**Athena Swan Gold application form for departments**

**Applicant information**

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| Name of institution |  |
| Name of department |  |
| Date of current application |  |
| Level of previous award |  |
| Date of previous award |  |
| Contact name |  |
| Contact email |  |
| Contact telephone |  |

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| **Section** | **Words used** |
| An overview of the department and its approach to gender equality |  |
| An evaluation of the department’s progress and success |  |
| An evaluation of the department’s sector-leading activity |  |
| An assessment of the department’s gender equality context |  |
| Future action plan\* |  |
| Appendix 1: Consultation data\* |  |
| Appendix 2: Data tables\* |  |
| Appendix 3: Glossary\* |  |
| **Overall word count** |  |

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

**Overall word limit: 9500 words**

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| **What is included in and excluded from the word count?** The word count includes all body text throughout the application, including quotes from qualitative analysis and readable words in screenshots. It also includes any standalone text or prose included in tables, graphs, footnotes or references. The following are not counted towards the word limit: * Data tables, figures and graphs providing they do not include standalone prose. These data should be presented in appendices 1-2 and can be cross-referenced from the main sections of the application
* Details of your self-assessment team when displayed as a table
* Action points within the body of the application and references to them
* References; for example, to literature or benchmarking sources
* Your action plan, which should not include any commentary contributing to the overall word limit
* Your glossary of terms used in the application (Appendix 3).

Additional word allocation The overall word allocation for your application can be increased in certain circumstances. The process relating to some common circumstances are listed below: **Covid-19 pandemic** In recognition of the impact of the pandemic on institutions, all applicants submitting in 2021 and 2022 are offered a 500-word extension to the application word limit to consider the impact of Covid-19. These words can be used to discuss practical impacts on the self-assessment process (eg format and timing of SAT meetings and/or membership; consultation methodologies; resourcing changes), on action plan implementation, or to address gender equality impacts of Covid-19 more. The additional words are available to all applicants during this period so there is no need to apply to the Equality Charters team for permission. Applicants are also not obliged to use the additional words if the selfassessment team determine that the application has not been impacted by Covid-19 or the extra words are not needed. **Clinical and non-clinical staff** Departmental applicants with both non-clinical and clinical staff can avail of a 500-word extension to the application word limit to allow them to analyse and reflect on any differences between the two staff groups. Applicants are encouraged to disaggregate their data for clinical and non-clinical staff to support this analysis. Applicants should email the Equality Charters team no less than one month prior to the application submission date to confirm this additional word allowance and ensure it is noted in our records. **Organisational restructure** If an organisational restructure has recently taken place, applicants can avail of a 750-word extension to reflect on the impact of the restructure to their gender equality work in their application (eg arising from changes to their staff or student demographic profile, policies, or context). Applicants should email the Equality Charters team no less than one month prior to the application submission date to confirm this additional word allowance and ensure it is noted in our records. **Exceptional circumstances**Requests for additional word allowances to account for exceptional circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis. Any increase in the word allowance should always be used to explain how the special circumstances have impacted on or been taken into account with respect to the applicant’s gender equality context or activity. Applicants should email the Equality Charters team no less than two months prior to the application submission date to agree and confirm this additional word allowance and ensure it is noted in our records. |

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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

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| **CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 1: CRITERION A**

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|[ ]  Evidence of leadership and senior buy-in  |
|[ ]  Clear governance structure for EDI  |
|[ ]  Formal processes for recognition and reward of EDI work  |
|[ ]  Self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students  |
|[ ]  Processes in place for evaluating the implementation of policies |

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**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.

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| A-HE GuidanceThe letter should highlight the key priorities, achievements and challenges within the department relating to gender equality and how the principles of the Athena Swan Charter are linked to departmental strategy. The letter should outline the personal commitment and involvement of the head of the department (for example, any involvement in the self assessment or particular actions) and evidence how the department’s gender equality work is led and supported by the senior management of the department. |

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| MSD GuidanceThink about what you want a panel to have fore knowledge of when writing the application – what are your takeaways? Use the letter to seed the actions, progress and success you want a panel to be looking out for and underlining your impact narrative. Outline the:• Top 3 impacts you want them to remember from the application• Main/central 3 gendered priority action areas you want them to remember from the action plan.It is vital that this letter show enthusiasm and personal engagement and championing of Athena Swan, so definitely include if:* You are a member of the SAT
* Personally involved in the self-assessment and priority setting
* Have delivered any actions personally, or any instances of you mentoring or supporting women in the department.

Think about the underlying expectations (Silver – showing success against two priorities) and explicitly state how you have met this – prime a panel right at the start that you have met the bar for silver.Be clear and pragmatic and frank about where you have yet to achieve success, and highlight a few key priority areas for the coming 5 years. |

**2. Description of the department**

Please provide an introduction to the department.

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| **Advance HE Guidance**The description should provide an overview of the department. The description should highlight contextual factors that are particular to the department; for example, location, discipline coverage, structure, split-site locations or organisational information (such as the department’s structure, or relationship with the faculty, university or community partners). Outline key contextual changes and developments which have taken place since your last award. Data analysis is covered in subsequent sections and should not be duplicated in this section. |

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| **MSD Guidance**Oxford’s collegiate structure is described in the Oxford briefing note, which will be circulated to panellists along with your application. Describe the institution or department so that panellists can readily understand this without specific prior knowledge. Clearly outline the structure including reporting structures and anything that may be particularly different to sector norms. Include any information about your context that impacts on your department’s culture, presents particular challenges and/or would not be readily understood by those unfamiliar with Oxford, e.g.:* The structure of the department (if complex, consider including a diagram);
* Gendered staff and student numbers (no analysis or discussion required);
* The location of the department, including whether it operates over split sites
* Its relationship with other parts of the University
* Any recent restructuring or period of growth;
* The extent to which posts are reliant on external funding;
* Outline any specific contractual issues in your department (i.e. staff with join University / NHS contracts)
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**3. Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work**

Please provide a description of your equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, staff and department-level resources.

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| **Advance HE Guidance**Please describe the department’s key management and committee structures, and the formal structures in place to carry out and support the department’s equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. Please describe the formal processes in place to distribute, recognise and reward EDI work, referencing university-level policies where appropriate. The description should provide an overview of how EDI work is supported by and embedded within the governance structure of the department, and how it links with university-level EDI structures.Detail should be included about how EDI work (including work relating to Athena Swan) is distributed, accounted for, recognised and rewarded; for example, in a workload allocation model, at appraisal, and/or through promotions and progression pathways. |

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| **MSD Guidance**If appropriate/relevant consider including detail on:* If you buy out any time for the academic lead, or provide any other type of incentive
* If you have a specific role overseeing EDI activity (eg. Athena Swan facilitator, EDI and training manager etc.) which you can frame as administrative support for the champion, and relieving some pressure on HR and PSS colleagues, as well as a financial commitment to EDI
* If you have a number of working groups or EDI-adjacent committees, reflect on how this might distribute the impact of EDI work
* If any staff have EDI as part of their core job responsibility
* Any internal EDI recognition (eg. Staff awards)
* Does your HoD sit on your SAT, or do a number of members sit on the main decision making dept committee? Does your Athena champion sit on the exec?
* Is Athena Swan a standing agenda item on the departmental executive committee?
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**4. Development, evaluation and effectiveness of policies**

Please provide the processes in place for developing, evaluating and revising departmental policies (where relevant), and for evaluating the implementation of institutional policies.

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| **Advance HE Guidance**The description should provide an overview of how the department ensures that departmental policies are fit-for-purpose, how they are evaluated and how their effectiveness and impact are assessed. This should include an overview of any consultative approaches (with staff, students or external stakeholders) which are used to inform these processes. The description should indicate how the department ensures that policies support an inclusive culture and do not negatively impact on people of particular gender identities. If the department does not set any policies at this level, this part of the question can be omitted. The description should also reflect on how the department evaluates the implementation of university-level policies in the department, including how feedback is collected and returned to the university for consideration. |

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| **MSD Guidance**You can include here if you regularly use PSED Equality Impact assessments for decision making (NB: these work best if you use them in your main departmental decision making committees – not just your SAT – demonstrating your commitment to equality in all decision making.If you have any actions, policies or other activity that builds on University policy (for example bridge funding, underwriting for maternity leave, where you have applied staff policies and support activities/policies to support your student cohort etc.) you can include this here.For more info on the policy section you can see the following webinar: [Assessing Your Culture & Reviewing Policies](https://youtu.be/3086RMqnl7g)  |

**5. 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.

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| **Advance-HE Guidance**An overview should be provided on the self-assessment team (SAT) undertaking the self assessment work. This should be provided in a table showing the gender of SAT members, their professional/student role in the department, and their role in the SAT. The SAT should be representative of the department in relation to gender profile and staff type, grades and roles. A summary should be provided of how the SAT has undertaken the self-assessment process, including details of what sources of data have been used to inform the application, and how the SAT has consulted with staff and students. Details should be provided (where appropriate) of consultation response rates disaggregated by gender. Applicants should reflect on how the SAT responded to and acted on the panel feedback provided on the previous application. An overview should be provided on how the department plans to deliver and maintain gender equality activity over the coming 5-year period, including how often the SAT will meet, how SAT succession and turnover will be planned and managed, and (where appropriate) how the action plan will be implemented, evaluated and updated. |

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| **MSD Guidance**Approach this sub-headed to aid in reading and to show more easily how you are meeting the criteria:**The SAT**: A table of the members of the SAT as before, include the year they joined the group, and any relevant roles/characteristics (i.e. sits on departmental executive committee, is an LGBT Role model, is the lead of the X working group) as well as a limited personal information relevant to their perspective on the SAT. Include a narrative around how this group are representative of your departmental community. Speak specifically about student member inclusion.You can also here speak to any other groups involved in EDI in the department who contributed to EDI activities and decision making – any additional committees and working groups, and how and why they were formed.**Previous feedback and action plan development**: Speak to how you responded to previous feedback and what impact this had on your action plan. Also speak to how/if you have developed your action plan over time – did you do a regular review where you adjusted and added actions? Did you add any additional actions as a result of Coronavirus? Did you do a regular RAG rating?**Consultation**: How you consulted with the department to develop your actions and track impact. Disaggregate by gender and role. Detail any other consultative activity here – particularly qualitative – department open meetings, focus groups, listening exercises etc. Speak to how you have ensure that your staff AND students had a say and contributed to priority setting.**Self assessment and data analysis**: How did you approach the data analysis? Do you have a data analysis group? Do you review data on a regular basis? **Writing the application**: Any specifics in how you approached writing the application, how you developed your action plan and undertook priority setting. If you shared the draft with anyone prior to submission (the department, a critical friend)**Plans for the future of the SAT**: how will you deliver and monitor actions – will you conduct a regular periodic RAG rating? How will you manage turnover? What are the plans for consultation and other activity going forwards. |

**Section 2: An evaluation of the department’s progress and success**

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

* *Progress against the applicant’s previously identified priorities has been demonstrated*
* *Success in addressing gender inequality has been evidenced*

Recommended word count: 2000 words

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| **CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 2: CRITERION D & E**Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant’s previously identified priorities

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|[ ]  The previous Bronze action plan is completed or superseded  |

Criterion E: Evidence of success addressing gender inequality

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|[ ]  Evidence of desired outcome/improvement against at least **two** priorities |

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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.

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| **Advance HE Guidance**Please provide the most recent iteration of the action plan associated with the department’s previous award. The action plan should be ‘RAG’ rated (rated ‘red’, ‘amber’ or ‘green’) dependent on progress. Please provide an overview of the progress achieved in implementing the department’s previous action plan. The description should focus on the methodology of action implementation, evaluation and iteration. Applicants should reflect on actions from the previous action plan which have been rated as amber or red, and any actions which were removed over the course of the award. Detail should be provided about how the department evaluated the success (or otherwise) of actions, and what factors (internal or external to the department) acted as barriers or facilitators to the department’s implementation of actions and meeting of success measures. Where challenges to successful implementation were noted, applicants should outline what steps were made to respond to these, and how the action plan was adjusted. Applicants should describe the main learnings and outcomes from the evaluation of the action plan, and consideration should be given to how the department can apply the learning to ensure an improved implementation of the future action plan, and secure better outcomes or impacts |

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| **MSD Guidance****RAG RATED ACTION PLAN:**It was confirmed by Advance HE that you can include some additional information within your RAG rated old action plan to provide context – to this end you can:* RAG rate in a number of ways, including periodic RAG rating, or RAG rating your actions AND success measures to provide more context on how and why the action plan is where it currently is. More guidance on this can be found in a webinar delivered in March 2022.
* Include **additional columns** for context – including a ‘BARRIERS’ column, and a ‘CHANGES’ column where you can simple and briefly note the barriers on amber and red rated actions – this should help you to note barriers and changes so it is easier to account for them thematically in the narrative.
* For actions added over the course of the award period which are incomplete as they are only part way through – include a start date, or some kind of information on when the action was added.

**NARRATIVE:**To save words it is recommended that you approach the narrative thematically, using the ‘barriers’ information to group actions, and then speak to specific examples of what happened on actions that are still marked amber and red. Be sure to include details of how you have applied learning from each barrier to inform how you will deliver actions for the coming period with specific reference to actions in the new AP.When talking about the RAG AP be clear about how you evaluated the success or otherwise of actionsThis section of the application is to talk about PROGRESS not success, the next section is there to talk about your achievements, however there is space her to talk about facilitators and how you have used your progress to inform your future action planning and prioritisation.A panel will not expect an explanation for every single action, but it can be useful to highlight a few successful implementations of actions and how you apply this learning in the new AP, also a few examples where an action changed over time in light of new data and circumstance.Any actions added, or learning from **Coronavirus** scan fall here but will come from your additional 500 words to be sure to cover this thoroughly – for example a load of flexible working actions may have quickly been superseded, and you may have put in place a few new actions specifically for carers or other groups that you can outline here. |

1. **Evaluating success against department’s key priorities**

Please describe the department’s key achievements in gender equality.

Please describe the department’s key achievements in gender equality.

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| **Advance HE Guidance**The description should evidence how the department has achieved the desired outcome or improvement against at least two of their previously identified key priorities. When describing success observed against the key priorities, applicants should refer to qualitative and quantitative data to evidence their statements where possible. Applicants should reflect on the main facilitators or factors that supported them to achieve success, and identify whether there are any aspects that could be translated to other areas to support success against the department’s other key priorities. |

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| **MSD Guidance**Think about the underlying expectations for the level of award you are applying for, and consider how you can clearly signpost that you have met this as a minimum.For Gold: Evidence of success against **three** prioritiesEnsure that you clearly demonstrate this level at a minimum. If you have not adjusted your action plan to be priority driven think about how you can demonstrate this – perhaps approaching the success narrative thematically and showing success in three or more themes.Evidence of longitudinal improvementOver the course of more than one award cycle (at least 6 years) – focus here being gradual and embedded change over time.EXAMPLE:Priority : Improve promotion success rates for womenAction: Multiple actions identified including introduction of a promotions workshopProgress: After one year 95% of eligible staff had attended the workshopSuccess: Promotion success rate for women increases from 35 to 51% in first yearLongitudinal Improvement: 7 years after the actions introduced the promotion success rate increased year on year for first 3 years, and remains constant at 75%.Consider also including information about facilitators and lessons learned and how you have applied this knowledge in your current action planningAlso ensure you are talking about SUCCESS, not PROGRESSProgress: undertaking the activity you planned to create change (creating web-pages, running event, setting up network / scheme)Success: (formerly impact) achieving change as a result of progress – change in staff satisfaction, increase in women applying for and being successful in RoDSome useful information can be found in the Advance HE webinar: [Implementing and Evaluating Your Action Plan & Evidencing success](https://youtu.be/keDZA-CrecE)Additional context around gold applications were covered in the Advance HE Webinar ‘Going for Gold’ |

**Section 3: An evaluation of the department’s sector-leading activity**

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

* *Evidence of sector-leading gender equality practice and supporting others to improve*

Recommended word count: 1500 words

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| **CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 3: CRITERION F**Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant’s previously identified priorities

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|[ ]  + evidence of how the applicant continually monitors and updates their policies and practice in order to remain innovative, intersectional, and inclusive of people of all gender identities, providing (where possible) examples of innovation |
|[ ]  + evidence that through their activity, good practice has been taken up by other departments/institutions/sectors |

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## Maintaining good practice and innovation

Please provide exemplars of good practice and/or beacon activities which demonstrate that the department is, and strives to remain, sector-leading.

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| **Advance HE Guidance** The description should include examples of how the department has been innovative in their gender equality work. The description should outline how the department continually monitors and updates their practices and policies in order to remain innovative and inclusive. This should take into account how the department is embedding an intersectional approach and ensuring the inclusion of and support for people of all gender identities. |

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| **MSD Guidance**Focus here should be on maintaining good practise and innovationHow do you maintain good practise? Do you regularly review your impact and ensure actions are performing as you want them to? Can you speak to how you monitor and update policies? Link back to the policy section perhaps and draw out an exampleInnovation is defined by A-HE as implementing ideas new to your department or University, or broader. How have you put in place something new – have you taken part in a pilot scheme? Have you been the first department to offer a particular activity, or do a certain activity? You action does not need to be wholly original, just that you were perhaps an early adopter or pioneer within your institution. |

## Supporting others to improve

Please describe how the department has supported others to achieve success in gender equality.

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| Advance HE Guidance The description should outline how the department has supported others to improve, and how the department’s activity has resulted in good practice being taken up by others.Applicants should consider their influence on, mentorships of, and support for others outside the department; for example, this could include departments within and beyond their university, organisations, industry partners, or professional bodies, within or beyond higher education. |

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| MSD GuidanceFocus here should be on how your good practise has been taken up by others, whether that be another department another entity. ‘Others’ is a broad term and can be inside your division, University, external partners and anyone else.It is important here to speak to how these others took up your activity if you can, and the broader impact of the activity.From Going for Gold webinar:Evidence that:Through your activity: How have you disseminated or shared your best practise Participation in networks, buddying or mentoring, publications, presentations at conferencesGood practise: What is the good practise shared? (eg. Forst to develop a menopause policy, developed new appraisal  resources to support career development, introduced unconscious bias observers in recruitmentHas been taken up by others: Feedback from others? Quotes? And trends in other departments and beyond adopting your policies?Advance HE offer some opportunities for supporting others:* Buddying a PTO Directorate
* Develop a written case study
* Present at an EDI conference
* Host a networking meeting
* Take up a championing role on Advance HE Connect
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**Section 4: An assessment of the department’s gender equality context**

In Section 4, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion B:

* *Evidence-based recognition has been demonstrated of the key issues facing the applicant*

Recommended word count: 3500 words

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| **CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 2: CRITERION B**Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant

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|[ ]  Collected and analysed mandatory data  |
|[ ]  Evaluated their culture + evaluated their policies |
|[ ]  Evaluated intersectional inequalities (through a narrative question) |
|[ ]  Evaluated intersectional inequalities (through a narrative question)  |
|[ ]  Evaluated the inclusivity of their culture for staff and students of all gender identities (through a narrative question) |
|[ ]  Identified and justified key priorities  |

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## Culture, inclusion and belonging

Please describe how the department ensures their culture and practices support inclusion and belonging.

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| **Advance HE Guidance**In this section, applicants should consider the department’s culture as it relates to gender equality and inclusion. This could include the department’s values, traditions, leadership, practices and behaviours and other formal and informal structures and interactions that characterise the working and learning environment of the department, affecting all staff and students. Applicants should reflect on how the department actively considers gender equality and inclusivity within their culture, including how instances of negative practices or behaviours are addressed. Applicants should draw on their data including the departmental culture survey findings and, where appropriate, other consultation findings with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2. The description should reflect on the department’s current understanding of intersectional inequalities for staff and students, drawing on the department’s cultural and qualitative evidence. Where issues have been identified, actions should be included in the action plan which will support the department to address intersectional inequalities within this award cycle. The department can choose to focus on the intersection of gender with any other characteristic; this prioritisation should be evidence-based, informed by the department’s specific context and/or regional or national data and trends. Applicants should consider the ways in which they actively strive (or could in future, through action) for the inclusion of people of all gender identities within the department’s culture and practices. The provision of quantitative data is not required. Applicants should not be deterred if the department’s demographic data indicate no or low rates of disclosure from e.g. trans or non-binary people, and are encouraged to consider how to embed inclusive practices and approaches within culture and activity. Applicants should reflect on the department’s approach to ensuring culture and practices are inclusive and supportive of people with caring responsibilities, and how the department strives (or could in future, through action) to mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on how the department supports flexibility for staff and students and supports the maintenance of a healthy ‘whole life balance’. |

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| **MSD Guidance**Advance He have recorded a useful webinar on this subject that you may find useful: ‘[Assessing Your Culture & Reviewing Policies’](https://youtu.be/3086RMqnl7g)This you can cover in this section:**Transparency and access to decision making** – you can outline actions taken in department to demystify decision making and improve visibility of decision making for all staff. This can include access to decision making groups by underrepresented individuals (eg. Student and researcher reps on Departmental Executive) and correlating data on what impact it has had. You can also outline how you have amplified minority voices by setting up working groups, staff networks and committees for certain themes.**Inclusion and staff engagement** – how have you developed the working culture of the department, can you speak to activities and events for staff networking and building identity? Can you speak to how you have made activities accessible to staff with caring responsibilities.**Bullying and Harassment** – outline specific actions and outcomes around bullying and harassment in the department. Speak about you harassment advisors, and any outreach work you have done in the area to make these individuals more accessible**Leadership training / LM induction** – have you done any work to improve line manager and PI training including aspects of EDI, and how to support staff of diverse backgrounds. If you have conducted any EDI training for decision making committees outline this here.**Workload and work/life balance** – outline activity, policy and impact around supporting stf to achieve a healthy work/life balance**Departmental values** – outline any work undertaken to define and explore departmental values and what effect this has had on the departmental culture.**Flexible working –** How do you support staff to access flexible working in your department, focussing on the gendered side of this, and perhaps how it has been used to support and mitigate the gendered impact of caring responsibilities**Working parents** – it is good to outline any specific actions, policies or activity around supporting working parents with an eye on mitigating the gendered impact of caring leave. You can outline how you support staff to apply for Returning Carers Funding, if you supported applications to the Covid Rebuilding Research Momentum fund (data available from the Athena Swan Facilitator). Also speak to any specific maternity leave cover policies in-department.On **Intersectionality** – there is no requirement that you provide data on intersectionality at department level as this may be impossible due to small numbers, however it could be useful to investigate other equalities perspectives in your staff experience survey results as they intersect with gender. The requirement is that you speak to the intersection of gender and one other protected characteristic. You can explore different characteristics using the filters on the staff experience survey – for guidance please do contact the Athena Swan and EDI Facilitator who can assist you here.In the absence of specific departmental data you can instead outline how you have embedded inclusive practices along other diverse groups – including LGBT staff, trans and non binary staff, BAME and BIPOC staff, neurodivergent staff etc. You can also use the findings of the full staff survey results at institutional level which outlines some intersectional issues, plus the upcoming Institutional action plan (linked when available).Some useful reading can be found in the Advance HE briefing: [Intersectional approaches to equality and diversity](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/intersectional-approaches-equality-and-diversity)With all the above don’t shy away from ‘bad’ data – be frank and open and clear how you are gearing an action or priority around it to meet the poor data. However it will be important to choose your data carefully – there is no mandatory data in this section, so select areas that support your priority narrative – the transformed charter is not about doing everything, rather identifying your top priorities for action. |

## Key priorities for future action

Please describe the department’s key priorities for future action.

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| **Advance HE Guidance**Applicants should reflect on their evaluation in previous sections (including of policies, progress and culture), and all data sources used to inform the application in order to identify the department’s key issues relating to gender equality. This should draw on the mandatory datasets (and any additional datasets where relevant) with reference to data presented in Appendices 1-2. The department’s evaluation should reflect on insights particularly as these relate to gender equality (eg the representation and progression of people of particular gender identities). To support their evaluation, applicants should consider any trends or issues across job families, contract types or functions, or grades. Applicants should consider any aspects of good practice that could be translated to other areas, and any areas where improvement could be gained through future action. For the progression of professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff, applicants should reflect on the progression pathways available for PTO staff, drawing on evidence as appropriate to inform the identification of good practice and areas for improvement. Applicants should consider how issues have been influenced by external events; for example, the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the department’s identification of key issues, between four and eight key priorities should be identified that the department seeks to address with future action. These key priorities must be appropriate to the department’s context and be justifiable based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Applicants should consider how their priorities address intersectional inequalities. Applicants can carry previously identified key priorities into the upcoming award period; where previously identified priorities are adjusted or edited for incorporation in the coming award period, the rationale for these changes should be presented. Priorities should be specific and detailed, allowing the department to target attention to areas of greatest need. Other, lower-priority goals can still be addressed through the action plan. Priority areas may be addressed through multiple actions (these actions should be SMART). Applicants should cross-reference to the key priorities in the future action plan. |

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| **MSD Guidance**The priority setting process is there to support department in the transformed process to identify their most pressing areas of need in the arena of gender equality. Previously it was expected that all issues identified in self-assessment be covered in the action plan – in the TC you are instead required to **address all identified priorities** in your action plan.Defining clear priorities will ensure that your actions are targeted on the areas of greatest need, or where you are likely to have most impact, and keep focused on the longer term outcomes you wish to seeBy focusing your efforts, setting priorities will help to ensure the most effective use of resources and that your plans are achievable and sustainable.Ensure each priority is underpinned by evidence – you can cross reference to the data in the annex.Priorities are not the same as actions, they are statements of change you wish to see and likely have multiple actions that contribute to the desired changePriorities should be based on – identification of the Departments key issues, appropriate to the context, and justifiable based on quantitative and qualitative evidence.Use your evidence:* For different staff and student groups where are the biggest and most persistent gender gaps in representation or experience, or major drop-offs in the pipeline? Does your data compare unfavourably to wider sector benchmarks?
* Areas of reversal or lack of progress – may suggest you need renewed focus where underlying barriers have not been addresses
* Are there areas of concern that repeatedly occur in culture/survey assessment?
* In identifying priorities, you should consider intersectionality, e.g. if you are focused on increasing representation of a particular group, have you analysed whether there are particular issues for disabled or minority ethnic staff or students that would need to be addressed for them to benefit? Is your target group of focus going to mainly benefit e.g. white women, while focusing on progression at lower grades might be more important for black and minority ethnic women?

Consider your context:As well as your evidence from evaluation of the data, there may be other drivers for your prioritiesThere may be wider external policy or statutory responsibilities that act as drivers, particularly for institutions such as addressing gender pay gaps or meeting relevant OfS expectations (eg. around harassment).• If you are a department, your University may have existing commitments/goals and targets to meet their external commitments • It’s useful if you are in contact with University and/or divisional/Faculty EDI or AS leads when setting priorities to try to align priorities; having divisional/faculty representation on your SAT is one way to ensure this link is made• In terms of opportunities wider EDI priorities or initiatives, for example around staff wellbeing, may create new opportunities to address these issues with a gendered lens.• Taking account of external drivers when setting priorities is useful, but needs to be balanced with/contextualised by the key issues identified in the self‐assessment and considered within the context of applicant's own self‐assessmentEnsure you get buy in from stakeholders. Eg. Your SAT your Executive, also HR and departmental management on identifying and planning resource needs.Ensure your priorities are specific and targeted:Tackle bullying and harassment >>> reduce instances of disrespect to PTO staff from studentsIncrease the number of women at senior academic grades >>> Improve the share of women achieving promotion to professor gradeThere are some good examples of how to use evidence to underline priorities in the Webinar: ‘[Identifying Your Priorities and Creating Action Plan](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWMM9obYGnU)’You do not have to include in this section the specific actions (you may wish to briefly note the central actions), but you can cross reference to where the priority falls in the action plan in the next section. |

**Section 5: Future action plan**

In Section 5, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

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

## Action plan

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

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| **CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 4: CRITERION C**Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues

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|[ ]  SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas |
|[ ]  Actions which address intersectional inequalities as identified through the applicant’s priority areas, if relevant |

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| **Advance HE Guidance**Based on the department’s evidence base and self-assessment, an action plan should be presented which addresses the department’s key issues and priorities. The plan should cover ongoing and planned actions for the next five years, and clearly cross-reference the key priorities as identified in the previous section. For each action define an appropriate success/outcome measure, identify the person/ position(s) responsible for the action, and timescales for beginning and completion (and milestones where relevant). Applicants should provide specific detail to indicate what intervention is planned to address identified issues. While ongoing self-assessment and data collection actions are likely to be necessary throughout the award period, the action plan should balance these actions with proactive intervention which will effect change. It is useful to include the baseline for actions (for example, in a “rationale” column) which will support the creation of measurable targets and the ongoing evaluation of progress. Measurable, quantifiable targets are strongly preferred, where possible. Actions, and their measures of success, should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). |

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| **MSD Guidance**It is important that your action plan is ambitious – at this point you will have picked the low hanging fruit and will be looking at more complex long term actions that may take longer than the 5 year period to show impactYou may include a few monitoring actions – but these should be kept at a minimum, a panel will definitely pick up on this if they are used too frequently.Common identified issues in action plans:Actions insufficient to achieve desired outcome:Ask yourself if the actions you’ve identified are really sufficient to achieve your desired overall outcome (e.g. the overall target you may have set in relation to your priority)?• What else could you do?• Is your success measure realistic/ something you can influence?Actions focussed on further self assessmentAre many of your actions really about understanding of issues, in order to define your priority? E.g. an action to deal with an issue is sometimes put in to organise a focus group to explore the issue further. This may be necessary and reasonable, if, for example, you have very recently identified a ‘new’ issue and need to understand it better, to explore potential solutions. Overall, however, you should aim to have proactive targeted actions addressing already identified and clearly specified priorities.You may have one or two ‘conduct activity to determine what we need to do’ actions – but ideally you will have done this as part of your self assessment – if too many action plan or priority points are to work out what actions to do a panel will see this and it might impact you adversely.Actions focussed on the short termA comment we often see is that actions are not spread over 5 years but concentrated in first year or so of an action plan. It is hard to have clarity on all actions required over a long period, but it’s important to consider what range and sequence of actions over time may be needed to achieve a desired overall outcome.Generic actionsAsk yourself if the actions are responding to the priority, and whether they are informed by learning from previous actions you’ve done related to the issue? (this would normally be captured in your rationale column, sometimes applicants include information about ‘actions to date’ in this column or a separate one.Lack of data driven rationale / baselineMake sure you include the baseline and rationale – and cross reference to where the narrative is in the application – make it as easy as possible for a panel to jump between your action plan and the application.Lack of gendered perspectiveOnce you have an outline action plan go back and review to ensure that the focus throughout is on **GENDERED** actions or intersectional actions – it is vital that you maintain this gendered perspective in the rationale and the success measures.For information and guidance on effective monitoring and evaluation you can watch a video recorded by Dr. Alvin Leung on ‘[Designing and Action Plan](https://ox.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=4c931f2b-d706-49f7-86c9-aed001083ec5)’ – this drawn on his expertise in monitoring and evaluation to write a good action plan.In addition there is a useful webinar from Advance HE on ‘[Identifying Your Priorities and Creating Action Plan](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWMM9obYGnU)’ |

**Appendix 1: Culture survey data**

Please present the results of the core culture survey questions, and if desired, the results of any additional survey questions or consultation.

**Appendix 2: Data tables**

Please present the mandatory data tables, and if desired, any additional datasets.

**Appendix 3: Glossary**

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

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| **Advance HE Guidance**Department data requirements 1. Students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level
2. Degree attainment and/or completion rates for students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level
3. Academic staff by grade and contract function
4. Academic staff by grade and contract type
5. Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff by job family
6. PTO staff by contract type
7. Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to academic posts
8. Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to PTO posts
9. Applications and success rates for academic promotion
10. Applications and success rates for PTO progression
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| **MSD Guidance**Do not include any additional narrative in appendices – text must be limited to table legends, labels and reference.Include cross referencing with each piece of data – show a panel where to find this in the main application form (and include a page ref in the narrative back to the appendix) to aid panels finding their way around the document – it is essential they not get stranded, and the job of reviewing is as simple as possible. It will also demonstrate that you have analysed all data in the body of your application.There is some complexity in the survey results due to the difference in methodology from 2018 to 2021, where the neutral category answer doesn’t strictly match. It might be useful to include this context here, as well as indicating in your presentation that they are different answer options – some sample wording that may be useful:*‘Survey data included in Annex distinguishes between methodology in 2018 staff survey and 2021 staff surveys where respondents were given different answer options. In 2018 options were: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree and don’t know. In 2021 options for response were: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Strongly disagree. Survey software mapped 2018’s ‘Don’t know’ responses to 2021’s ‘Neither’ responses, however the two are not strictly comparable and are shown here as distinct answer populations. 2021 onwards methodology will continue using the 5-point likert scale.’*Do not forget to include a benchmark on the staff data as appropriate – speak with your divisional facilitator if you are not sure what benchmark to use.Only include data that is driving your narrative, do not add in additional data that is not necessary or mandatory. Also ensure that all data is referenced in the application so that a panel viewing the data can easily see that each element has been analysed as part of your self assessment. |