five years.

Priority 1: Staff progression and career development

The staff data in Figure 2.1 shows that the current gender split within PAM broadly reflects the national picture of men and women in maths and physics departments, using HESA data as a benchmark. Figures 2.4 to 2.8 show the data split by grade (see the UH grading structure in Figure 2.3 for context). It is encouraging that the percentage of women at the most senior AM level is 18%, which is an all-time high for PAM. The number of women at AM and UH9 levels has increased by 100% from two to four since our last Athena Swan award. (Note that the number of female staff at UH9 is not accurately reflected by the data in Figure 2.5, which is the most recent data available from HR, as this does not allow for two recent promotions).

Note that the mandatory data relating to Professional, Technical and Operational (PTO) staff have not been included in the Appendix due to the very small numbers involved, following the move of professional staff into a central hub described in Section 1.

Figure 2.10 shows a recent decrease in the percentage of women on fixed-term contracts, bringing the figure into line with the percentage of men.

The recruitment data in Figures 2.11 and 2.12 give a positive picture. Like other STEM departments there is a smaller pool of female applicants, but, as a percentage of applicants, the number of women shortlisted and successfully taking up a job compares favourably with the equivalent percentages for men in most years. We believe this is a result of our good recruitment practices discussed in the previous section. Note that 2019-20 was an unusual year due to the below average number of positions open for recruitment during that year; hence we were able to shortlist a very high percentage of women.

The academic promotion numbers in Figure 2.13 shows the percentage of male and female staff members whose grade has changed during the past six years. The level fluctuates due to the small numbers involved, but overall does not appear to give evidence of a bias towards either men or women. We note that this only shows the number of promotions as a percentage of the total number of males and females in the department; it would also be useful to see it as a percentage of the number of promotion applications, but this data was not collected. (In addition, the figures may also include grade changes for reasons other than promotion. We do not believe that this has significantly affected the results.)

Action 1.1 Liaise with the central UH data team to improve the promotions data available to us. Data has not been collected or easily disseminated to departments. As well as the number of promotions, we need the number applying for promotion and the number of eligible candidates not applying, split by gender and ethnicity

To achieve inclusive promotion, it is essential that everyone is aware of the processes in place for progression and believes them to be fair and transparent. According to the 2023 culture survey, most PAM staff are aware of the progression process and know where to find information about it, with only 14% disagreeing with this statement. However, a worrying 36% do not agree that the progression criteria are clear, 41% do not consider the process to be transparent and 29% do not think that the decisions are fair (Figures 1.8 to 1.11). These figures were similar in the 2021 culture survey. The academic promotion system is run at an institutional level, so the criteria and processes are not under the direct control of PAM. However, we can certainly improve our communication, guidance and support around the process, so our Action Plan focuses on these aspects.

Action 1.2 Improved communication of the Equate process (criteria, process, how decisions are made) to all PAM academic and professional staff.

Action 1.3 Hold a workshop aimed at women+ with HR business partner, to guide women and non-binary people through the Equate process.

Action 1.4 Promote training opportunities women to prepare for leadership roles (e.g. Aurora); EC chair(s) work with HoD to determine a workload allocation for this.

While technical staff have been incorporated into their own department within SPECS since around 2021 (officially as of September 2023), for many years, the EC has supported and lobbied on behalf of the technical staff regarding progression practises. Previously it was only possible to progress when someone left a role, leaving many people stuck in a salary band that they had significantly outgrown. In the last year, it is now possible for technical staff in SPECS to use the Equate process to meet progression criteria and be promoted based on experience. This is in part due to UH being signed up to the Technician Commitment. The EC will continue to lobby for this to apply to other PTO roles.

We found that some questions in the culture survey gave a gendered response, in particular the core questions “My contributions are valued in my department” and “My line manager supports my career development” (Figures 1.1 and 1.5). We note that 22% of women respondents ticked “Disagree” compared with 4% of men for both questions (perhaps the same people in both cases). We need to address the fact that some women in PAM feel unsupported.

Action 1.5 Provide progression support and mentoring for women via the SPECS Women's Network.

Action 1.6 Promote membership of UH networks (Academic Women's Action Group, Network of Women+ Professors, Working Parents Network).

Action 1.7 Line managers offer targeted promotion support during appraisals, eg focusing on roles which contribute towards progression.

Action 1.8 Training for line managers around career barriers for genders other than men and how to support them.

Action 1.9 Encourage postdoc women to attend RDF training.

Action 1.10 Lobby UH to ensure that all PTO roles can progress based on experience; promote to staff as becomes available.

Priority 2: Embedding EDI in the culture of the School and Department

We are currently in a transition period for EDI within SPECS. The DDoS was recently promoted to the position of DoS, and SPECS is recruiting a new DDoS. As the DDoS holds responsibility for the EDI work within the School, there is a brief hiatus in School-wide EDI planning, and there are likely to be changes in the way that EDI is incorporated into the School's future.

It therefore seems essential to include this as a priority item, to ensure that EDI remains front and centre in the School's planning and priorities. In addition, following the merger of the three departments in 2019 and 2020, we are still actively working towards consistency and sharing of best practice across the School and this is reflected in the action plan.

Action 2.1 Re-establish the SPECS EDIT as an influential body within the School.

Action 2.2 Achieve greater consistency across the three departments in respect of EDI; sharing of best practice; appointment of a School EDI Champion.

Action 2.3 Continue to hold meetings of the SPECS Women's Network (inviting men too).

Within PAM, the main decision-making committee is the Ops Group, described in Section 1. The proportion of women on this committee is 21%, which is a fair representation of the number of women in the department.

Figures 1.12 to 1.14 show that awareness of the benefits of Athena Swan, Juno and EDI in the department is generally high. It is encouraging to see broadly positive responses from both men and women to the core Athena Swan statement "Department leadership actively supports gender equality" (see Figure 1.2).

However, we have identified some areas for improvement. We would like more men in PAM to be involved in EDI, as our survey showed (Figure 1.15) that 67% of women respondents are active contributors to EDI compared to just 18% of men. Although, this is actually an improvement on the 2021 figure!

It is a requirement at UH that every staff appraisal incorporates an EDI-related target. Unfortunately, it is clear from our survey that this is not happening uniformly in PAM (see Figure 1.16), and we are disappointed by the number of people responding "N/A" to this question, given that it should be applicable to everyone.

Action 2.4 Gather feedback on why people (especially men) do not engage with EDI; formulate new action points based on the answers.

Action 2.5 Line managers to ensure people are including and actioning at least one EDI priority in appraisal process; better communication between the EC and the line managers for suggestions of how people can get involved.

Next, we consider the student body, as this is a key part of EDI representation and culture. Figures 2.14 to 2.16 show that the number of female students at UG, PGT and PGR level broadly reflect the HESA benchmarks for maths and physics students. A potential area of concern, although based on only one year of data, is the male/female ratio for PGT students in 2021-22.

Action 2.6 Review the data for proportions of male/female PGT students annually.

Action 2.7 Work with MarComms (marketing and communications) and student recruitment to ensure EDI strategies to encourage female applicants are included in marketing courses to prospective students.

Figures 2.17 and 2.18 show that female students are generally more likely to achieve a good degree (1st or 2:1) than males, although not in the most recent year of data.

We have also included an action point to ensure that we continue to make progress with diversifying and decolonising the curriculum, an ongoing project within PAM and UH.

Action 2.8 Continue to engage with the UH project of diversifying and decolonising the curriculum.

Priority 3: Mental health and wellbeing of students and staff

Feedback from student representation on the EC, programme committees and the NSS indicates that mental health is a serious and worsening issue for university students. There are well-documented reasons for this, including Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis. During the 2022-23 academic year, there were 371 SPECS student self-referrals to the UH Wellbeing team's counselling and mental health services. (Note that this is the number of referrals, not the number of individual students.) Figure 8 shows how this compares to the rest of UH. We note that the proportion was lower for male students, in line with research showing that men are less likely than women to seek support for problems such as depression or stress. Numbers were also relatively low for students identifying as transgender.

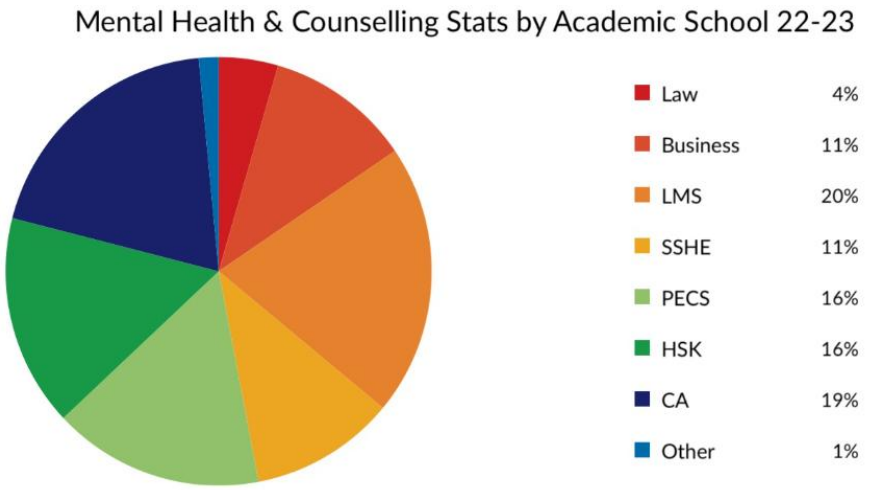


Figure 8: Student self-referrals split by School

There is help and support available for struggling PAM students via a system of personal tutors, year group tutors and the SPECS Academic Support Hub (SASH), as well as the UH Student Wellbeing Services and Student Union buddy scheme. We feel that adding further layers to this system would be unnecessarily complex, so our action points are around raising awareness of existing provision and encouraging students (particularly male and transgender students) to make use of it and improvements in planning and priorities.

Action 3.1 Raise awareness of the support available to students (SASH, Student Wellbeing, Student Union buddy system, 'Report and Support') via personal tutors.

Action 3.2 Communicate to personal tutors that male and transgender students may need extra encouragement to access the above services.

Moving on to consider our staff, in the culture survey 28.6% of respondents answered “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” to the core Athena Swan question “My mental health and wellbeing are supported in my department” (Figure 1.6), showing that this is an issue for staff as well as students. Free text comments in this section include: “The only meaningful support for mental health would be getting workload under control” and “I would feel uncomfortable taking a day off sick for a mental health reason compared to if it was a physical health reason”.

There was a gendered response to the question “How regularly do you work longer than your contracted hours?”, with 61% of men compared to 33% of women responding “Usually”. Conversely, more women than men felt that the PAM workload system is not fair and transparent (22% compared to 13%) (Figures 1.17 and 1.18).

PAM has recruited six new staff members, due to start in early 2024, following the increase in PGT student numbers. We hope this will have a significant effect on workload issue. Also, we note that PAM will be moving to a UH-wide workload system in September 2024. Our action plan recognises the adverse contribution of high workload towards wellbeing and aims to assess the impacts of the forthcoming changes.

Action 3.3 Monitor impact of moving to UH workloading system (including gender split).

Action 3.4 Aim to keep workloads as close to 100% as possible going forwards.

Action 3.5 Discuss options for recognising the contribution of staff who have had additional workloads due to understaffing.

In our culture survey, we note that women were more likely than men to be dissatisfied with the department’s handling of bullying and harassment (22% compared to 0%) (Figure 1.4), which is unacceptable.

There is support in place for staff struggling with their mental health or experiencing bullying and harassment, including the Employee Assistance Programme, SPECS Wellbeing champion, the Chaplaincy, UH Dignity & Respect advisors, Speak Out anonymous reporting, and the UH Men's Health and Wellbeing network. Our action plan aims to raise awareness of these sources of support and the training available, recognising the importance of the messaging coming from senior management.

Action 3.6 HRBP to run a session raising awareness of the various wellbeing services available to staff

Action 3.7 HRBP to run a session raising awareness of UH's Bullying and Harassment Policy. Female staff particularly encouraged to attend.

Action 3.8 Promote anti-bullying & harrassment training (eg Active Bystander training) offered by UH.

Action 3.9 Remind staff of the PAM/UH policy to take all their annual leave and not to send messages outside working hours, in order to improve workplace culture.

Action 3.10 Discuss options for recognising the contribution of staff who have had additional workloads due to understaffing.

Action 3.11 Increase visibility of senior management zero tolerance of B&H via reminder of policy, reminder of open door policy.

Action 3.12 Discuss bullying and harassment at the next SPECS Women's Network meeting, to try to understand why women are not satisfied with the current approach

Priority 4: Ensure the transition to the new SPECS building is inclusive to the needs of women and other minority groups

SPECS is due to move to a new building in 2024, and this has been the subject of much debate within the PAM department, especially because the new building will be open plan with less privacy and personal space for staff members. Although not asked about it directly in the culture survey, an omission that we will redress in the next survey, indirect responses to other questions and other sources of feedback indicate that it is an area of serious concern for staff members. An example comment is: "... the move to open plan offices and hotdesking, which is an unsuitable environment for academic staff...".

We consider this to be partly a gendered issue. Research shows that open plan offices can be a more negative experience for women than men, resulting in decreased productivity due to being more accessible and the pressure of being "on display". This is likely be exacerbated for women with intersectional characteristics, such as a disability.

We need to ensure that women and other minorities have a voice while the new working systems and patterns are implemented, so that the senior management are aware of general and specific concerns and reasonable adjustments can be made where necessary. Our action plan aims to address these issues. We expect the facilities at Bayfordbury campus may become more widely used as an alternative, which is why accessibility will become more important than it is now.

This is also an opportunity to make positive changes to the culture, bringing the community together from separate areas and building relationships and informal networking opportunities.

Action 4.1 Hold focus groups and/or surveys with staff and PGR students, ensuring female representation, asking for ideas to help make the new building work for them.

Action 4.2 Raise the new building as a topic of discussion at the next SPECS Women's Network meeting.

Action 4.3 Establish data trends regarding the new building (split by gender and job role).

Action 4.4 Add questions about the new building to the next culture survey, to monitor the gendered attitude to the change.

Action 4.5 Lobby SPECS and UH senior management to improve accessibility of the facilities available at Bayfordbury.

Action 4.6 Use the social spaces to promote regular networking opportunities within the department.

Section 3: Future action plan

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

- *An action plan is in place to address identified key issues*

3.1 Action plan

Please provide an action plan covering the five-year award period.

ID	Action	Timeframes (start/end date)	Person responsible/ accountable	Success criteria and outcome
Priority 1: Staff progression and career development				
1.1	Liaise with the central UH data team to improve the promotions data available to us. Data has not been collected or easily disseminated to departments. As well as the number of promotions, we need the number applying for promotion and the number of eligible candidates not applying, split by gender and ethnicity	Data available by Sept 2024, then ongoing	UH HR data team	Improved pipeline for women and non-binary people to higher grades, achieving a similar ratio to that of men being promoted, and a similar ratio of eligible candidates applying for promotion
1.2	Communication of the Equate process (criteria, process, how decisions are made) to all PAM academic and professional staff	Annually, in advance of each promotions round	DoS, HoD, HRBP	Culture survey indicates increased trust in the progression process (Q22.1 to Q22.4); number of people applying for promotion increases, especially versus length of service (data from 1.1)
1.3	Hold a workshop aimed at women+ with HR business partner to guide women and non-binary people through the Equate process	Annually, in advance of each promotions round	HRBP	Culture survey indicates increased trust in the progression process (Q22.1 to Q22.4); number of women and non-binary people applying for promotion increases, especially verses length of service (data from 1.1)
1.4	Promote training opportunities women to prepare for leadership roles (e.g. Aurora); EC chair(s) work with HoD to determine a workload allocation for this	Ad-hoc promotion through School/Dept comms	HoD, DoS, EC	At least one eligible women+ staff member in PAM attends a leadership training courses each year (e.g. Aurora, UH Women Rise conference). Workload is established to accommodate attendance.

1.5	Provide progression support and informal mentoring for women via the SPECS Women's Network	Ongoing, check in once per semester with WN leads to assess support needs and record uptake	SWN, EC	Informal feedback from the Women's Network leads and participants indicates increased uptake and feeling of support; culture survey indicates increased satisfaction regarding mentoring (Q15)
1.6	Promote membership of UH networks (Academic Women's Action Group, Network of Women+ Professors, Working Parents Network)	Ad-hoc promotion through School/Dept comms	EC	Culture survey indicates increased networking opportunities for women (Q17.4); add new question regarding membership of UH networks
1.7	Line managers offer targeted promotion support during appraisals, e.g. focusing on training and progression criteria which contribute towards active progression	Autumn 2024 (as part of appraisals), then ongoing	Line Managers	Culture survey indicates increased support from line managers, especially for women (Appendix 1, Table 1.1, 1.7)
1.8	Training for line managers around career barriers for genders other than men and how to support them	Autumn 2024 (before appraisals)	Line Managers	Culture survey indicates increased support from line managers, especially for women (Appendix 1, Table 1.1, 1.7)
1.9	Encourage postdoc women to attend RDF training	Ongoing (training opportunities info given to new starters and ad-hoc in comms)	Research Leads, Line managers	Relative number of attendees to training reflects proportion of male/female postdoc staff

1.10	Lobby UH to ensure that all PTO roles can progress based on experience; promote to staff as becomes available.	Ongoing (raise at Ops Group, EDIT meetings, UH feedback forums)	EC	All staff able to apply for progression; information is readily available and clear.
Priority 2: Embedding EDI in the culture of the School and Department				
2.1	Re-establish the SPECS EDIT as an influential body within the School	Before June 2024 (i.e. within 6 months)	Deputy Dean of School	Regular SPECS EDIT meetings chaired by a senior member of SPECs management; action points are implemented or resolved between meetings
2.2	Consistency across the three departments in respect of EDI; sharing of best practice; appointment of a School EDI Champion	Within 2 years (next culture survey 2025)	SPECS EDIT	Culture survey indicates reasonably consistent results across the three departments
2.3	Continue to hold meetings of the SPECS Women's Network (inviting men too)	Ongoing (meetings occur at least once per semester)	SWN, EC	Regular meetings of the SPECS Women's Network occur; gather informal feedback from attendees
2.4	Gather feedback on why people (especially men) in PAM do not engage with EDI; formulate new action points based on the answers	Within 2 years (Sept 2025)	EC	Next culture survey indicates increased % of men actively involved in EDI (Q34.18). New actions arise as a result of feedback and implemented into action plan
2.5	PAM line managers to ensure people are including and actioning at least one EDI priority in appraisal process	Within 2 years (Sept 2025)	Line Managers	Next culture survey indicates increased % of staff including an EDI target in their appraisal (Q9.4)

2.6	Annually review the PAM data for proportions of male/female PGT students.	Ongoing (annual data release occurs ~ November)	EC	Increasing percentage of female PAM PGT students.
2.7	Work with MarComms and student recruitment to ensure EDI strategies to encourage female applicants are included in marketing PAM courses to prospective students.	June 2025 (i.e. within 18 months)	EC	Increasing percentage of female PAM PGT students.
2.8	Continue to engage with the UH project of diversifying and decolonising the curriculum	Ongoing (check in with responsible person to establish progress and provide support)	CC (specific member of EC), module leaders	Next culture survey indicates increased % of staff supporting EDI (Q34.17); progress with UH curriculum diversification project
Priority 3: Mental health and wellbeing of students and staff				
3.1	Raise awareness of the support available to students (SASH, Student Wellbeing, Student Union buddy system, 'Report and Support') via personal tutors	Ongoing, start of each semester	Personal tutors	NSS feedback, feedback from student reps at programme committee meetings
3.2	Communicate to personal tutors that male and transgender students may need extra encouragement to access the above services	Ongoing, start of each semester	Personal tutors	Monitor gender split of the students seeking help from UH Student Wellbeing

3.3	Track impact of moving to new UH workloading system (including gender differences)	Within 2 years, next culture survey	EC	Next culture survey maintains or improves the current response to Q1
3.4	Aim to keep workloads as close to 100% as possible	Ongoing, every spring	Ops Group	Next culture survey indicates improved response to Q2, Q5.2
3.5	Discuss options for recognising the contribution of staff who have had additional workloads due to understaffing	June 2024 (i.e. within 6 months)	HoD, EC, Ops Group	Next culture survey indicates improved response to Q5.1, Q5.4
3.6	HRBP to run a session raising awareness of the wellbeing services available to staff	First session by June 2024 (i.e. within six months), repeated annually	HRBP	Next culture survey indicates improved response to Q24.6
3.7	HRBP to run a session raising awareness of UH's Bullying and Harassment Policy. Female staff particularly encouraged to attend.	First session within six months (by May 2024), repeated annually	HRBP	Next culture survey indicates improved response to AS Core Q20
3.8	Promote anti-bullying & harassment training (e.g. Active Bystander training) offered by UH	Regularly, ad-hoc via dept and School comms	EC, HoD, DoS	Increase of PAM staff attendance on anti B&H training courses
3.9	Remind staff of the PAM and UH policy to take all their annual leave and not to send messages outside working hours, in order to improve workplace culture	Annually, every September	HoD	Next culture survey indicates improved response to Q24.6
3.10	Increase visibility of senior management zero tolerance of B&H via reminder of B&H policy, reminder of open door policy	Ongoing, every September	DoS, HoD	Improved response to Q34.15 and Q34.16

3.11	SPECS Wellbeing Champion to liaise with University Workplace Health & Wellbeing Lead to develop new, and promote/incorporate, existing wellbeing initiatives (with a focus on issues disproportionately affecting Women).	June 2024 (i.e. within 6 months)	SPECS Wellbeing Champion	Next culture survey indicates improved response to Q24.6
Priority 4: Ensure the transition to the new SPECS building is inclusive to the needs of women and other minority groups				
4.1	Hold focus groups and/or surveys with staff and PGR students, ensuring female representation, asking for ideas to help make the new building work for them.	Over the next 12 months (i.e. up to November 2024)	SPECS EDIT	Focus group suggestions incorporated into action plan as it evolves
4.2	Raise the new building as a topic of discussion at the next SPECS Women's Network meeting	Over the next 12 months (i.e. before November 2024)	SWN	Suggestions from the SPECS Women's Network incorporated into action plan as it evolves
4.3	Establish and track data trends regarding the new building (split by gender and job role), including use of the room booking system and feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction after the move	From 2024 onwards	HoD, EC	Analyse data and present to a PAM departmental meeting
4.4	Include questions about the new building in the next culture survey, to monitor the gendered attitude to the change	2025 Culture survey	EC	Aim for a gender equal split in attitudes to the new building in answers to 2025 culture survey

4.5	Lobby SPECS and UH senior management to improve accessibility of the facilities available at Bayfordbury	From 2024 onwards	Ops Group	Gather and analyse Bayfordbury increased use statistics, determine any actions that may arise and incorporate into action plan; gather informal feedback from staff
4.6	Use the social spaces in the new building to promote regular EDI events and networking opportunities within the department	From September 2024 onwards	EC	Recognition of increased opportunities for mixing socially in new building in answers to 2025 culture survey; next culture survey indicates increased % of staff supporting EDI (Q34.17)

Appendix 1: Culture survey data REDACTED

Appendix 2: Staff and Student Data REDACTED

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

AS – Athena Swan

B&H – Bullying & Harassment

C3R - Centre for Climate Change Research

CACP - Centre for Atmospheric and Climate Physics

CAR – Centre for Astrophysics Research

CoDIR - Centre of Data Innovation Research

DHoD – Deputy Head of Department

DoS – Dean of School

DDoS – Deputy Dean of School

EC – PAM Equality Committee

EDIT – (SPECS) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team

HoD – Head of Department

HRBP – HR Business Partner for PAM

IoP – Institute of Physics

MTP - Mathematics and Theoretical Physics

Ops Group – PAM Operations Group

PAM – Department of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics

PID - Particle Instruments and Diagnostics

PTO – Professional, Technical and Operational

RDF – Researcher Development Framework

SASH – SPECS Academic Support Hub

SAT – Self-Assessment Team

SBU – School Business Unit

SCO - School Communications Officer

SEG – School Executive Group (superseded by Ops Group)

SGL – Subject Group Leader

SPECS – School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science

SWN – SPECS Women+ Network

UH – University of Hertfordshire

WIP – Women In PAM (superseded by SPECS Women+ Network)