**Athena Swan renewal 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 issues |  |
| Future action plan\* |  |
| Appendix 1: Culture survey 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: 5500 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**   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Evidence of leadership and senior buy-in | |  | Self-assessment undertaken by a representative team and informed by staff/students | |

**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 Guidance**  The 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 Guidance**  Think 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 and its context**

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) |

**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.

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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. Also briefly how the SAT developed over time  **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? How did you conduct you analysis and self assesment  **Writing the application**: Any specifics in how you approached writing the application, how you developed your action plan and undertook priority setting and workshopped/assigned actions. 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 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

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| **CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 2: CRITERION B & D**  Criterion D: Demonstration of progress against the applicant’s previously identified priorities   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | The previous Bronze action plan is completed or superseded |   Criterion B: Evidence-based recognition of the key issues facing the applicant   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Collected and analysed mandatory data | |  | Evaluated their progress | |  | Identified and justified key priorities | |

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 actions  This section of the application is to talk about PROGRESS not success, s  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. |

## Key priorities for future action

Please describe the department’s key issues relating to gender equality, and explain the key priorities for 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.  Applicants should consider whether and how the department’s gender equality issues have changed since their previous award. 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).  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. 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 should refer to their previously identified key priorities. If applicable, 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 see  By 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 change  Priorities 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 priorities  There 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‐assessment  Ensure 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 students  Increase the number of women at senior academic grades >>> Improve the share of women achieving promotion to professor grade  There 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 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*

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| **CHECKLIST FOR SECTION 3: CRITERION C**  Criterion C: Action plan to address identified key issues   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | SMART action plan that addresses all priority areas | |

1. **Action plan**

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

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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 impact  You 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 assessment  Are 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 term  A 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 actions  Ask 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 / baseline  Make 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 perspective  Once 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. |