

Athena Swan renewal form for universities

Applicant information

Name of university	University of Wolverhampton
Date of current application	31 st January 2025
Level of previous award	Bronze
Date of previous award	30/09/2019
Conferral date of Bronze renewal award	16 May 2025
Contact name	Sukhvinder Singh
Contact email	sukhvinder.singh@wlv.ac.uk
Contact telephone	

Section	Words used
An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality	2178
An evaluation of the university's progress and issues	3233
Future action plan*	Separate Document
Appendix 1: Culture survey data*	
Appendix 2: Data tables*	Redacted
Overall word count	5411

*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 – Introduction to the institution and the self - assessment process

1. Letter of endorsement from the Head of the University



Letter of endorsement from the Head of Institution

As Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton I am proud to reaffirm our commitment to Athena Swan principles and to advancing gender equality across all aspects of university life. I am therefore delighted to offer my full support to and endorsement of our application for renewal of a bronze award. Advancing gender equality remains a strategic priority that drives our work in creating an inclusive and equitable environment for all staff and students, as set out in the University Strategy 2035 - Creating Opportunity, Transforming Futures.

Our journey towards gender equality continues to evolve, and we are dedicated to implementing effective policies, actions, and frameworks that support our vision. The Athena Swan Bronze Award we received in 2019, along with the ongoing work of our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), demonstrates our commitment to fostering an environment where gender diversity is celebrated, and barriers to equality are actively addressed.

We understand that true gender equality requires more than just policies and frameworks. It requires measurable actions and leadership at all levels. I have ensured that all members of the Vice-Chancellor's Group act as champions/sponsors for the various diversity strands, including Gender. As such, we are proud of the progress we have made, but we acknowledge that there is still work to be done, particularly in increasing representation and addressing underrepresentation in senior leadership and STEMM disciplines

The role and contribution of every member of our university community—staff, students, and leadership—is vital to creating a culture of inclusivity. We remain resolute in our mission to build a university where everyone, regardless of gender, role and personal circumstances can thrive and succeed. This commitment is central to our university's values, and I personally champion these efforts to ensure that they remain a priority.

Maintaining and improving upon our Athena SWAN Charter status is an important way to measure our success in advancing our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to ensuring we adopt a mindset of continuous improvement. Our aim, therefore, which is supported by our Board of Governors, is to increase the number of schools gaining Athena Swan awards as well as aiming for an Institutional Silver award in our next submission in 2030.

Finally, I confirm that all information presented in the application is an accurate representation of the University.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ebrahim Adia'.

Professor Ebrahim Adia
Vice Chancellor

University of Wolverhampton, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, City Campus Wulfruna, Wolverhampton WV6 1LJ, United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)902 320000 W: www.wlv.ac.uk

1.2. Description of the university and its context

The University of Wolverhampton has a long-standing tradition of academic excellence and opportunity, with nearly 200 years of history. As a modern university, it continues to invest significantly in its students, staff, alumni, and the broader community, both locally and internationally. The University's investment of over £125 million in campus development highlights its commitment to enhancing student experience and educational facilities.

This investment includes £50 million dedicated to Walsall Campus improvements, along with the innovative Performance Hub, refurbished Student Unions, and modernized Learning Centres. The Science, Technology, and Prototyping Centre at the Science Park has gained notable recognition, winning awards such as the Best Large Commercial Project at the LABC regional awards and being a national finalist in the same category.

The university's success is further recognized in several external publications:

- 88% of graduates are employed or in further education 15 months after graduation (Graduate Outcomes Survey, 2024, Class of 21-22).
- Ranked No. 1 in the UK for teaching first-generation students two years running (Daily Mail University Rankings 2024, 2025).
- Ranked 29th in the UK for student positivity (NSS 2023).
- 86% satisfaction with course teaching (National Student Survey 2024, for full-time, first-degree students taught at UoW).
- 55% research rated as world-leading or internationally excellent (Research Excellence Framework 2021).

University Leadership

At the time of this submission, gender representation within the University Executive is shown in Figure 1.0, with the Chair of Governors being a woman from a global majority background.

Previously, the Corporate Management Team (now the University Executive Board, UEB) had 71% female representation, highlighting male underrepresentation. The current UEB is more balanced, comprising 58% females and 42% males. Similarly, the Vice Chancellors' group now achieves gender parity at 50%, compared to 33.3% female staff previously.

Figure 1.0

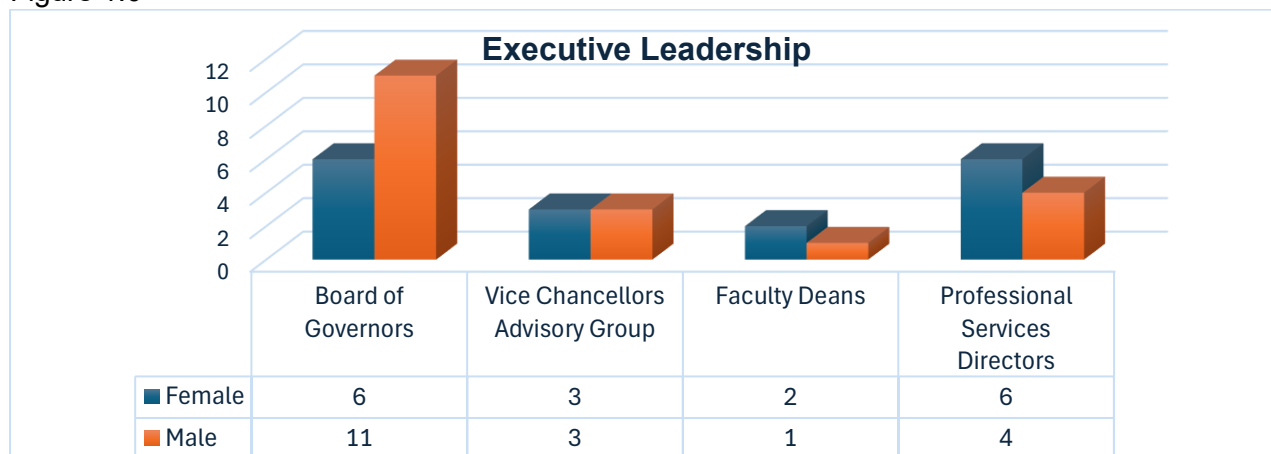
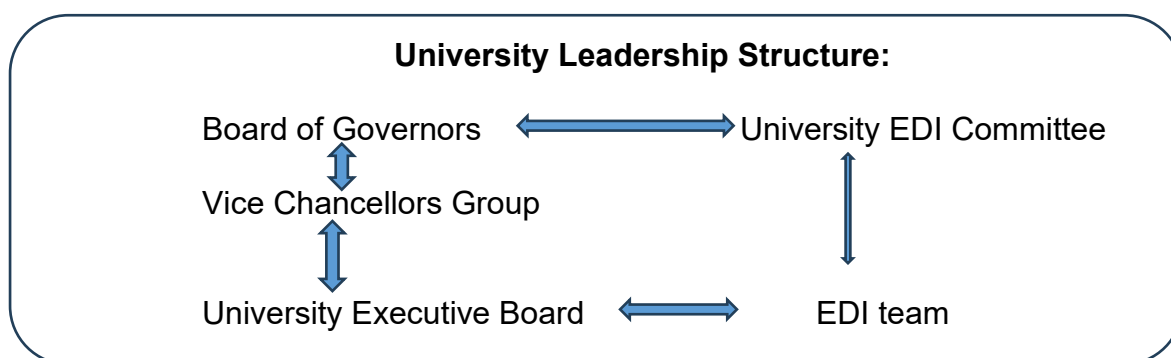


Figure 1.1



Quotes from Staff survey:

- *We currently have a lot of women in senior leadership roles which I think is fantastic. Many women have progressed and been promoted through the university which shows good investment in our staff. I do feel that this support to progress does translate to women who have chosen to reduce their hours (e.g. women returning to work following having a baby).*
- *I can see that the University at the very senior level is trying to make significant positive change to support employees and build partnerships that are sustainable and supportive to the welfare of the university. This would then have a positive impact on employees in the short, medium and long term, this is communicated to the staff very well, through various channels. I find that some staff, in general, are approachable.*

Overview of EDI at the University

The central EDI team includes the Associate Director for EDI, EDI Advisor (Disability), and EDI Advisor. Additionally, the Associate Dean for Inclusivity and Director of Diversity & Inclusion in Professional Practice focus on students.

Since our last submission, we have established the Women's staff network alongside the Global Majority, Disabled, and LGBTQ+ staff networks. Each network has three office bearers, allocated 20 hours each to fulfil their roles, and all staff attending meetings are given time to participate.

The networks play a significant role in representing their members, providing them with support and contributing to policy and practice at the University. The Disability Staff network has recently been shortlisted for a British Diversity Award. The central EDI budget also provides resources and support for these networks.

The University holds a Bronze Race Equality Charter mark (renewal due July 2025) and developed a Disability Equality Action Plan (DEAP) aligned with the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter frameworks. We are currently Disability Confident Level 2, with a goal of achieving Level 3 by 2027.

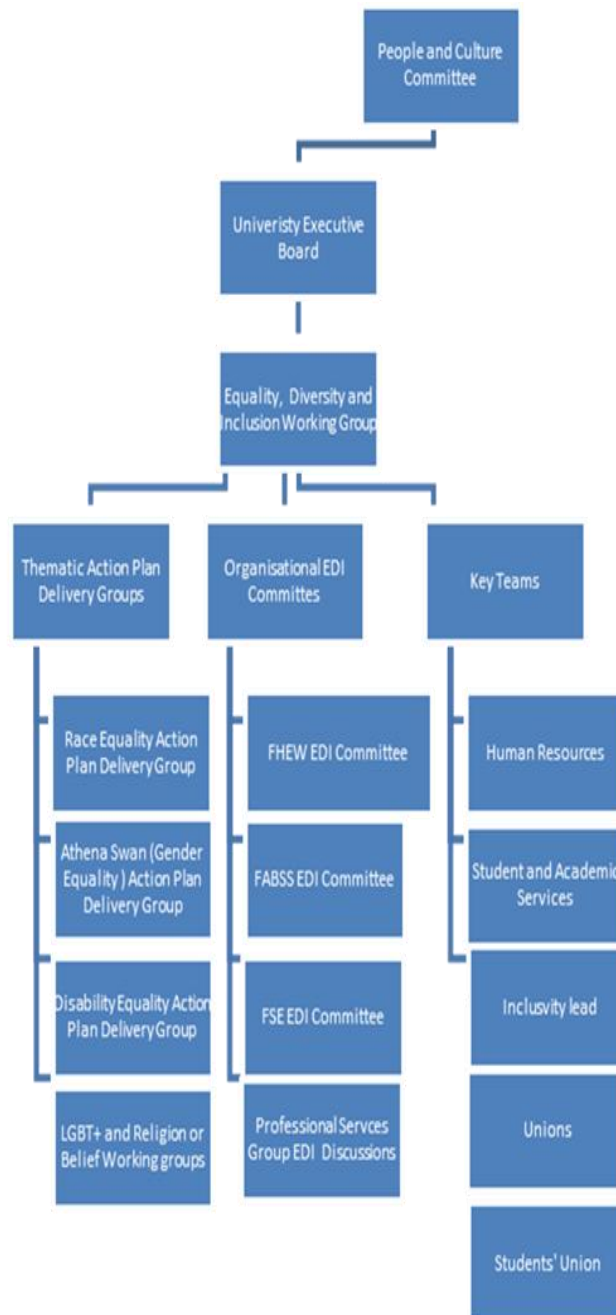
We have set up LGBTQ+ and religion and belief working groups that concentrate on tackling issues by drawing on the lived experiences of both staff and students.

Our approach to EDI recognizes shared challenges across equality strands while tailoring interventions for each group. This includes overlapping actions in Athena Swan and Race

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Equality Charter plans. Intersectionality is key, as shown by our gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gap analyses, highlighting disparities among female staff from different ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 1.2



Quote from staff survey: I think the University publicises its commitment to advancing gender and race equality loudly and that this diversity is increasingly visible in the appointments and promotions made. Policies are in place and training around diversity and inclusion are mandatory.

Organisational Structure

Plans are in place to further reduce the number of schools within each faculty by merging several of them in mid-2025.

Figure 1.3

Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences (FABSS)

- School of Creative Industries
- School of Social Science and Humanities
- University of Wolverhampton Business School
- University of Wolverhampton Law School

Faculty of Education, Health & Wellbeing (FEHW)

1. School of Allied Health and Midwifery
2. School of Education
3. School of Nursing
4. School of Psychology
5. School of Health and Society
6. School of Sport

Faculty of Science & Engineering (FSE)

- School of Architecture & Built Environment
- School of Engineering, Computing and Mathematical Sciences
- School of Life Sciences
- School of Pharmacy

Professional service area

- Corporate Compliance
- Digital Services
- Estates and Facilities
- External Engagement
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Registry Services
- Legal
- *Research and Enterprise*
- *Strategic Projects and Organisational Enhancement*
- Students and Education

Strategy 2035 - Creating Opportunity, Transforming Futures

Figure 1.4



The University's 2035 strategy aims to drive growth, inclusion, and academic excellence over the next decade, focusing on five pillars:

- Student Success
- People and Culture
- Operational Excellence
- Research and Knowledge Exchange
- Societal Impact

The strategy highlights the University's pride in its diverse, international community, which fosters innovation and excellence. An EDI framework is being developed to support the strategy. Inclusive leadership training has been delivered to the Executive Board and all line managers to promote a culture of inclusivity.

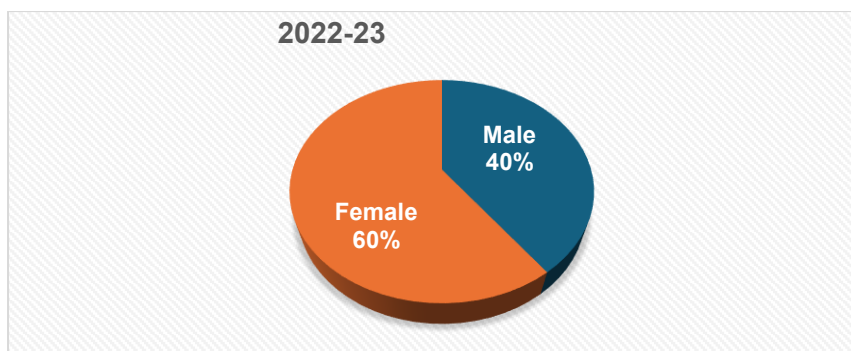
Staff and Student Profile Overview (Data 2023-23)

A detailed breakdown is available in Appendix 2 (cross-referenced below), including staff data by ethnicity and gender to highlight intersectionality. **In the submission, when we state that female staff are disproportionately underrepresented, we are comparing this to the overall female staff population within the University.**

Overall Institutional Staff: Table 2

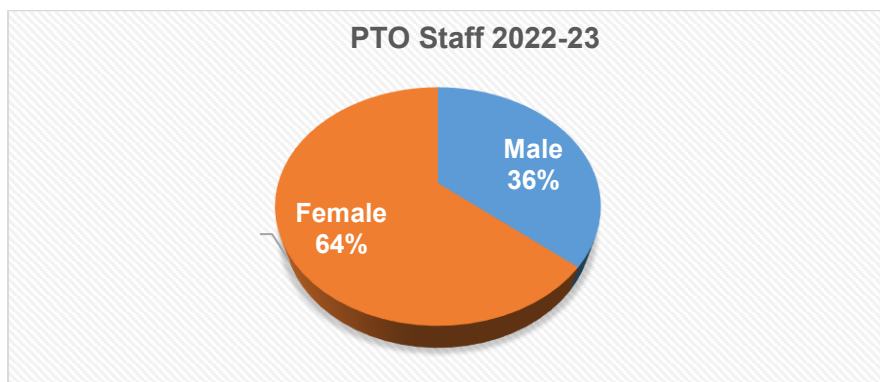
The university has 60% female staff, surpassing the national sector average of 57% for higher education. However, the data in Appendix 2 reveals that women are disproportionately underrepresented in senior academic roles compared to their male counterparts in line with national trends.

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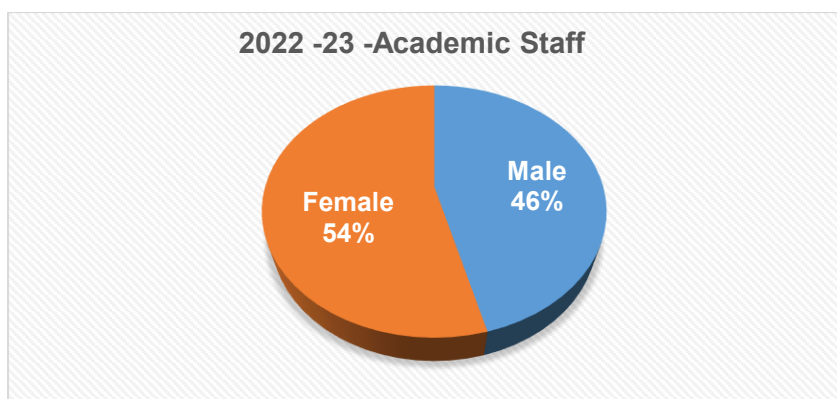
Professional Support Services: Table 4.1

Women make up 64% of professional support staff, but their disproportionate underrepresentation in higher SPOT (Senior salary outside the national pay spine) grades highlights ongoing gender imbalance.



Academic Staff: Table 2.1

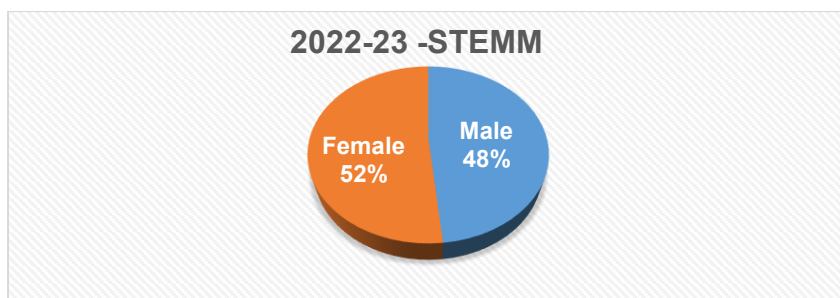
Since the 2018-19 submission, female academic staff has increased by 3%, reaching 54%, above the national average of 49% (HESA data). This reflects the university's success in attracting and retaining female staff, though they remain disproportionately underrepresented in senior academic roles.



STEMM Fields: Table 2.1.1

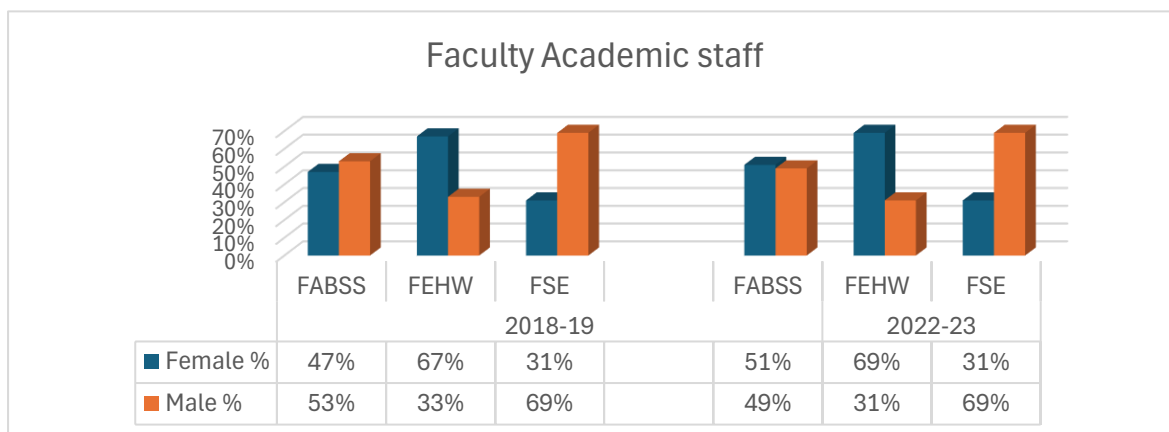
Female staff in STEMM has increased by 3% since the last submission, reaching 52%, above the national average (HESA). This reflects the university's strong performance in promoting gender diversity in STEMM fields.

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Faculty and Departmental Representation (Tables 2.1.2 & 2.1.3):

	Faculty	Number Female	Number Male	Total
2022-23	FABSS	102	106	208
	FEHW	252	112	364
	FSE	60	135	195



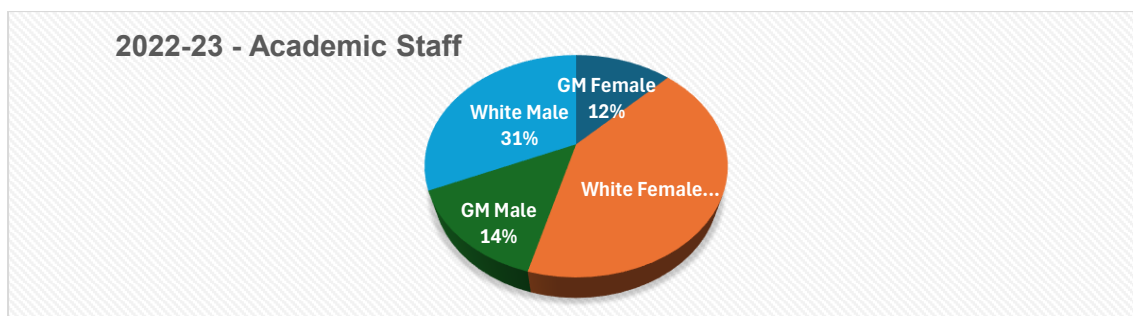
FABSS: There has been an increase in female staff within FABSS. However, in the schools of Art, Social Science, and Humanities, there is an under-representation. These fields, traditionally more gender-balanced, still require efforts to attract and retain female staff.

FEHW: The School of Nursing shows low male staff representation, reflecting gender stereotypes and societal expectations in a field traditionally dominated by women.

FSE: Female staff are disproportionately underrepresented in all departments except Pharmacy, mirroring the broader STEMM trend. Despite progress, gender imbalances remain in certain disciplines, which the Athena Swan action plan will aim to address.

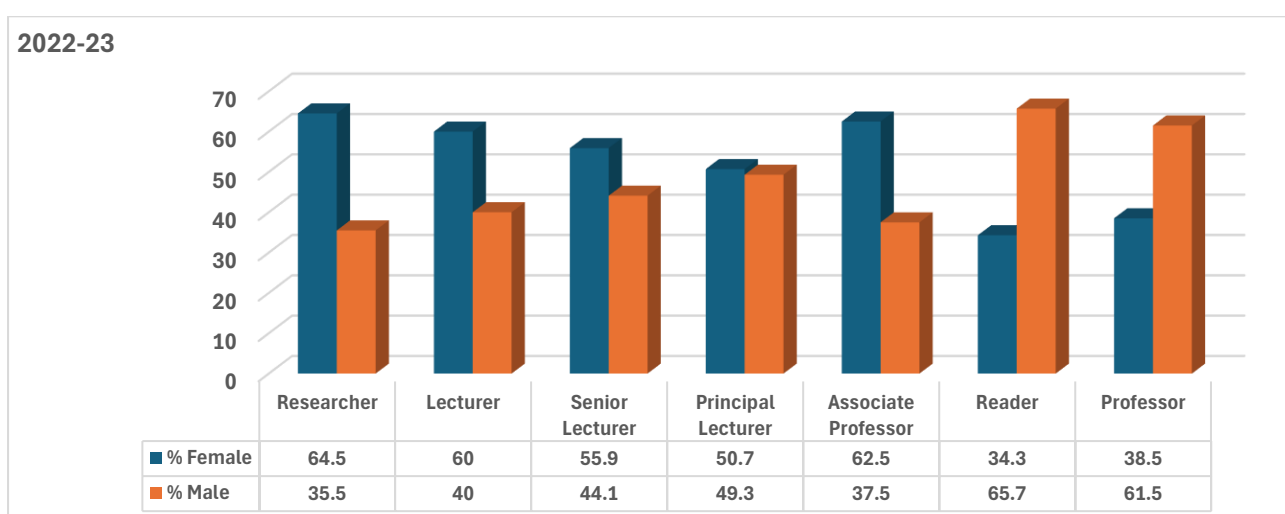
Intersectionality – Gender and Ethnicity: Table 2.1 & 2.1.3

While the 4% increase in Global Majority female academic staff is positive, their 12% representation still falls short of the 16% university-wide average.



Academic Job Roles: Table 2.2.2-

The graph below highlights that there is a disproportionate decrease in female staff from lecturer to professor. This is reflective of the higher education sector in general.



The introduction of the associate professor role was a strategic move to support and facilitate career advancement, particularly for female staff, acting as a stepping stone toward achieving the professor role. This role offers additional support and recognition to help staff members gain the necessary experience and mentorship to advance further.

In summary, while challenges remain, the University's targeted efforts to support female staff through structured career progression pathways like the associate professor role have had a measurable positive impact on the increase in female professors to 39% (A growth of 6% in female professors between 2018 – 2022), surpassing the national average of 31% and showing a commitment to gender equality in academic leadership roles.

Students Table: 1 - Gender distribution at both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) levels across 15 schools.

Figure 1.5

Course Level	Faculty	Course Mapped School (group)	% Female
UG	FABSS	Wolverhampton Business School	44%
	FEHW	School of Sport	25%
		School of Architecture and Built Environment	19%

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	FSE	School of Engineering Computing and Mathematical Sciences	15%
PG	FABSS	School of Social Sciences and Humanities	44%
	FEHW	School of Sport	42%
	FSE	School of Architecture and Built Environment	29%
		School of Engineering Computing and Mathematical Sciences	37%

- 1.1. Undergraduate (UG) level: 4 schools have fewer female students than male students out of 15
- 1.2. Postgraduate (PG) level: 3 schools have fewer female students than male students out of 15.

At the UG level, the gender distribution is relatively balanced, but at the PG level, the gender gap seems to be more pronounced in favour of male students in only 3 schools.

1.3. Athena Swan self-assessment process

a) Description of the self-assessment team

After receiving the Athena Swan Bronze Award in September 2019, the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team (AS SAT) became the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) Delivery Group in January 2020 to oversee gender equality initiatives. In preparation for the current submission, the group reverted to the AS SAT in March 2024, with previous members invited to continue.

To expand membership, the University reached out between January and March 2024, particularly engaging staff networks representing marginalised groups (Women's Staff, Disability, Global Majority, and LGBTQ+ staff) for an intersectional approach. Student input was gathered through the liberation officers and academic coaches.

The AS SAT's membership was reviewed for diverse representation across gender, ethnicity, and working patterns, strengthening its commitment to gender equality and intersectionality. Since the formation of the current AS SAT, the University appointed a Chief People Officer (CPO) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Leadership and Student Experience to champion gender equality, ensuring top-down support.

Figure 1.6: **AS SAT Membership:**

	GENDER	JOB TITLE	FACULTY/ DEPARTMENT	FULL/ PART TIME
1.	F	Chief People Officer	Office Vice Chancellor	FT
2.	F	Associate Dean of Inclusivity	Directorate of Students and Education	FT
3.	M	Associate Director of EDI	Human Resources	FT

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4.	F	Community of Practice Coordinator for 'that's me' project	Research	FT
5.	F	Academic Coach	Faculty of Health and Wellbeing	FT
6.	M	Director of Diversity and inclusion in professional practice	Directorate of Students and Education	FT
7.	F	Lecturer in Popular Music	Faculty of Business and Social Sciences	FT
8.	F	Associate Dean Recruitment & International	Faculty of Business and Social Sciences	FT
9.	F	Project Manager – That's Me	Research	FT
10.	F	Head of Performance and Insight	Directorate of Strategy and Organisational Enhancement	FT
11.	M	Dean of Students and Education	Directorate of students and education	FT
12.	F	Principal Lecturer - Head of Access and Widening Participation (WSN Chair)	Faculty of Health and Wellbeing	FT
13.	F	Student Transitions Teacher in Health Professions	Faculty of Health and Wellbeing	FT
14.	F	Director for Postgraduate Research Programme	Faculty of Science and Engineering	FT
15.	M	Senior Lecturer in Structural Engineering	Faculty of Science and Engineering	FT
16.	F	Liberation rep for Gender Equality – Students' Union	Students' Union	FT
17.	F	Academic Coach	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	FT
18.	F	Educational Developer	Directorate of Students and Education	PT
19.	M	HR Data Analyst Assistant	Human Resources	FT
20.	F	Lecturer in Hospitality	Faculty of Business and Social Science	PT
21.	F	Head of Nursing	Faculty of Health and Wellbeing	FT

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22.	F	Sport Business Management Programme Leader	Faculty of Health and Wellbeing	FT
23.	F	Equality, diversity and inclusion advisor	Human Resources	FT

The AS SAT's membership demographics comprised 78% women and 22% men. Moving forward, it's important to increase male representation. Regarding intersectionality, 56% of the female members were from a global majority background.

Attendance at meetings is included in the workload allocation for Academic staff. For Professional Services attendance is agreed with line managers as a development opportunity.

Figure 1.7:



Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team Volunteers needed!

Dear all,

We require volunteers to be part of the University Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team. This is a good opportunity to be involved in promoting and advancing gender equality across the University through an Athena SWAN charter. Academic Staff will be given workload allocation agreed with their line manager and Professional services staff will need to discuss and arrange with their line managers. It is envisaged that volunteers will be asked to attend at least 4 meetings from March to October as a minimum.

The AS SAT objectives are:

- a) **Oversee, guide, prepare and submit University's Athena SWAN application.**
- b) **Design, deliver and monitor the University's Action Plan.**

Advance HE Athena SWAN team recommends that the Self-Assessment Team should have a diverse membership, covering different levels of the institution, including representation from professional services, academics, and students. Where possible, we will seek that the team's cumulative experience include:

- i) Balancing home responsibilities and work (part-time/flexible working/career breaks)
- ii) Dual-career families, single parents.
- iii) Recent experience of recruitment and promotion processes
- iv) Different stages of career (particularly early and mid-career stage)
- v) Senior management
- vi) Aim from representation from a wide range of protected groups to ensure an Intersectional approach, particularly from the groups currently most underrepresented at the University, such as Global Majority, LGBTQIA+ and Disabled people.

Click on our links below for more information:

[Athena Swan bronze award](#)

[Getting started with Athena Swan - Video](#)

To Express an interest to volunteer, please email Satwinder Kaur at s.kaur21@wlv.ac.uk by Monday 4th March 2024.

The first meeting will take place on Tuesday 12th March 1pm – 3pm

Thank you

b) Account of the self-assessment process

The Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team (AS SAT) has met monthly since its formation, ensuring consistent progress. A Microsoft Teams channel was created to house key resources, making them easily accessible to all members.

To prepare the SAT, training materials, including a video on Athena Swan principles, were distributed. Additionally, a presentation by the Associate Director of EDI and a workshop on developing action plans (based on Advance HE guidance) helped enhance members' understanding. For those unable to attend the workshop, the slides were made available on the Teams channel.

Sub-groups were formed to focus on specific areas, meeting between main SAT meetings and providing updates. This helped streamline efforts and ensured thorough attention to all aspects of the AS submission.

Involvement and Consultation

To minimise survey fatigue, the AS and REC cultural surveys were combined, incorporating core questions from each charter. Conducted from September 2–20th, the survey had a 33% response rate, with 63% of responses from female staff (details in Appendix 1). Efforts will target areas with low response rates to achieve a 40% response rate in the 2029 survey for the Silver submission in January 2030.

The AD for EDI engaged staff networks for feedback, ensuring an intersectional approach and broad staff involvement. Engagement with students was via focus groups and academic coaches.

Feedback on the draft application and action plan was gathered from AS SAT members, internal staff serving as independent AS assessors, and through Advance HE's remote review of the draft submission.

Belongingness Survey for Students by Gender: The survey compared males and females on a sense of belonging, excluding the "other" category due to low representation (2 individuals). An online survey using the Mantz Yorke (2016) scale was conducted from November 2022 to January 2023, measuring students' self-perceptions of engagement, belongingness, and self-confidence. With a 10% response rate (2,108 students), participants included 619 males (33.5%) and 1,227 females (66.5%). Results showed no gender differences in Engagement or Belongingness, aligning with previous findings (Cureton et al., 2017).

We completed the 2024 Survey in December. The results are not yet available, but we will analyse them and take appropriate action once received.

c) Plans for the future of the self-assessment team

The AS SAT will return to the GEAP Delivery Group, with membership reviewed to ensure those responsible for delivering actions are represented. This evolution reflects the University's strategic commitment to advancing gender equality. Further details on the GEAP Delivery Group are in section 2.

Section 2 – Evaluation of progress against the previous action plan

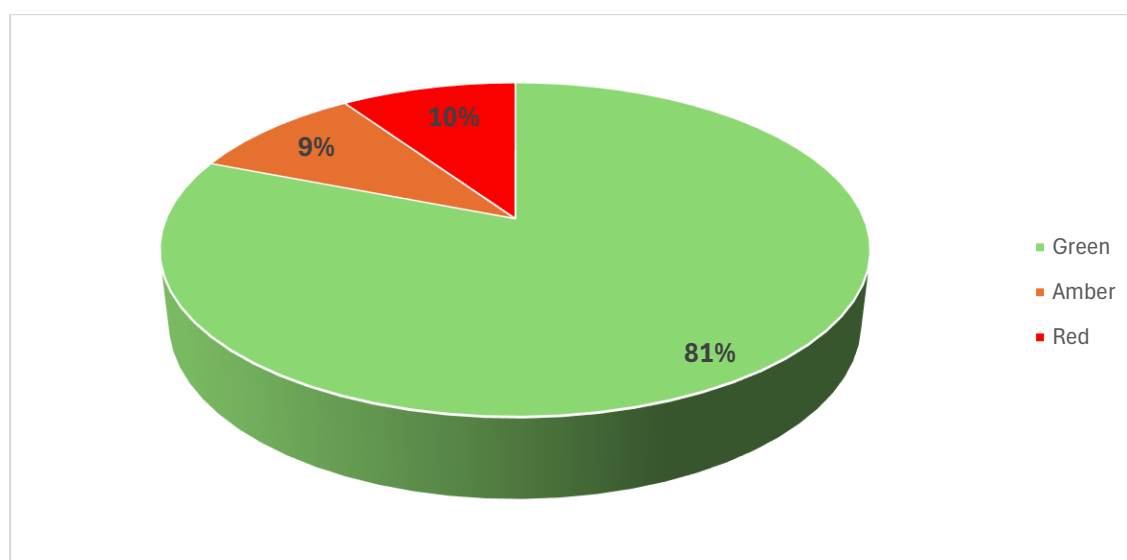
2.1 Previous Action plan

Summary

Our Bronze renewal reflects substantial structural changes at both the institutional level and within Faculties as explained earlier. While these transitions have introduced challenges in maintaining consistent momentum with Athena Swan initiatives and completing all planned actions, they also mark a pivotal period of growth and evolution.

Out of the 85 actions 68, (80%) rated green, indicating completion. The 8 amber actions will be completed with updates included in the new action plan. The 9 red actions were dropped due to restructures, the pandemic's impact, and feasibility issues as explained earlier.

Actions	Green/completed	Amber	Red
85	68	8	8



Addressing Barriers and Strengthening Enablers in Implementing the Previous Action Plan

Challenges and Barriers Identified

Further analysis of RAG-rated action plans and progress reports, highlighted key obstacles to achieving gender equality objectives as below:

- Lack of Accountability: Ambiguity around responsibility resulted in inconsistent implementation. This was due to several key staff changes that were leading on AS actions.
- Resource Constraints: Limited funding and staffing, exacerbated by organisational changes, hindered progress.

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- **Data Limitations:** Insufficient data (due to inefficient data systems) and monitoring mechanisms made it difficult to assess impact.
- **Resistance to Change:** Institutional and cultural inertia, influenced by low motivation and risk aversion following organizational changes, slowed adoption.
- **Competing Priorities:** Financial constraints, impact of Pandemic and a strong focus on student recruitment diverted attention from gender equality initiatives.

Key Enablers and Facilitators of Progress

Despite these challenges, several factors contributed to successful implementation:

- **Leadership Commitment:** Strong support from senior leadership, including the Gender Champion, People and Culture Officer, and Faculty Deans within the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group, drove momentum.
- **Effective Communication:** Regular updates, including reports to the Gender Equality Action Plan Delivery Group, EDI Working Group, and University Executive Committee, as well as staff updates via WLV Insider, fostered engagement.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** Cross-faculty and directorate cooperation, particularly through EDI committees, strengthened implementation.
- **External Benchmarks:** Comparing best practices, such as pay gap analyses, provided valuable insights for improvement.

Strategic Actions for Future Progress based on lessons learnt and barriers and facilitators as identified above.

Drawing on insights from the previous action plan's implementation, the University will take further steps to strengthen execution and embed gender equality within institutional practices by:

1. **Establish Clear Accountability:** Assign designated action owners based on job roles, with defined responsibilities and introduce a tracking dashboard (December 2025) on the Gender Equality Action Plan delivery group Team's folder for regular progress updates.
2. **Secure Sustainable Resources:** Ensure dedicated funding, staffing, and tools to support gender equality initiatives.
3. **Enhance Data Collection & Evaluation:** Strengthen data-driven decision-making through improved data collection, including exit interviews, and impact tracking via tracking dashboard and use of Theory of change model.
4. **Foster a Culture of Inclusion:** Leverage training and engagement initiatives to address resistance to change.
5. **Align with Institutional Priorities:** Integrate gender equality initiatives within the EDI strategy, ensuring coherence with the People & Culture sub-strategy and broader University goals (October 2025)
6. **Implement Agile Learning Practices:** Establish feedback loops to enable continuous improvement and adaptive implementation, including the use of the Theory of Change model.

These strategic measures will enhance accountability, strengthen institutional commitment, and drive meaningful, measurable progress toward gender equality.

RAG rated Athena Swan action plan 2019 focusing on Amber and Red actions

Ref and RAG Rating	Action	Status Explanation	Amended action and link to action within new AS action plan
Objective 1: Embed Athena SWAN into the systems and culture of the University, providing support to Schools in applying for their own awards, and creating accountability systems for advancing actions			
1.8, 1.14	Support individual School Athena applications with those Schools who have put themselves forward to undertake their own Self-assessment in the next two years.	Due to resources and Organisational changes, we did not progress with 2 schools as committed.	AP: 4.1-To support and increase the number of school submissions for Athena Swan Awards. 5 schools' applications submitted and gaining a AS bronze award by 2029
1.1,1.11, 1.12		Three schools had started the AS journey but did not submit due to staff leaving on these leaving, limited resources and changing priorities.	
Objective 2: Continue to embed transparency into university policies, practices and committees, paying notice of identified trends and issues			
2.3	Alert STEMM Schools and faculties of the lower proportion of women Principal lecturers and take local action.	Although data dashboards were not developed, raw data was used to develop excel spreadsheets with this data and shared.	AP:4.1- Faculties and Directorates to create their own action plans, aligned with University AS action plan, informed by localised data analysis (from Data dashboards)
2.5	Survey Visiting Lecturers to better understand their experiences of the University and act on the findings	Repeated attempts to engage VLs with surveys have proven unsuccessful. Action abandoned	We will prioritise and target VLs in the next AS staff cultural survey.

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2.7	Explore a coaching and observation type process for Chairs of panels to upskill individuals and share good practice.	This action was abandoned due to a lack of resources.	The recruitment and selection mandatory training was updated to include sections on skills for chairs of panel and the sharing of good practice.
2.10	Monitor leavers' data.	Data was not monitored by gender or any other protected characteristic.	AP:5.2- Track leavers' data and the experiences of staff leaving the University thru exit interview questions/survey. As well tracking and monitoring staff returning from maternity leave, focusing on changes in working patterns, promotions, and workloads
2.23	Also use these workshops to start collecting names of staff interested in joining the promotions Community of Practice	Lack of uptake due to staff resources and priorities	Not considered to be feasible in the current climate.
2.29	Evaluate the impact of the new Performance, Development and Review Policy	A review of the policy resulted in the need to update it; hence no evaluation of the impact was carried out.	AP:3.5- Evaluate the impact of the new Performance, Development and Review Policy
Objective 3: Create a vibrant university environment that supports the development and progression of all staff, paying particular attention to known issues and trends			
3.9	Map out different options for childcare support, including increased provision in the University nursery and the possibility of securing discounts with other local nurseries	Upon further investigation it is believed that there is no scope for an increased childcare option. This action has therefore been closed.	No scope under current financial circumstances and lack of resources.

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	for university staff and consult with relevant staff on their preferred options.		
3.10	Update exit interview questions to explore why people may leave after maternity leave. HR to specifically ask any woman who resigns within a year of returning from maternity leave whether there is anything the university could do to enable them to stay.	Exit Interview questions were reviewed and revised. However, no monitoring or analysis was carried out due to technical issues and limited resources.	AP:5.2 as above
3.27	Consider further the intersection of gender and age and the implications for an older workforce	Not completed due to lack of data and other priorities.	The new EDI strategy takes an intersectional approach
3.35	Self-assessment team to discuss and explore further the possibility of a work placement or graduate scheme for PSS to break down occupational segregation.	Not completed due to Organisation change, resources and changes in priorities.	AP:3.2 - Create a soft skills training programme for female staff in lower grades, covering self-promotion, confidence, and marketing, with work-shadowing opportunities.
3.37	Develop and roll-out allies training and operate on a voluntary basis.	External trainers sourced but due to financial constraints not followed up.	This is being built into existing training programmes.

Full RAG rated ACTION PLAN 2019 Submission Bronze

Rationale	Ref	Actions	Outputs	Timescales	Owner	Outcomes/ success
Objective 1: Embed Athena SWAN into the systems and culture of the University, providing support to Schools in applying for their own awards, and creating accountability systems for advancing actions						
The University has experienced 'Athena SWAN fatigue' and enthusiasm for the charter mark has waned. We need to celebrate the creation of this action plan, and highlight the university's commitment to change.	1.1	Launch gender equality action plan	<p>Launch the gender equality action plan and communicate the work across the University using the VC's newsletter, cascading through faculty E&D committees, a poster campaign, including electronic noticeboards, inclusion in relevant training.</p> <p>If successful, celebrate Athena SWAN award and take the opportunity to refresh branding and E&D web pages.</p> <p>If unsuccessful, communicate the university's commitment for Schools to complete an Athena SWAN self-assessment anyway, even if they are unable to submit the application.</p>	Summer 2019 for initial launch Autumn 2019 for follow-up communications	Director of External Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness of the University's commitment to E&D, and specifically to gender equality. - Use feedback from event to compare to other gender-specific feedback to ascertain staff views on our gender equality work.
Experience has taught us that it is	1.2	Evolve SAT to implement and monitor the action plan.	Produce updated Terms of Reference for the			- Action plan is a living document and is

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<p>not enough to aspire to creating gender equality - we need to make sure we deliver on our plan.</p>			<p>SAT.</p> <p>Set up termly meetings for the SAT</p> <p>Provide termly updates to CMT on progress, highlighting any actions which have slipped</p> <p>Provide annual updates to Board of Governors</p>	<p>Summer 2019 for updated SAT, and then termly meetings, beginning with summer term meeting.</p>	<p>Deputy Vice Chancellor Access and Lifelong Learning and Head of E&D</p>	<p>updated and reported on every term. Senior managers are aware of progress and intervene where necessary to ensure actions stay on track and are delivered on time, and to high quality.</p>
<p>As our Athena work progresses our SAT needs to be updated, ensuring consistency, but also reflecting the evolving work and action plan. New (and existing) members need to be trained and ready for the next self- assessment</p>	<p>1.3</p> <p>1.4</p> <p>1.5</p>	<p>Refresh membership of the SAT ensuring there is an ECR, more men and increased ethnic diversity.</p> <p>Provide training to SAT members on gender equality, Athena process and intersectionality</p> <p>Convene updated SAT to undertake self-assessment in preparation for April 2023 submission</p>	<p>Updated, trained (but still experienced) SAT which reflects the experience and knowledge needed for the next institutional self-assessment, but with at least four new members.</p> <p>16 months of SAT meetings diarised</p> <p>Terms of reference refreshed and circulated</p> <p>Project plan established for managing 16-month SAT process, using University project planning methodology</p> <p>Relevant quantitative data requested from Workforce Analytics Team</p>	<p>Autumn 2021</p> <p>Autumn 2021, with first SAT meeting in January 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Vice Chancellor Access and Lifelong Learning and Head of E&D</p> <p>Head of EDI</p>	<p>Relevant, experienced SAT convened and ready to undertake 16-month institutional self-assessment ready for April 2023 application</p>

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<p>The institution needs to embed Athena SWAN (and E&D) into faculties and schools to maximise impact and ensure relevant local-level actions and initiatives are being embedded, and central policies are being implemented consistently across the institution.</p>	1.6	Fully establish faculty E&D committees.	<p>Terms of reference have already been circulated and some faculties have already established their committees. Further outputs needed: - Chairs identified in every faculty- Committees to meet once a term- Faculty action plans aligned to the central E&D strategy- Head of E&D to sit on each faculty meeting- Evaluation of Faculty E&D committees to take place in Autumn 2021, allowing two years for committees to become established.</p>	<p>Spring-Summer 2019 for establishing and agreeing action plans and then termly meetings. Evaluation in Autumn 2021</p>	Deans of Faculty and Head of E&D	<p>Faculties begin to take ownership of E&D in their area, which will support the establishment of School Athena SWAN SATS, and ensure intersectionality is considered through a holistic approach to E&D.</p> <p>Conduct internal review in Autumn 2021 to evaluate the effectiveness of E&D Committees, based on their actions, outputs and the content of their meetings.</p>
<p>E&D committees and School Athena SWAN SATs need regular, consistent and reliable data, so they can concentrate on analysis, understanding and actions, rather than requesting data.</p>	1.7	<p>Create data dashboards and management reports to inform faculty E&D committees and School Athena SWAN SATs and support staff in how to use the dashboard and the data.</p>	<p>Draft data dashboard produced, including key data, as required for Athena SWAN. Draft dashboard piloted with a faculty and School and updated following feedback Provide drop-in sessions for staff on how to use and interpret the dashboard/include as an item at faculty E&D committee meetings</p>	Summer 2019	Head of E&D	<p>- Good quality quantitative data is proactively sent to faculties annually, with Schools able to access their own data whenever they want- workforce analytics team can respond to more complicated/bespoke requests more easily, as standard data is already provided.</p> <p>- Schools use their data to inform discussions and create their own action plans.</p>
<p>To ensure central policies have</p>		Support individual School	<p>Self-assessment completed by School of</p>		HoS	<p>- Schools have a</p>

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<p>maximum impact and consistency, and to ensure additional local-level and discipline- specific initiatives are developed, Schools need to work towards their own Athena SWAN applications</p>	1.8	<p>Athena applications with those Schools who have put themselves forward to undertake their own Self-assessment in the next two years. Head of E&D to assist in establishing SAT and to attend SAT meetings where invited for specific items</p>	Sciences, ambitious action plan developed and application ready to submit	Nov-19	HoS	<p>greater sense of their own gender equality issues and develop initiatives and actions which benefit all staff - Schools feel supported in their Athena SWAN work and are clear about what they need to do. - School Athena SWAN applications are high quality, focussing on advancing gender equality, rather than attaining the award.</p>
	1.9		Self-assessment completed by Institute of Sport, ambitious action plan developed and application ready to submit	Nov-19		
	1.1		Self-assessment completed by School of Performing Arts, ambitious action plan developed and application ready to submit	Apr – 20		
	1.11		Self-assessment completed by School of ABE, ambitious action plan developed and application ready to submit	Apr – 20		
	1.12		Self-assessment completed by School of Law School, ambitious action plan developed and application ready to submit	Nov -20		
	1.13		Self-assessment completed by Institute of Psychology, ambitious action plan developed and application ready to submit	Nov -20		
	1.14		Self-assessment completed by School of Social, Historical and Political Studies, ambitious action	Apr - 21		

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			plan developed and application ready to submit			
	1.15	Ensure good practice and lessons learnt in School level applications is shared across the university, School SATs are run as effectively as possible and success is celebrated and communicated.	Termly meetings of the Athena SWAN departmental support group scheduled and held	Summer 2019 onwards	Head of E&D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools feel supported and encouraged in applying for Athena SWAN, evidenced through feedback and successful Athena SWAN submissions - Schools are able to spend their time discussing gender equality rather than navigating the process Schools support each other, for example in being critical readers and sitting on each other's mock panels
	1.16		Provide training and briefings to Schools getting started with the process, suggested timelines and milestones and static webinars to watch when they are ready	May 2019 and onwards	Head of E&D	
	1.17		Create a monthly 'newsletter' which is sent to all Athena SWAN SATs updating them on any changes to the process, good practice initiatives, key research and relevant external publications	June 2019 and then monthly	Head of E&D	
	1.18		Progress, communications and innovative practice to be shared through the VC's newsletter, staff updates and other communications channels.	Termly from Summer 2019	Director of External Relations	
	1.19	Encourage all Schools to engage with Athena SWAN and begin working towards their own self-assessment	Discuss Athena applications termly at CMT meetings to ensure Deans have an overview of which Schools are on track and which schools are still preparing to form a SAT. Provide more proactive encouragement (detailed	Ongoing	Deputy Vice Chancellor Access and Lifelong Learning and Vice Chancellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Schools have a date for establishing a self-assessment team by 2022

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			within relevant sections in other actions) for Schools with the highest gender imbalance, which do not currently have an Athena SAT established.			
	1.20	Hold University E&D pledges event for Schools to make three pledges for advancing E&D, one of which must be gender-specific.	<p>Organise University-wide E&D 'pledge' events. All Schools invited, hosted by the Vice Chancellor with relevant speakers.</p> <p>Schools asked to pledge to three specific actions, one of which must be gender-specific.</p> <p>Event to take place after main HR policy reviews have been completed, so these can also be communicated at the event.</p>	Autumn 2020	Head of External Relations	All Schools have at least one gender-specific pledge, which is published on the E&D web pages.
Objective 2: Continue to embed transparency into university policies, practices and committees, paying particular notice of identified trends and issues						
In STEMM we consistently have more women employed as researchers than as lecturers	2.1	Alert STEMM Schools and faculties of the lower proportion of women lecturers than researchers and take local action.	<p>Faculty E&D committees receive data</p> <p>Discussed as an item at E&D Committee meetings and actions formulated for tackling.</p> <p>Head of E&D to support their thinking and suggest appropriate action.</p>	Autumn 2019 onwards.	Deans of faculty	The 8% drop found in 2017/18 reduced to below 5% by 2022, and below 3% by 2025.

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In AHSSBL we still have a drop between Lecturer and Senior Lecturer.	2.2	Monitor the pipeline in AHSSBL faculties between Lecturer and Senior Lecturer and ensure gaps do not widen.	Annual monitoring through data reports to the SAT	Annually over the next four years.	SAT	The gap does not widen, or if it does, then appropriate actions are developed and implemented.
There is a persistent leak in the pipeline for women in STEM at Principal Lecturer level.	2.3	Alert STEM Schools and faculties of the lower proportion of women Principal lecturers and take local action.	Faculty E&D committees sent data Discussed as an item at E&D Committee meetings and actions formulated for tackling. Head of E&D to support their thinking and suggest appropriate action.	Autumn 2019 onwards.	Deans of Faculty	The 8% drop found in 2017/18 reduced to below 5% by 2022, and below 3% by 2025.
The Recruitment and selection policies are being updated and published in April 2019. We are confident that the policies and processes reflect sector good practice, but there needs to be more supporting information, advice and guidance to support managers and those involved in recruitment and selection.	2.4	Produce 'how to' guides, workshops and checklists and IAG for recruitment and selection	IAG produced, including: - How to write inclusive job and person specifications - Ensuring criteria are essential - ensuring gender neutral language is used - advice on how to give feedback to unsuccessful internal applicants - Inclusion of flexible working statements - inclusion of positive action statements where there is an underrepresentation of men or women.	Summer 2019, ready to launch in Autumn 2019	Director of Human Resources	-Staff have easy access to good quality IAG - improved implementation of policies and greater consistency across the university Vacancies are advertised as open to flexible working, unless they legitimately cannot be and HR are aware of the proportion which are not advertised this way.

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			HR to monitor consistency and implementation of the policy.			
While the University tries to minimise the use of Visiting Lecturers, they are used, and form part of our workforce. We need to ensure we understand their experiences and views of the University.	2.5	Survey Visiting Lecturers to better understand their experiences of the University and act on the findings.	Online survey developed and piloted with small sample. Survey sent to all Visiting Lecturers who have taught at the University in the previous 12 months. Results analysed and any relevant actions developed. Depending on responses, consider follow-up survey after two years (Summer 2022).	Summer 2020	Director of Human Resources	Repeated attempts to engage VLs with surveys have proven unsuccessful. Action abandoned in favour of monitoring feedback from VLs.
There is already a one day face-to-face recruitment, selection and interviewing workshop for the Chairs of recruitment and selection panels. It would be beneficial for everyone involved in the process to undertake the training.	2.6	Roll-out mandatory face-to-face recruitment and selection training in two phases to manage the resource implications. Initially the training will continue to be for Chairs, and then for all panellists.	Continue to roll out the mandatory recruitment and selection training for Chairs of recruitment panels. Extend training to everyone who sits on recruitment panels, emphasising the potential for bias and how to ensure transparency and evidence-based decision making.	Training to continue for Chairs, and then phased introduction for everyone else from Autumn 2020 to manage resource implications	Director of Human Resources	- Change in staff survey results with an increase from 79% to 89% of staff agreeing that the University undertakes fair and transparent recruitment and selection by 2023 - Those involved in recruitment panels are confident and motivated to ensure transparency in recruitment and selection. Implementing the training sets a tone and environment for embedding equality and

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						diversity across recruitment and selection - we start seeing even proportions of men and women progressing through our recruitment process.
	2.7	Explore a coaching and observation type process for Chairs of panels to upskill individuals and share good practice.	Explore a coaching / observation type process, or similar, for Chairs of Panels who would, in turn, become the coaches of other panel members. This would ensure that knowledge and skills are kept fresh through a method of delivery which is individual to the staff member. The method would take into consideration workload and potential fatigue with training.	Autumn 2020 onwards	Director of Human Resources	Abandoned -Instead Updated Recruitment and Selection training for all staff involved in recruitment.
Currently it is recommended good practice across the University that Recruitment panels should be gender balanced, but it is not mandatory, and it is unclear how often exceptions are made. The policy needs to be strengthened, monitored and enforced.	2.8	It will become mandatory to consider diversity in the round when convening a recruitment panel.	New requirement built into recruitment workshops, training and how-to guides and communicated through management briefings and faculty E&D committees	Summer 2019 onwards	Director of Human Resources and Heads of School	- The University knows how many recruitment panels have taken place and can guarantee that they were all gender balanced (and ethnically diverse wherever possible).
	2.9	Recruitment panels will not be allowed to proceed if they are 100% one gender, and panels will be encouraged to aim for more balance. Ethnic diversity should also be considered with greater requirements being	Mechanisms built in to ensure this is implemented consistently across the University: School E&D committees to report on diversity of interview panels with School and Faculty	Spring 2021 onwards	Director of Human Resources and REC SAT	

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		developed as part of the University REC submission	Managers keeping records. HR team to also do spot checks on interview panel composition. Ethnic diversity to become a more explicit requirement, but infrastructure currently doesn't support this. REC application to consider this, perhaps with the introduction of Fair Recruitment Specialists.			
Spike in staff leaving in 2017/18	2.10	Monitor leavers' data to ensure 2017/18 data is a blip due to VL, and not a trend.	Annual monitoring through data reports to the SAT	Annually over the next four years.	SAT	Leavers' data monitored and any ongoing gender-specific trends are identified and addressed.
Bias is shown to have an impact on shortlisting and various studies have highlighted the impact of gender and ethnicity on how applications are perceived. The process should be anonymised as far as possible.	2.11	Evaluate anonymous shortlisting pilot and roll out more widely.	Pilot to be reviewed and issues ironed out (for example whether to include academic staff and how to manage that). Anonymous shortlisting to be rolled out formally across the University.	Evaluation in Summer 2019, full roll out in Summer 2020	Director of Human Resources	Reduction in potential bias towards applicants in the first stage of the recruitment process - Sets a tone and environment of transparency and evidence-based decision making - Increase from 79% to 89% in staff survey of staff agreeing that the university is committed to fair and transparent recruitment and selection When analysed by protected characteristic, even proportions of staff

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						progressing through the recruitment process.
The University does not use head-hunters very often, but where we do we should be ensuring they are doing everything we expect them to do to consider equality and diversity.	2.12	Embed equality and diversity into the contracts and discourse we have with head-hunters.	Ascertain what good practice is in this area and consult with other Universities. Embed the results into our contracts and discuss the changes with the head-hunters we use.	Summer-Autumn 2019	Head of E&D and Director of Human Resources	- Where head-hunters are used, they produce diverse shortlists of viable candidates.
A member of OVC attends the face to face induction for new starters, which is a great opportunity to ensure E&D is consistently mentioned by senior leaders. This emphasises the importance of E&D at the university, which is positive for the new starter, but also sets a standard which we expect all staff to meet.	2.13	Offices of the Vice Chancellor (OVC) members to consistently mention E&D in their briefing to new staff at the face-to-face induction sessions (in addition to the regular E&D session).	Suggested content and wording drafted and circulated to OVC VC to highlight the expectation that E&D is specifically mentioned by senior managers in their induction presentation.	Summer 2019	Head of Organisational Development	New staff can see how important E&D is to the University OVC set the tone and environment for E&D at induction
We need to reduce the potential for bias	2.14	Ensure promotions panels are given training which includes: 1).equality, diversity and			Director of Human	- Panellists will have up to date information on bias reduction and strategies

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<p>in the promotions process, ensure that all staff are proactively encouraged and supported in applying for promotion, and that all staff have faith in the process. We also need to ensure that staff with caring and parental responsibilities (and ultimately, all staff) believe, and can, maintain a work-life balance working at a higher grade (which links to our actions on flexible working and core hours).</p>	2.15	<p>inclusion, including how to ensure processes are evidence-based and free of bias.2). Information on mitigating circumstances in promotions and how to consider these within the process (for example, part-time working, periods of parental leave, sickness absence etc.)</p>	<p>Training to be provided to all promotion's panellists by E&D team, ahead of the next promotions round, and in advance of future promotions rounds.</p>	<p>June - September 2019</p>	<p>Resources/ Head of Organisational Development</p>	<p>for running transparent, evidence- based promotions processes, as evidenced through the evaluation of the training- Panellists will be confident in how to manage applications from people who have mitigating circumstances which have impacted their outputs, which will be measured through the evaluation of the training and through analysis of promotions outcomes- Applicants will be more confident in the transparency and equity of the promotions process, as evidenced through the staff survey</p>
	2.16		<p>Evaluate training and tweak for future rounds to ensure it is as relevant as possible for participants.</p>	<p>September - December 2019</p>		
	2.17	<p>Provide an overview to each Dean of the gender and ethnic diversity (and intersection of the two) of eligible staff for promotions within their area to highlight the likely diversity of the pool of applicants applying for promotion</p>	<p>A data overview to be presented to each Dean, along with suggestions of how to ensure everyone who is ready applies for promotion and reducing the possibility of some staff being more encouraged than others. - This will be followed-up by an overview of the gender and ethnic</p>	<p>Jun-19</p>	<p>Head of E&D</p>	<p>- Deans to become more aware of diversity gaps in those staff applying for promotion compared to staff eligible for promotion, leading to increasing interventions at faculty level, while we wait for individual Schools to apply for Athena SWAN. - Increase in staff</p>

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	2.18		<p>diversity of staff who applied and were successful.</p> <p>Data overview to also be provided to Faculty E&D committees so they are able to discuss and support the Dean in devising strategies for equitable promotions applications.</p>			satisfaction with the promotions process as evidenced through the staff survey
	2.19		<p>OVC to review promotions data after each round and reflect on differentials in diversity of those applying across the institution and consider follow-up actions for Deans and faculties.</p>	Jan-20	Director of HR	
	2.20		<p>Provide increasing support and ideas for Deans in targeting interventions at promotions applicants as understanding of the issues increase</p>	Sep - 19	Director of HR	
	2.21	<p>Improve the existing guidance to applicants under the conferment process by including examples of evidence which can be submitted as part of their application.</p>	<p>Currently, the criterion against each route is specified, but applicants (particularly those pursuing learning and teaching or knowledge exchange) can often be unsure about how they evidence their successes. The improved guidance will address this and will</p>	Sep-19	Director of Human Resources	<p>- All staff are aware of the workshops and where to seek assistance and guidance on the promotions process- The University has a better understanding of the level of support PIs/line managers are providing on applying for promotions so future support and</p>

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			additionally include a helpful checklist to further support any applicants.			accountability can be put in place.- Staff have a greater level of satisfaction with the support provided for promotions within the University, as evidenced through the workshop evaluation and the staff survey.- Eradicate the 8% difference between men and women reporting they had been encouraged to apply for promotion by 2023- an increase in staff satisfactions with the promotions process- potentially a better long-term relationship between unsuccessful promotions applicants and their PI/line manager (although this will be difficult to measure).
	2.22	Run a series of promotions workshops for potential applicants.	Advertise widely so all staff will be aware, and ensure communications and workshops mention recent improvements to process and highlight mitigating circumstances in the promotions process.	May 2019 and annually	Director of Human Resources	
	2.23		Also use these workshops to start collecting names of staff interested in joining the promotions Community of Practice (all participants will be asked if they would like to be added to a mailing list.	May 2019	Director of Human Resources	Not feasible to do so
	2.24		Evaluate the workshops to build and improve on them in future promotions rounds, and to explore further how much support workshop participants are receiving	May 2019	Director of Human Resources	

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			from their PIs/line managers.			
	2.25	Run a series of panel events/sessions to complement the workshops	A Reader/Associate Professors Panel – a 60-90 min session where people currently in the role provide a brief overview of what the role is about and what they did to get there. This will also allow people to ask questions about the roles. Readership/Associate Professorship to Professor, which has the same format as the above but focus on the difference between the roles and what people did to make transitions between the roles. An action learning set for female Readers who are looking to progress to Professor, for example, providing a session with a developmental focus and helps Chairs think about their continued development, along with some mentoring and coaching skills development to help the nurture their research groups. These events will be delivered by existing Professors (ensuring a E&D balance) and supported by the Research Hub.	June-July 2019	Director of Human Resources	

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	2.26	Through the staff mentoring network, Aluminate, offer and promote mentoring specific to developing and supporting female academic staff who may be looking to apply for promotion, by being matched with mentors who are either experienced in being successfully conferred or with other appropriate skills and knowledge.		May-19	Director of Human Resources	
	2.27	With involvement from 2019 promotions applicants, ascertain how the university can better brief PIs and line managers on how to support staff applying for promotion. For example, updates at key milestones, or reminders with ideas of how they can support their staff. In addition to support during the process, this will also include support after the process where an applicant is unsuccessful, to ensure their disappointment is acknowledged and managed, and full constructive feedback is provided and incorporated into development plans.		Consult with applicants in Spring 2020 and implement actions in Summer 2020, and annually thereafter	Director of Human Resources	
Linked to action 43, research leaders need to ensure they provide feedback and support to junior colleagues to help them develop and progress.	2.28	Provide training to Professors and Readers so that they are better able to fulfil their role as research leaders by providing development opportunities or formative feedback to their junior colleagues. This training to include a specific section on the need to avoid Unconscious Bias when choosing research partners or mentees.		By Autumn 2019	Dean of Research and Head of Organisational Development	Gender parity in the % of staff who report being encouraged to apply for promotion. At least 40% of staff submitted to REF2021 are women.
A new appraisal process has been launched recently, and it will be important to evaluate its impact.	2.29	Evaluate the impact of the new Performance, Development and Review Policy	Use the staff survey to collect staff feedback on the new policy. Monitor completion rates Audit the information returned to ascertain the quality of engagement	Annually over the next four years.	Director of Human Resources	Currently 54% of women and 57% of men find the appraisal process useful (according to the staff survey 2018). We want this to increase to 75% by 2023, with no significant gender difference in response.

Objective 3: Create a vibrant university environment that supports the development and progression of all staff, paying particular attention to known issues and trends						
The staff survey highlights that while some staff are able to work flexibly, and find it a major benefit of their employment, it is inconsistent and dependent upon managers, teams and Schools.	3.1	Develop and launch a Wolverhampton email Charter setting out expectations of email etiquette, trying to send emails only during regular working hours, and ensuring any emails sent outside those hours are caveated that there is no expectation to reply until regular working hours, unless previously agreed, or in very exceptional circumstances.		Developed in Summer 2019 and launched in September 2019	Director of Human Resources	- Begin instilling a culture of work-life balance without the expectation of long hours and 'always being available'.
Additionally, the University has a lower rate of job applicants from women than men. It is hoped that improving flexible working policies, and ensuring they are communicated on the external-facing website could increase applications from women.	3.2	Review flexible working policy to ensure it is current, reflects best practice and is fit for purpose.	- Run full staff consultation on policy, analysing the results of consultation by gender and other protected characteristics (and intersectional where possible) and paying particular attention to differences between academics and PSS.- Ensure core hours are a fundamental part of the consultation- Conduct EIA on the updated policy- Publish updated policy	May - October 2019	Director of Human Resources	Measure through staff survey results annually and measure any difference in response rate.
	3.3	Review flexible working requests process to identify any trends and issues that exist, and any areas of the University with high levels of dissatisfaction.		September - November 2020 for review,	Director of Human Resources	

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		Consider adapting the process depending on the findings, for example HR automatically reviewing any request which is being turned down to ensure the decision is justified. But this will depend on volume and staff resourcing.		actions to be put in place in Spring 2021.		
	3.4	Create managers' toolkit on how to handle flexible working requests and how to manage staff remotely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve managers and staff to ensure toolkit covers areas of concern and confusion. - Pilot toolkit and update following feedback monitor flexible working requests 	February - July 2020	Director of Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Currently 75% of women and 79% of men report that their manager is supportive of flexible working. We want to increase this to 85% by 2023 and 100% by 2025. -Improved transparency and consistency in flexible working across the institution -Improved responses to flexible working questions in the Staff Survey. -Possibly, improved maternity return rates for PSS -Increased job applications from women
	3.5	As part of the consultation process, disseminate mass communications plan across the university, highlighting the flexible working policy, highlighting case studies and advocating for flexible approaches to working wherever possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use existing flexible working case studies and develop new ones, which include senior managers, PSS and academics- Develop communications campaign to disseminate all new resources and processes to ensure all internal staff know what is possible, how to request it, and how to appeal if they feel they are being unfairly blocked- Ensure line managers feel supported in managing flexible staff and teams- Ensure external applicants can see key information on flexible working so they understand what is possible within the university 		Director of External Relations	

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<p>The University has contractual maternity pay and parental leave entitlement in addition to statutory requirements, but the supporting information, advice and guidance needs to be improved. Currently the staff survey, maternity return rates for PSS, and the SAT's own observations suggest more is needed.</p>	3.6	<p>Consult with other universities and staff internally to identify best practice and produce checklists and supporting documentation on parental leave which is positive and supportive</p>	<p>- Clear policy outlining all forms of support available (e.g. financial support, time off for appointments etc...)- Checklist for managers to proactively support staff through their pregnancy, period of leave and return to work- checklist for staff going on parental leave setting out what is available, what they need to do and advice and guidance on maximising KIT days, staying in touch, changing working patterns on return to work, breastfeeding rooms etc...</p>	<p>Feb-July 2020 (To be tied in with the review of flexible working)</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p>	<p>- Improved staff satisfaction in staff survey with support for those on parental leave and returning to work following parental leave- improved maternity return rates for PSS- increased confidence for managers in supporting staff through pregnancy and maternity and assisting staff in maximising career opportunities while on leave.</p>
	3.7	<p>Improve the use of KIT days and increase support for academics returning from maternity leave.</p>	<p>Introduce a fund for conference attendance for those on maternity leave, along with explicit advice on using KIT days to maintain academic profile.</p> <p>Explore the possibility of reduced administrative loads for staff returning from maternity leave.</p>	<p>Feb-July 2020</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p>	<p>Improved staff satisfaction and retention rates.</p>
	3.8	<p>Complete and implement results of a feasibility study into breastfeeding rooms on all three campuses.</p>		<p>By Autumn 2020</p>	<p>University Secretary</p>	<p>Breastfeeding rooms on all three campuses.</p>
<p>The University has had feedback from staff on</p>	3.9	<p>Map out different options for childcare support, including increased provision in the University nursery and the possibility of securing discounts with other local nurseries for university staff and consult with relevant staff on their preferred options.</p>		<p>Sept - December 2020 for consultation, implement</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p>	<p>Upon further investigation it is believed that there is no scope for an increased</p>

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<p>childcare provision, but the feedback is mixed, with staff having different preferences for what childcare support they would most like the university to provide. This is exacerbated by having three separate campuses, making central nursery provision more difficult for some staff.</p>			<p>changes in Spring 2021</p>		<p>childcare option. This action has therefore been closed</p>
<p>The University is not retaining PSS maternity returners as well as academics. There are many potential reasons for this, but we need better data to know more. The action above should help, but we also need to collect more information on</p>	<p>3.10</p>	<p>Update exit interview questions to explore why people may leave after maternity leave. HR to specifically ask any woman who resigns within a year of returning from maternity leave whether there is anything the university could do to enable them to stay.</p>	<p>Jul-20</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p>	<p>- A better understanding of why PSS are less likely to stay at the University following maternity leave- Actions developed and put in place to encourage more PSS to stay at the university following maternity leave.</p>

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this particular group.						
<p>To embed gender equality into the fabric of the University, there needs to be an ongoing series of events and communications, but these need to have a clear aim.</p> <p>List to be updated as and when events are evaluated and new ideas (with clear aims) are identified.</p>	3.11	<p>Use discipline-specific gender events to start conversations and build momentum in Schools which do not currently have an Athena self-assessment team, starting with Schools with the greatest Gender imbalance.</p>	<p>- Explore the idea of another film screening, following the success of the Hidden Lives screening, followed by a panel debate to coincide with Black History Month and Ada Lovelace Day. Open up to the whole University.</p>	Oct 2019	Head of E&D and Director of External Relations	<p>- Schools begin to debate gender-specific issues</p> <p>- Head of School are seen to be involved in gender-specific events, helping to set a culture of E&D</p> <p>- Senior Management engagement with events may help to encourage other staff to get involved.</p>
	3.12	<p>- Ensure Heads of School are able to attend event and fulfil any 'hosting' or Chairing role</p>	<p>- Explore current gender debates (and intersectional gender debates) within the field of Health and organise a University-wide event, hosted within the School.</p>	Dec-19		
	3.13		<p>- Explore the idea of a debate on the merits of the 'W series' in motor racing and the pros and cons of a women-only league. Secure relevant external speaker, open event up to the University and host within the School of Engineering.</p>	Feb-20		
	3.14		<p>- Explore the idea of a conference or event on the impact of gender in artificial intelligence. Secure relevant external speaker, open event up to the University and host within the School of Computing and Mathematics</p>	Apr-20		

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	3.15		- Explore current gender debates (and intersectional gender debates) within the field of Architecture and organise a University-wide event, hosted within the School.	Jul-20		
	3.16		- Explore current gender debates (and intersectional gender debates) within the field of Community and Society and organise a University-wide event, hosted within the School.	Sept/Oct 20		
Feedback from other universities suggests that people can struggle with the idea of intersectionality and how to apply it within the Athena framework.	3.17	Run events and communications specifically related to intersectionality and how to embed intersectionality into School-level applications	Include relevant good practice on intersectionality in the Athena SWAN newsletter, once School level SATs have got going and are more independent.	Jun-20	Head of E&D	Schools feel confident in what is meant by intersectionality and how to take an intersectional approach in Athena SWAN. Intersectionality is embedded into Wolverhampton thinking on gender equality earlier rather than later.
	3.18		Run intersectionality workshops and lunch and learn sessions on intersectionality and how to consider it within Athena SWAN.	Jun-20	Head of E&D	
Conversations in the SAT meetings often came back to the need for proactive support and informal information, advice and guidance to succeed in promotion. This needs to come	3.19	Create a Community of Practice on progressing women's careers at the University of Wolverhampton, with specific attention paid to the heterogeneity of women and their different	Communities of Practice need to form and be run organically, but SAT members hoped it would be possible to: - Use the forthcoming promotions workshops to promote a Community of Practice and ask for anyone interested to get involved - proactively organise a meet up following the workshops whereby	May 2019 onwards	Organisational Development/ Dean of Research	-Provide an opportunity for women within the university to discuss their career development and progression. -Provide an opportunity for women to network

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from a variety of sources.		<p>experiences and needs.</p> <p>The group will have different members with different level of seniority and experience to share learning, experiences and support.</p>	<p>people can network and get to know each other and start forming ideas on how the group can run</p> <p>For members to take it in turn to run a meeting, so that the burden does not fall to one person, and is also able to operate independently, without formal central planning and organisation.</p>			
Feedback from Aurora participants highlights that the University could do more to support participants, enable participants to network with each other, and to target the opportunity at staff at the best point in their career.	3.20	Ensure staff are clear about the Aurora programme: what it is, who can apply, and which staff it is particularly targeting.	Create an annual Aurora calendar so staff are aware of key dates, when to apply, and when the sessions are likely to run. Ensure staff can apply directly, and if successful, that their line managers are made aware of the time the staff member should be given to participate fully in the programme.	Oct-19	Head of Organisational Development	<p>- Ensure the University is maximising its investment in Aurora and ensuring participants are able to continue their learning and development once the programme has finished.-</p> <p>Future Aurora survey will show increase in satisfaction with the university's management of Aurora.</p>
	3.21		Review the University Aurora Champion and ensure whoever has the role can commit time and enthusiasm to making the programme as successful as possible.	Jun – 19		
	3.22		- Run Aurora workshop in July 2019, making it clear the programme is for any woman up to SL level and equivalent in PSS. Have previous participants attend to explain what happens and what they got from the experience, and outline how the process is managed internally.	Jul – 19		
	3.23	Better support those	Provide more support to Aurora	Sep-19		

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	3.25	accepted onto Aurora. Support an internal Aurora Network and support the Network in running a relevant annual event.	participants in finding a mentor, and ensure mentors are given advice and guidance on how to mentor, and ideas for what to cover in the first session. Consider whether previous aurora participants would be willing to be mentors. re-run the Aurora survey in two years and compare results to see if issues have been addressed.	May – 21 Autumn 2019 onwards		
Feedback from Staff Network, and the Aurora survey suggests that other development programmes should be explored.	3.26	Explore and design a work shadowing programme for staff to gain insights into more senior roles, and potentially build informal sponsorship and mentoring relationships with the person they shadow.	Scoping exercise undertaken to understand how this is run in other Universities. Application process designed with clear selection criteria and transparency. Scheme launched and rolled out.	Scoping exercise in early 2020, with Scheme developed and launched by Autumn 2020	Head of Organisational Development	Work Shadowing Scheme launched with good participation rates and high rates of staff satisfaction. REVERSE MENTORING PROGRAMME REPLACED THIS ACTION AS WELL AS Women in wolves programme.
We have an older workforce who are likely to have different experiences and needs and face different gender	3.27	Consider further the intersection of gender and age and the implications for an older workforce.	SAT to discuss in Spring 2021 meeting to develop actions to roll out in 2021-2023	Spring 2021 SAT meeting	SAT	SMART actions developed to tackle age- specific gender inequalities and added to the action plan.

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inequalities.						
We need to better understand our central training offer, how it is used and how satisfied staff are with the offer.	3.28	Explore staff satisfaction with central training offer and implement actions based on the findings.	Review existing feedback on central courses and conduct follow-up survey with staff to ascertain their satisfaction with the course, ensuring specific consideration of part-time staff. Conduct survey with line managers to explore how satisfied they are with the central training offer in helping their staff to develop and progress.	Autumn 2020	Occupational Development	Improved engagement with central courses, improved feedback and better trained workforce.
Part-time staff have less time to network and build collaborations organically. Part-time staff are also less likely to be promoted.	3.29	Consider how the University's current research information system (Elements) can be used to progress gender equality, and specifically benefit part-time staff.	Promote Elements through the community of practice, promotions workshops, research grant support programmes, the Early Researcher Award Scheme and Faculty E&D committees so staff are aware of the potential benefits. Consider building a mechanism through Elements and online collaborative tools, for staff to advertise for collaborators - for example, through highlighting a funding opportunity or a research interest, and asking if other staff would like to be involved.	Promotion of Elements in Summer 2019. Additional functions explored in Spring 2021	Community of Practice and Dean of Research	Staff feedback suggests Elements has assisted them in academic collaborations.
E-Mentoring platform has recently been launched	3.30	Evaluate the e-Mentoring platform and identify any gender differences in engagement and satisfaction.	Produce data on uptake by gender and intersectionality data on uptake by gender and ethnicity. Address any differences identified.	Ongoing	Occupational Development	High satisfaction recorded through mentor and mentee feedback, and through the staff survey.
We are one of the few Universities	3.31	Communicate Employers for Carers through the Faculty E&D Committees, and through staff induction to maximise		Ongoing	Head of E&D	100% of staff are aware of Employers for Carers

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who have signed up to Employers for Carers and it is important all staff know about the service to maximise impact		staff awareness			
We could strengthen our reporting processes by providing informal advice and ways to report anonymously	3.32	Explore sector good practice in reporting tools, for example Report & Support, and look at mechanisms for staff to access informal advice and report incidents anonymously.	Summer 2020	Director of HR	Mechanisms are identified and dates planned for procurement and implementation.
We have more than double the number of women on CMT and Academic Board than men	3.33	Alert OVC to the gender skew on CMT and Academic Board to consider appointing more men in the future. Also consider whether women are being over-burdened with committee membership.	Summer 2019	Deputy Vice Chancellor Access and Lifelong Learning	Greater gender balance established on CMT and Academic Board.
The University has great links with the local community and is one of the main employers in the local area. We can use that link to maximise our gender equality impact in outreach activities and employment	3.34	Consider how gender equality can be further built into outreach work and bursaries, particularly in the five disciplines identified with the largest gender disparity. See if this can be linked with the events planned above - relevant events could be opened up to the public and/or outreach activities should specifically address gender stereotypes and occupational segregation. Programme of events planned for 2021	2021	Head of Access-Outreach/ Director of Recruitment and Partnerships	Debates about gender equality extend into the local community, and with local schools and colleges, impacting on the diversity of our UG in take.
	3.35	Self-assessment team to discuss and explore further the possibility of a work placement or graduate scheme for PSS to break down occupational segregation and give staff a		Self-assessment team	- Ideas around occupational segregation and professional services staff to begin in 2022, so they can be fully

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		work opportunity to experience different roles and careers which they might not otherwise consider.	2022		embedded into the next gender equality action plan in 2023, perhaps with a relevant scheme or programme having been fully developed.
Trans individuals can face severe discrimination, and many people know very little about their experiences.	3.36	Produce guidance and run workshops on gender-neutral pronouns	Summer 2020	Head of E&D	Positive feedback from events and increased staff awareness and sensitivity to gender-neutral pronouns
	3.37	Develop and roll-out allies training and operate on a voluntary basis. Develop a train the trainer toolkit so that a bank of allies' trainers is developed and can run sessions in response to demand. Provide stickers for participants to display in their work area, to highlight they are an ally and build a sense of belonging for trans staff and students.	Spring 2021	Head of E&D	Increased staff awareness and increased sense of belonging for trans staff.

2.2 Progress Report

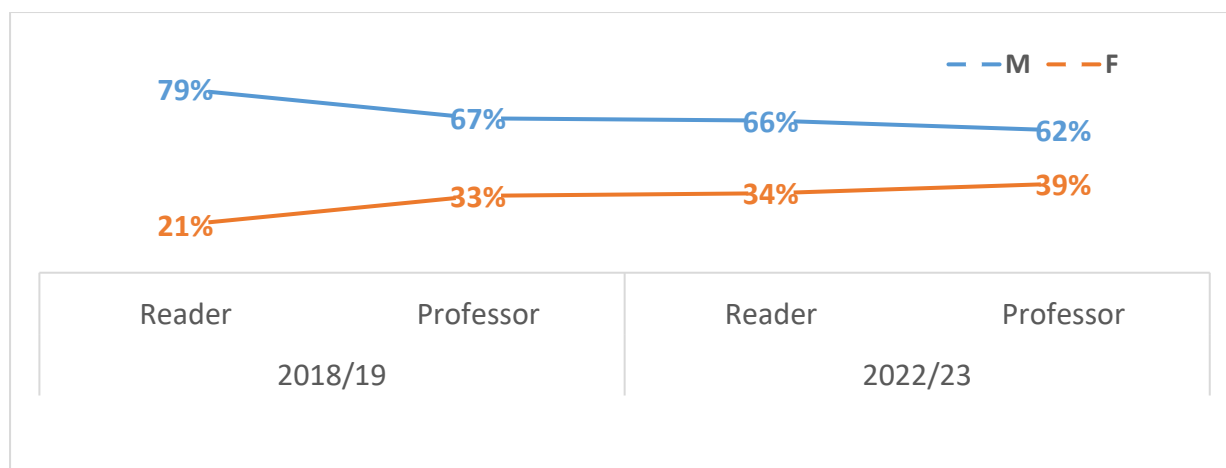
While significant progress has been made, we have encountered several challenges, as explained earlier. These include the lasting effects of COVID-19 and financial deficits causing recruitment freezes.

Figure 2.0: Progress in representation of female staff in senior academic roles:

	2018-19	2022 -23	Increase
Reader	21%	34%	↑ 13%
Professor	33%	39%	↑ 6%

The table above shows progress in increasing the percentage of female Readers and Professors since our last submission.

Disparities between percentages of male and female readers and professors:



The graph above shows that progress has been made, since our last application in reducing the percentage gaps between male and female Readers and Professors. However, this is still disproportionate to the overall female academic staff at the University.

Below is a summary of key actions taken, aligned with the objectives from the previous submission, with references to Action Plan numbers in the RAG-rated plan.

Objective 1: Embed Athena Swan into the systems and culture of the University, providing support to Schools in applying for their own awards, and creating accountability systems for advancing actions:

Embedding Athena Swan (AP Ref:1.6)

The establishment of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committees, one for each of the three faculties and one for the Professional Services Group (PSG), provides a solid framework for embedding Athena Swan principles throughout the University. This approach has enabled, tailored and targeted interventions to address the unique challenges and opportunities that staff and students have within different academic and professional disciplines, to achieving gender equality.

To ensure that EDI considerations are embedded into the strategic planning processes, a section on EDI (including gender equality and Athena Swan actions) has been integrated into the workforce plans for each faculty and directorate.

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Supporting Individual Schools: (AP Ref:1.8 – 1.20):

The University's central EDI team put in place a series of targeted measures to support schools in their efforts to achieve Athena Swan accreditation and progress gender equality initiatives. These steps have been critical in creating a supportive environment for schools, particularly as they navigate challenges arising from structural changes within the university. In each faculty there is an Athena Swan lead.

Examples of support include:

- ***Training and Capacity Building:***

In March 2022, the central EDI team organised comprehensive training for all AS school leads, delivered by an external consultant. This initiative provided them with the knowledge and tools needed to prepare strong submissions. The training focused on understanding AS principles, the submission process, and strategies for embedding gender equality in institutional practices.

- ***Access to Resources:***

Two instructional videos were developed, providing clear guidance on Athena SWAN principles and the submission process. These videos are accessible via the staff intranet and within the Teams groups for AS leads. By offering these resources online, staff members have flexible, ongoing access to essential materials that can assist in their AS submission efforts.

While two Schools have successfully achieved Bronze awards, the University faced challenges in meeting its broader submission targets due to structural changes and staff departures. Moving forward, a review of submission plans and additional support for schools is included in the action plan to ensure continued progress in embedding gender equality with several successful school submissions and a University Silver Athena Swan accreditation in 2030.

Governance and Accountability (AP Ref: 1.2):

As highlighted in section 1, following the attainment of the Athena SWAN Bronze Award, the University's Athena Swan SAT evolved into the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) Delivery Group. This group met quarterly to ensure ongoing momentum.

A Microsoft Teams channel served as the primary communication hub for all GEAP-related activities. It functioned as a repository for meeting minutes, action logs, agendas, and the live version of the Athena Swan Action Plan. The Teams channel facilitated both formal updates and informal communications, allowing for continuous collaboration and information sharing among members. The Secretariat was provided by the EDI team.

Through its inclusive membership, structured processes, and integration into university governance, the group played a central role in ensuring that the University remained on track to meet its gender equality goals. The GEAP Delivery Group not only monitored and supported progress but also identified areas requiring further intervention, ensuring gender equality remains a priority within the university's broader EDI strategy.

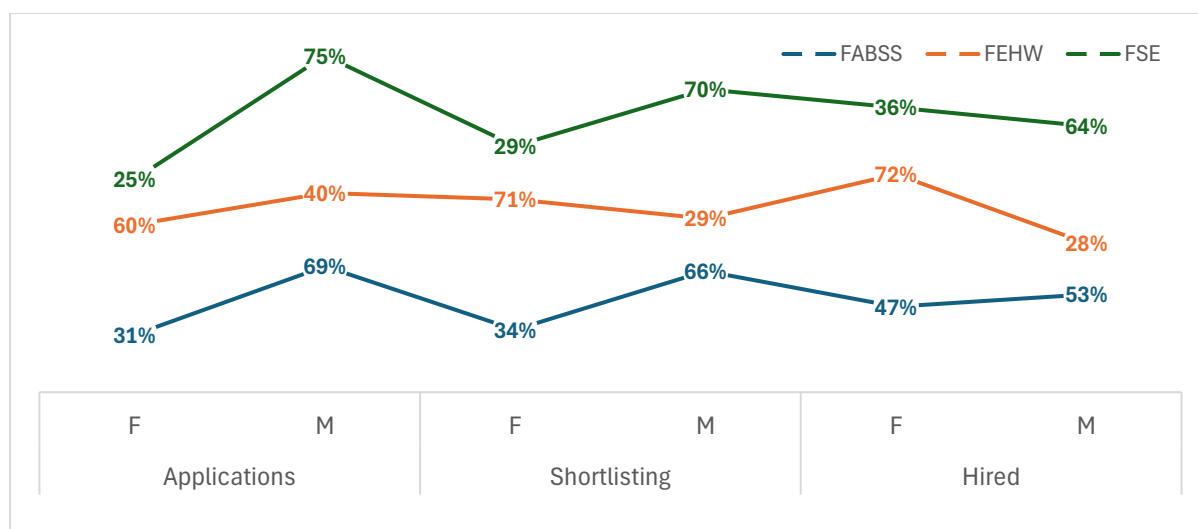
Objective 2: Continue to embed transparency into university policies, practices and committees, paying particular notice of identified trends and issues.

Recruitment and Selection Policy Enhancements (AP Ref: 2.4, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11):

Despite more male applicants for academic roles within FABSS and FSE, data suggests a favourable recruitment trend for female applicants. With women advancing through the recruitment stages at a higher rate than their male counterparts relative to their initial application. This trend may reflect that recruitment processes seem to be fostering a positive environment for female candidates, suggesting that measures/action implemented (reference to action in title above) and put in place are working as intended, potentially promoting gender equity in hiring.

Figure 2.2:

	Applications		Shortlisting		Hired	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
2022-2023	39%	61%	50%	50%	59%	41%
FABSS	31%	69%	34%	66%	47%	53%
FEHW	60%	40%	71%	29%	72%	28%
FSE	25%	75%	29%	70%	36%	64%



The recruitment data has experienced fluctuations in recent years, primarily influenced by the pandemic and recruitment freezes. These disruptions have affected hiring across the board, especially for academic roles. It's important to acknowledge that these factors may have created temporary setbacks, but the overall trends indicate resilience and progress in terms of gender diversity.

Academic promotions- Conferment policy (AP Ref: 2.14 – 2.27):

The University's conferment process recognises excellence in research, teaching, and knowledge exchange, with roles for Reader, Associate Professor, and Professor. Updated guidance now includes examples of evidence required, based on staff feedback.

All members of the Conferment panel must have completed the mandatory training on unconscious bias and diversity in higher education.

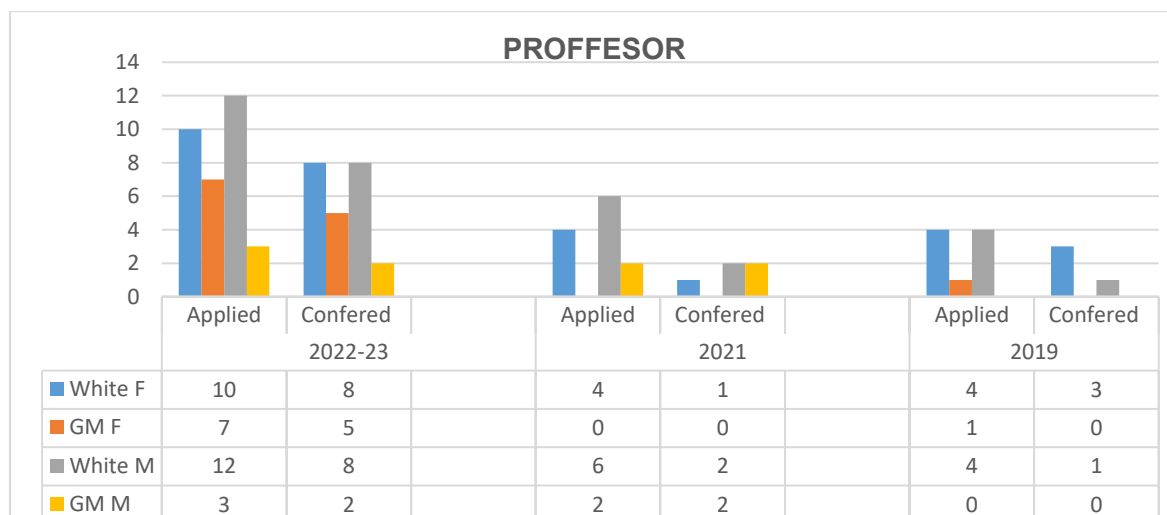
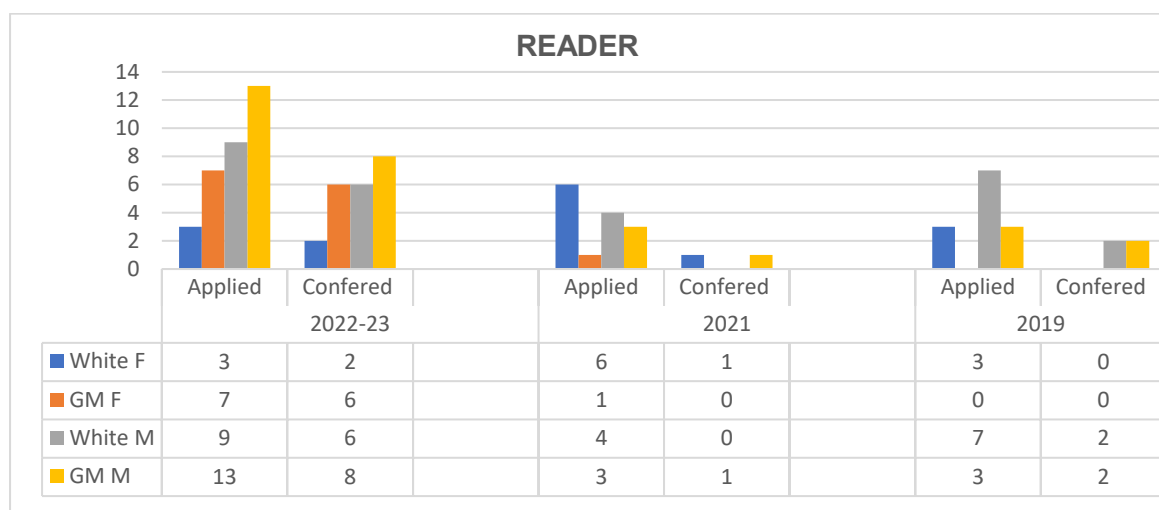
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A positive action statement encourages applications from female and global majority staff to address underrepresentation. Workshops, co-hosted with diversity networks, featured successful female staff sharing experiences to inspire applicants.

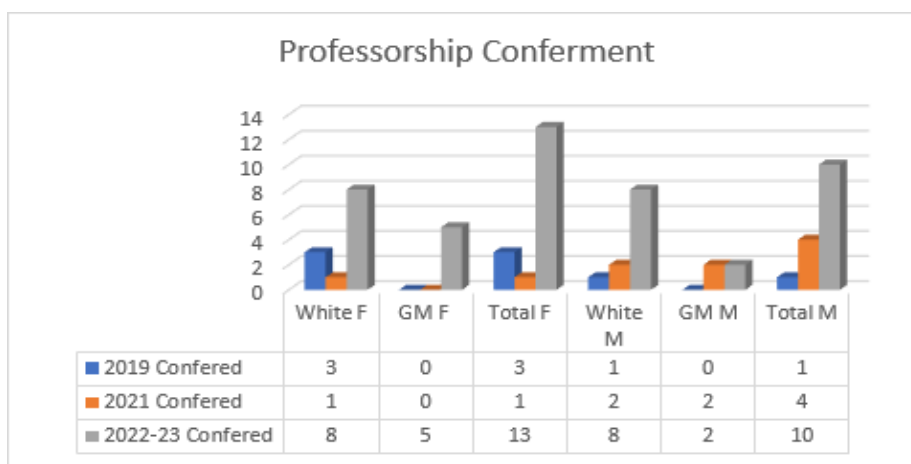
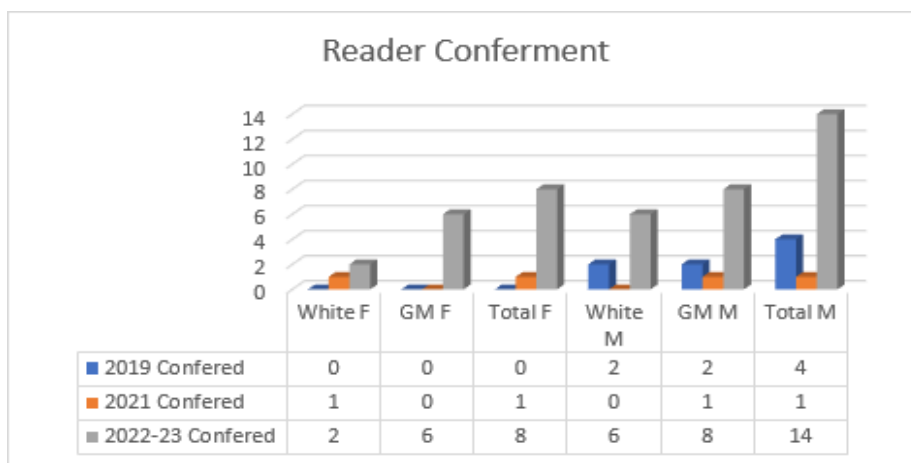
Applicants may also disclose "individual circumstances" via a form assessed by the Individual Circumstances Panel, which includes the Associate Director for EDI. The panel's recommendations help guide faculty and conferment panel decisions. An example of mitigating circumstances is:

"A member of staff who has taken maternity or shared parental leave may have a 'gap' in outputs or an impact on the quantity of activity undertaken (e.g. doctoral supervisions)".

Figures 2.1- Data shows the following trends:



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The increase in female applications and successful conferment suggests that the measures, highlighted earlier have had an impact on removing barriers and improving equity.

Research Excellence Framework (REF) (AP Ref: 2.28):

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK universities and higher education colleges. Gender remains a significant area for concern as we submitted fewer female staff than male staff to REF 2008 and REF 2014, and the proportion submitted was out of line with the gender balance across the academic staff. We recognised that the gender disparity is not acceptable and made improving this an institutional priority. We therefore put in train the following key actions:

- *All Faculties (and their associated Research Centres) and all cross-faculty Research Institutes completed Gender Equality Action Plans (GEAPs) to mainstream gender equality and address intersectionality*
- *QR allocations and periodic internal Research Investment Funding (RIF) to faculties and institutes is dependent on completion and progress with GEAPs*
- *RIF investment and the University's Early Research Award Scheme (ERAS) for early career researchers is monitored for gender impact*

The result of the above and other actions has seen the proportion of female academic staff submitted to REF2021 increase, from 27% in 2014 to 40% in 2021.

Practices and Policies:

Quote from staff survey: I believe the University has made positive strides in promoting gender and race equality, particularly through its inclusive policies and support networks. However, there's always room for improvement, especially in increasing diverse representation in senior positions and ensuring equal opportunities for all staff and students.

Flexible Working Policy (AP Ref: 3.2 -3.6):

This policy has been reviewed and updated to align with changes in legislation. To support both managers and staff in navigating this policy, a "Flexible Working Toolkit" has been developed. The updated action plan also includes specific measures for monitoring and evaluating the policy and the toolkit's effectiveness. According to the staff cultural survey, 72% of female and 70% male staff responded positively to the question regarding whether their departments support flexible working, indicating strong support for this policy.

Objective 3: Create a vibrant university environment that supports the development and progression of all staff, paying particular attention to known issues and trends.

Staff development and support

The Aurora Women's Leadership Programme (AP Ref: 3.20-3.25) is an initiative run by Advance HE. The funding of places on the programme is a demonstration of our commitment to creating a supportive, empowering environment for female staff that can thrive, build networks and advance their careers. Funding for places has increased from two places in 2020 to nine in 2023. From an intersectional perspective, In the last cohort we had an equal number of global majority and white female successful applicants.

Feedback from the 2023 cohort fed stated they had benefited from the programme in terms of:

- Confidence in speaking out and sharing their ideas, believing they can have a positive influence on other women and the future direction of WLV.
- Wider industry knowledge having worked with women from other UK universities.
- The knowledge shared by speakers ignited their passion for their roles
- Desire to seek coaching beyond the programme mentors to help develop their careers internally.

At the end of 2023 we secured executive leadership support, with the Dean for the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences, as the Aurora Champion. We continue to build on feedback so lessons learned can be applied to the process for future intakes.

Due to the substantial number of applicants to Aurora in 2023 who we were unable to fund, or were not yet ready for a place, we ran a Women of Wolves (WoW) programme, in partnership with the Women's staff network. This programme included module delivery and project work. The purpose of this inhouse programme was to increase the female talent pipeline.

Modules completed included:

- Networking,
- Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence
- Learning and Mental agility

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- Embracing Change
- Motivation and owning your own development,
- Effective Leadership and Overcoming Bias.

A Graduation event took place in December 2023, where the ten staff that completed the programme presented their projects.

The 2023 WoW cohort will be meeting every three months for action learning sets to continue to support each other. At least two have applied for further leadership programmes already. This cohort have honorary membership of the Aurora Alumni at WLV, securing access to a wealth of knowledge and experience as well as sharing their own back.

Examples of positive feedback:

- *“I did not believe I could do this and complete a project; I am so pleased to have completed this and to have shared my project with my team and can now implement it.”*
- *“The programme helped me meet new people and work through my fear of speaking out in groups, feedback from my manager shows they have noticed a difference in me.”*
- *“I am fully of enthusiasm now and feel better skilled to step up into my line manager role and look forward to more leadership development.”*

A reverse mentoring pilot programme: The University launched a reverse mentoring pilot as part of its Race Equality Charter action plan, focusing on supporting global majority staff and students. Reverse mentoring pairs senior leaders with junior staff, often from underrepresented groups, flipping traditional mentoring dynamics to empower marginalised voices.

The pilot was inclusive, with over 80% of mentors and 56% of mentees being female, promoting both racial and gender diversity. Senior leaders, including the VC and Deans, participated, demonstrating strong support.

Following its success, the programme was integrated into staff development and expanded in 2024 to include all protected characteristics, supported by diversity networks

Quotes included in the evaluation report for the pilot mentoring programme:

Mentor	Mentee
I promoted awareness of equality and diversity to my mentee by challenging, educating and sharing my lived experiences as a black woman, I believe.	To consider that my perspective on a situation is not the only one, and to think more carefully about how my actions may be interpreted and experienced by others.

Creating an Inclusive and Safe Working Environment at Wolverhampton University

Quote from staff survey: It great to see such a commitment to all equality, the University has certainly evolved to becoming a great ambassador in these areas over the years, making everyone feel welcome. We cannot take this for granted, we all need to keep making sure everyone feels welcome.

In September 2019, Wolverhampton University launched its Email Charter (AP Ref: 3.1) to respect personal time and reduce stress, particularly during remote work due to the pandemic. This initiative supports a balanced work-life culture and well-being, promoting personal boundaries in the modern workplace.

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In May 2021, the university introduced an Incident Reporting Tool (AP Ref: 3.32) to improve reporting and management of harassment and discrimination. The tool allows anonymous reporting and enforces a zero-tolerance policy. Since its launch, 140 incidents were reported, with 80% resolved, and the rest under further review. Regular tracking and communication ensure its effectiveness. The incident reporting tool's impact is shown by the staff cultural survey, where 75% of female and 77% of male staff know how to report bullying or harassment.

The Women's Staff Network (AP Ref: 3.19) has grown its membership since its inception, offering a supportive community for staff to share experiences and discuss key issues. Monthly meetings provide a space for staff to feel heard and motivated. In March 2024, the WSN hosted its first International Women's Day conference, celebrating women's achievements and addressing gender inequalities. The network also raises awareness of menopause and menstruation issues, helping staff access support. In partnership with the Working with Periods Matter charity and the Students' Union, the WSN distributes sanitary products to staff and students, contributing to an inclusive work environment.

Section 3 – Future priorities and action plan

3.1 Current self-assessment and future priorities

The tables highlighted in this section are cross referenced to the data tables in appendices 2.

Table 2.2.2 in appendices 2 indicates that there is greater representation of female lecturers and senior lecturers compared to their male counterparts. This is a positive indicator, as it suggests that the university has a strong pipeline of female staff at these levels who could be considered for promotion to reader and professor positions in the future.

Figure 3.0:

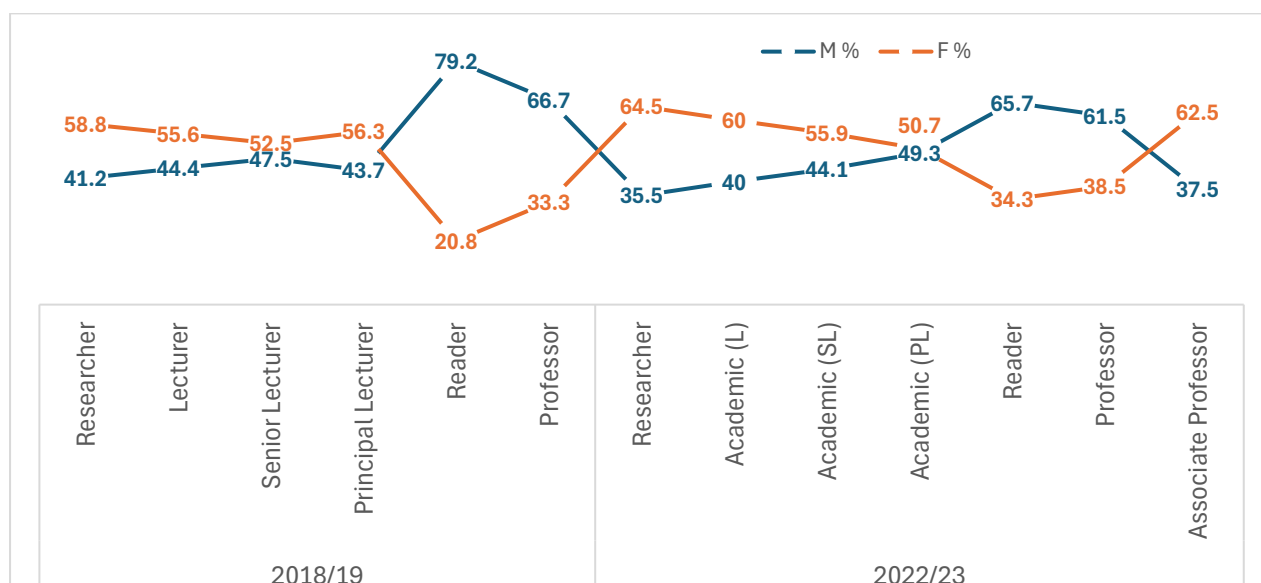


Table 2.1.3 indicates continued disproportionate underrepresentation of female academic staff in several schools, particularly at higher grades. We will focus on addressing this issue. Our objective is to achieve a diverse and gender-balanced workforce at all levels within the University, aligned with the overall gender distribution across the institution.

Although the cultural staff survey highlights that there is a high degree of a sense of belonging for female staff (60% with 58% for male staff), we will continue to create an inclusive environment by ensuring our policies and practices consider gender related issues, such as menopause.

Our priorities address the issues identified by the AS SAT and are cross-referenced with the new action plan that is in the next section.

Priority 1: Creating an Inclusive and Transparent Recruitment Process

Quote from staff survey: Processes regarding jobs/recruitment need to improve so there is clear communication on what is happening.

We will evaluate the recruitment policy (AP: 1.1) to assess the impact of changes made to previous versions, incorporating candidates' lived experiences to ensure the process is

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transparent, fair, and equitable. As well as ensuring that all opportunities are communicated to staff in an open and transparent manner.

A working group will be established to explore alternative recruitment methods (AP: 1.2), building on practices like providing interview questions in advance, which support candidates, including those going through menopause. The group will also evaluate options such as virtual or flexible interview formats to improve accessibility and inclusivity.

Despite financial constraints limiting recruitment, the university remains committed to inclusive practices.

Priority 2: Equitable and transparent Promotions Policy

As noted, there is a strong pipeline of female staff in lower grades in FABSS and FSE who can progress to higher grades if given opportunities. While FEHW has more female staff in higher grades, so the focus will shift to increasing male staff. For Professional support services the only disproportionately is in favour of Male staff within the SPOT (Senior salary outside the national pay spine) grade.

Figure 3.1:

Numbers of staff		Grades	H	SPOT	UW11	UW10	UW9	UW8
2022/23	Total	Male	1	51	60	195	55	11
		Female	1	30	50	250	98	8
	FABSS	Male		17	15	65	18	2
		Female	1	13	15	60	25	3
	FEHW	Male	1	8	19	68	20	1
		Female		10	27	159	59	3
	FSE	Male		26	26	62	17	8
		Female		7	8	31	14	2

In the cultural staff survey, 51% of all women and 47% of all men at the University felt promotion decisions were unfair, highlighting the need for greater awareness and fair policy implementation. We will introduce succession planning (AP: 2.0), develop a transparent promotions policy (for both Academic and Professional support services staff) (AP: 2.1), and address systemic barriers and the specific needs of female staff. These steps aim to create an environment where women are equally supported in their career progression. Regular monitoring and refinement of promotions policies and practices (AP: 2.3) will ensure our commitment to equity is actionable and accountable.

Priority 3: Supporting Career development:

The recent cultural survey shows positive responses (57%) from both female and male staff regarding career development, reflecting satisfaction with current programs. Building on this feedback, we will continue promoting the Aurora Women's Development Programme and track participants' career progression (AP: 3.0), alongside the 'Women in Wolves' training program while monitoring participation (AP: 3.1).

In addition, we will deliver targeted support to female staff in lower grades through a career development programme, focusing on equipping those in the pipeline with the soft skills,

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resources, and opportunities needed for promotion to higher roles (AP: 3.2). Female staff will also be encouraged to join the Reverse Mentoring Programme (AP: 3.3) to foster leadership skills, cross-generational learning, and networking.

Table 2.4.1 (Appendices 2) shows more female staff in research-only and teaching contracts. However, the survey highlights concern about progression opportunities for women. To address this, we will:

- Review the New Appraisal System (AP: 3.5).
- Monitor Professional Fellowship applications/membership (AP: 3.6).

These steps aim to ensure equitable pathways for female staff in research roles.

Priority 4: Embedding gender equality.

We are continuing to make progress on the actions identified in the previous action plan, including those that were rated as amber. These areas remain a priority, and efforts to drive improvements are ongoing.

Over 60% of female staff reported positive responses on well-being (58% male) and 64% on work-life balance (65% male) in the cultural survey, indicating the positive impact of current initiatives. However, we remain committed to further enhancing these outcomes and addressing areas needing improvement.

Faculties, directorates, and EDI committees will embed gender equality across the University through local action plans (AP: 4.0) aligned with the institutional Athena Swan plan.

Several schools will receive central EDI support for departmental Athena Swan submissions, aiming for Bronze Awards. Sport and Psychology, already holding Bronze, will pursue Silver (AP: 4.1). These efforts will enhance best practices and provide a framework for ongoing improvement.

Quote from staff survey: More regular communication on what measures are in place for advancing gender/race equality and the progress being made.

To promote awareness of gender equality, the University will host a series of events in alignment with our submission and the related action plan (AP: 4.2). Additionally, the EDI team will release an annual report detailing the progress of the Athena Swan action plan (AP: 4.3).

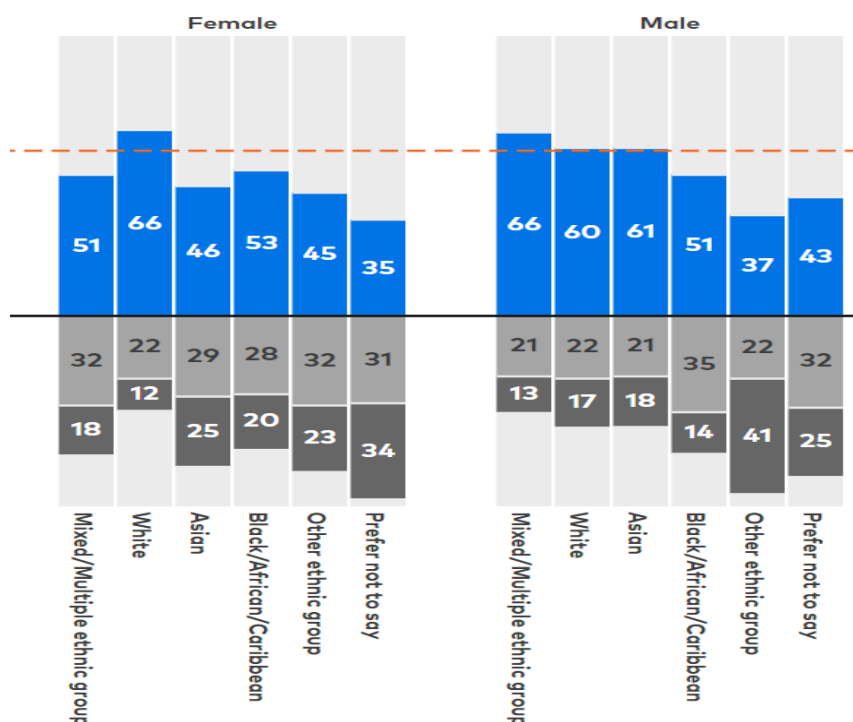
The staff cultural survey revealed that only 47% of female staff feel that workloads in their departments are allocated fairly. To address this concern, we will conduct a thorough review of workload allocations across departments, with a particular focus on gender equality (AP: 4.6).

Priority 5: Creating an empowering, supportive and Inclusive culture.

The response from global majority female staff in the staff cultural survey was low in some areas. Therefore, we will establish focus groups to identify issues and develop necessary interventions (AP: 5.9), such as addressing the question on "sense of belonging."

Figure 3.2

Sense of Belonging



In response to the AS SAT’s identification of a gap in data regarding the impact on female staff returning from maternity leave, we will monitor this group of staff, specifically focusing on changes in working patterns, promotions and workloads (AP: 5.2). This will help to ensure that we can identify any potential barriers or inequalities and take appropriate action to support female staff during this important transition.

The Women’s Staff Network has highlighted concerns around maternity and paternity leave, pregnancy, adoption, and the support available for staff undergoing fertility treatment. In response, a working group will be established to review existing policies and practices related to these issues (AP: 5.3).

While we currently have designated facilities for breastfeeding, staff have raised concerns regarding their suitability. In response, we will establish a working group in collaboration with the Women’s Staff Network (AP: 5.7). to gather insights, drawing on their lived experience, by visiting the existing breastfeeding facilities and providing recommendations for improvement.

These actions are critical steps in fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for female staff, and we remain committed to driving progress in these areas through targeted, evidence-based interventions.

We will ensure compliance with the amended Equality Act 2010 by recording and monitoring incidents (AP: 5.4) and supporting staff through a sexual harassment framework (AP: 5.41).

Section 3: Future action plan – Attached as separate document

1. Action plan

Summary

The 5 key priorities as identified by the AS SAT, within the action plan are:

Priority 1: Creating an Inclusive and Transparent Recruitment Process

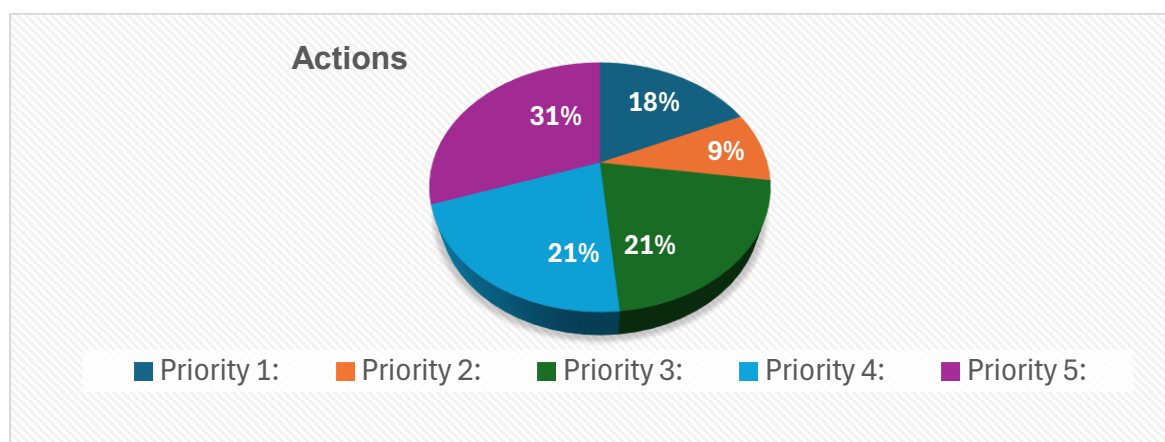
Priority 2: Equitable and transparent Promotions Policy

Priority 3: Supporting Career development

Priority 4: Embedding gender equality

Priority 5: Creating an empowering, supportive and Inclusive culture.

There are 33 actions in total, split as:



Summary-key targets: Our objective is to achieve a diverse and gender-balanced workforce at all levels within the University, aligned with the overall gender distribution across the institution. However, where there the disproportionately for female staff is large, we have set realistic targets based on previous trends in data.

Qualitative	2022-23	Target 2028-29	Quantitative (Questions in cultural staff survey)	2022-23	Target 2029
Female staff within FSE	31%	36%	Fairness of appointments/ recruitment process	55%	60%
Male staff within FEHW	33%	38%	Understanding and awareness of gender equality	58%	63%
Female applicants: FABSS	31%	36%	Managers and departments enabling flexible working	72%	77%
FSE	25%	30%			
Female staff: Reader	34%	39%	Workload allocation	47%	52%
Professor	39%	44%			
			Sense of belonging	60%	65%
			Promotions/progression	51%	56%

We will employ the Theory of Change model to outline the specific new actions within the action plan. Additionally, this model will function as an evaluation framework for the plan. Below is an example illustrating the Theory of Change framework for AP ref:3.2.

Theory of Change	Targeted <u>Support</u> for <u>female staff</u> in lower grades <u>Career development</u>
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An example Theory of Change (ToC) is provided within the appendix and further support in completing this is available on the COLT website (How do to Develop a ToC).

1 Situation: *What is the current context or situation? What problem is the programme trying to address or resolve and who does it affect?*

Data indicate an underrepresentation of female academic staff in senior roles (Grades 9 and above). However, there is an overrepresentation of female staff in lower grades, suggesting a strong pipeline of talent that could be developed and promoted into higher positions. Qualitative data reveal that while female staff may possess the necessary qualifications and technical skills, they often lack the soft skills required for these senior roles.

2 Aims: *What is the goal or objective the programme trying to achieve and what is your solution to the causes of the problem?*

The programme aims to increase the percentage of female staff in senior grades and leadership roles across the University. To address the root causes of underrepresentation, the solution focuses on equipping female staff at lower grades with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to successfully compete for senior roles. This includes promoting existing training programmes to ensure better engagement and developing a tailored training programme designed to enhance soft skills such as self-promotion, confidence building, and personal marketing. Additionally, opportunities for work shadowing will be provided to support practical skill development and career progression.

7 Inputs	5 Activities	6 Outputs	3 Outcomes	4 Impact
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Process			Impact	
Project management and co-ordination Allocation of staff from HR Organisational development team Time allowance for staff to attend training programme. Budget	Marketing and communications of training programme. Development of training programme content/material. Recruitment of participants to training programme. Training dates and rooms booked.	Training programme developed Delivery of training programme with positive feedback from participants. 15 female staff participating each with a learner profile.	15 female staff equipped with the soft skills and confidence to further their career development. A training programme that will be delivered annually.	25% of participants progressing their career to the next level or engaged in project work. Increase in the number of female staff moving to higher grades.

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<p>Support of Women’s staff network</p> <p>Tracking/monitoring systems for attendees</p> <p>Individual Learner certificate for each attendee</p>				
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8 *Rationale & Assumptions:* Your rationale explains why one outcome is needed to achieve another. Assumptions explain the contextual underpinnings of the ToC & the conditions necessary for success. Rationales and assumptions based on research/theory will support the development of more effective interventions.

The rationale for this intervention is grounded in the quantitative data, which highlights a clear underrepresentation of female staff in higher grades and senior roles. For instance, while 60% of academic staff at the lecturer level and 56% at the senior lecturer level are female, representation decreases significantly at higher levels, with 51% at principal lecturer, 34% at reader, and 39% at professor. This pattern suggests a strong internal pipeline of female staff at lower grades, yet insufficient progression to senior roles. Similarly, in professional services, female staff are underrepresented at SPOT levels.

Qualitative data, including feedback from the Women’s Staff Network, reveals that female staff in lower grades often possess the qualifications and technical skills necessary for advancement but lack networking abilities and softer skills, such as self-promotion and personal marketing, to effectively position themselves for senior opportunities. The assumption underpinning this intervention is that by addressing these skill gaps through a tailored training programme, female staff will be better equipped to compete for and secure senior roles. This approach builds on research and theory suggesting that targeted skill development and support can help overcome structural and individual barriers to career progression, creating conditions for a more equitable representation of women in leadership positions.

Appendix 1: Culture survey data

Please present the results of the core culture survey questions for sub-units (e.g. academic department, PTO directorate or equivalent) where available, and if desired, the results of any additional survey questions or consultation.

The Athena SWAN and Race Equality charter cultural survey was combined to avoid survey fatigue and ensure maximum response.

The survey was open from 2nd to 20th September and was administered via the Great Place to Work platform, which ensured complete anonymity and confidentiality for participants.

A total of 39 statements were included in the survey, all rated on a 5-point scale ranging from “Never” to “Always.”

Staff were given the opportunity to answer an open question: “We would like to hear your thoughts on the Universities commitment to advancing gender/race equality in higher education. Specifically, what do you think the university is doing well/or what needs improving”

The survey was sent to 2004 staff members. The total number of staff responses was 652 (33%). The breakdown was:

Demographic	Number responded	Percentage responded
Female	410	63%
Male	231	35%
Another gender not listed	7	1%
Not answered	4	

The response rates for the Cultural Staff Survey were in line with the overall representation of various staff groups within the university, alleviating concerns about under-representation. This indicates that the survey reached a proportionate sample across key demographics, allowing for a reliable reflection of the staff’s perceptions and experiences.

Response rates by University area

Demographic	Number invited	Number responded	Participation rate
Corporate Compliance	38	18	47%
Digital Services	67	24	36%
Directorate of Students and Education	119	45	38%
Estates and Facilities	377	54	14%
Faculty of Art, Business and Social Science	260	79	30%

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Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing	504	163	32%
Faculty of Science and Engineering	230	62	27%
Finance	47	28	60%
Human Resources	36	29	81%
Marketing, Communication and Digital	22	12	55%
Offices of the university Secretary	9	6	67%
Offices of the Vice Chancellor	15	7	47%
Registry Services	110	47	43%
Research Services	18	13	72%
Strategy and Organisational Enhancement	17	11	65%
Student Recruitment	31	38	43%
Wolverhampton Science Park	88	7	23%

Heat Maps:

	Average of All Statements	Belonging and Inclusion	Bullying and Harassment	Career Development	Gender and Race Equality	The University	Wellbeing	Work Life Balance
Female	57%	60%	51%	57%	58%	47%	60%	64%
Male	58%	58%	59%	57%	62%	47%	58%	65%
Another gender not listed	27%	18%	38%	19%	42%	11%	24%	34%

One of the questions in the 'Bullying and Harassment' focus area, was on 'have you experienced or witnessed any bullying or harassment'. A low score would be expected as compared to the other scores, hence the average statement for this is skewed.

The data can also be broken down from an intersectional perspective. There are actions and targets (to improve positive response rate) within the action plan to address are where there were disparities (these are cross referenced to the survey). Below are the key findings for each focus area.

1. Belonging and Inclusion

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The overall average for belonging and inclusion is 59%, meaning a little over half of the staff feel a sense of belonging.

- Female staff reported a slightly higher sense of belonging (60%) compared to male staff (58%).
- The lowest score comes from Asian female staff, with only 46% feeling a sense of belonging, meaning 54% do not feel included at the university.

2. Bullying and Harassment

The average score for statements regarding bullying and harassment was 62%, which might indicate a general acknowledgment of the issue or the effectiveness of policies in place, though there is room for improvement.

- Gender Disparities - 23% of male staff reported witnessing or experiencing bullying and harassment, compared to 17% of female staff. This suggests that men perceive or experience bullying and harassment more frequently than women.

3. Career Development

The average score for career development support and opportunities is 56%, showing that just over half of the staff feel satisfied with the career development opportunities available.

- Gender - Female and male staff both reported the same score of 57%, indicating that, on average, there is no significant gender disparity in the perception of career development support.
- Intersectionality - Mixed female staff had a particularly low positive response rate at 41%, meaning that 59% of them feel unsupported in their career development.

4. Gender and Race Equality

The data on Gender and Race Equality shows notable disparities in how different demographic groups perceive the university's efforts to address these issues. The average for all statements related to gender and race equality is 59%, suggesting that a little over half of the staff feel the university is addressing these issues positively.

- Gender Differences - Male staff (62%) feel more positively about the university's handling of gender and race equality compared to female staff (58%), suggesting that women are slightly less satisfied with these efforts.
- Intersectionality - Other than White female staff, who largely feel that the university addresses these issues positively, the majority of female staff from other ethnic groups do not feel the same. Asian female staff: 54% do not believe gender and race equality is being addressed. Black female staff: 57% feel the same. Mixed-race female staff: 64% feel that the university is not promoting gender and race equality positively.

Female staff, particularly from ethnic minority groups, tend to be more critical, with a majority not feeling that the university promotes equality in a positive manner. These insights suggest a need for more focused efforts on addressing inequalities and fostering inclusion, particularly for Global majority female staff.

5. Wellbeing

The average score for wellbeing-related statements was 59%, indicating that just over half of the staff feel positively about their wellbeing at the university.

- Gender Differences - Female staff reported slightly higher satisfaction with their wellbeing, with 60% responding positively compared to 58% of male staff. This suggests a small gender difference in perceptions of wellbeing.
- Intersectionality - Asian female staff had a 50% positive response, meaning half of them do not feel their wellbeing is supported. Mixed-race female staff reported an even lower positive response at 42%, showing a majority dissatisfaction with their wellbeing. Among

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male staff, Black male staff had the lowest positive response at 54%, while Black female staff were only slightly higher at 55%.

6. Work Life Balance

The data on Work-Life Balance reflects a generally positive outlook, but it also highlights some disparities, particularly when it comes to ethnicity and intersectional challenges.

The average score for all statements regarding work-life balance was 64%, indicating that a majority of staff feel their work-life balance is supported.

- Gender Differences - The positive response was almost the same for female staff (64%) and male staff (65%), showing no significant gender disparity in overall satisfaction with work-life balance.
- Intersectionality - The only staff group with a majority of individuals feeling that work-life balance was not being addressed or achieved were Asian female staff. This highlights a key intersectional challenge, where gender and ethnicity together may be contributing to a lower sense of balance and support.

While the overall perception of work-life balance at the university is relatively positive at 64%, there are clear disparities based on ethnicity. The most concerning result is for Asian female staff, who represent the only group where the majority feel that work-life balance is not adequately addressed.

Statements

Highlighted below are the bottom 3 statements linked to the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter mark by gender and ethnicity.

Gender:

Focus Area/Theme	Statement	Female	Male
Gender and Race Equality	I feel confident that colleagues at the University can have an open and honest conversation with each other about race.	47%	53%
Wellbeing	My current workload is manageable	44%	46%
Career Development	Decisions about promotion/progression are made fairly	49%	53%

		Gender		
		Female	Male	Another gender not listed
Survey Items	Average of All Statements	57% 410	58% 231	27% 7
	Belonging and Inclusion	60% 410	58% 231	18% 7
	Bullying and Harassment	51% 410	59% 231	38% 7
	Career Development	57% 410	57% 231	19% 7
	Gender and Race Equality	58% 410	62% 231	42% 7
	The University	47% 410	47% 231	11% 7
	Wellbeing	60% 410	58% 231	24% 7
	Work Life Balance	64% 410	65% 231	34% 7

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I feel like I belong in my department	68% 410	65% 231	0% 7
I feel that people really care about me in my department	59% 410	58% 231	14% 7
My contributions are valued in my department	64% 410	58% 231	43% 7
I feel comfortable speaking up and expressing my opinions	61% 410	62% 231	29% 7
Departmental communications are clear and relevant to me and my role	50% 410	48% 231	14% 7
I feel people at University show me respect? (e.g., staff, lecturers, supervisors, fellow students)	62% 410	62% 231	29% 7
I feel connected to colleagues/staff at the university?	57% 410	53% 231	0% 7
Departmental leadership actively supports gender equality	69% 410	69% 231	57% 7
My department is committed to achieving gender balance in leadership positions	65% 410	69% 231	43% 7
The rate people progress in my department is not affected by their gender	66% 410	69% 231	57% 7
Equality, diversity and inclusion work is recognised when workload is allocated	55% 410	61% 231	29% 7
Equality, diversity and inclusion work is recognised in applications for promotion/progression	53% 410	59% 231	33% 7
I feel confident that colleagues at the University can have an open and honest conversation with each other about race?	47% 410	53% 231	43% 7
My department enables flexible working	72% 410	70% 231	57% 7
Workloads in my department are allocated fairly	47% 410	56% 231	29% 7
My department provides staff with support around all types of caring responsibilities/ leave and takes departmental meetings/ events into consideration	65% 410	68% 231	0% 7
I think festivals and traditions from different cultures are acknowledged at the university	73% 410	72% 231	43% 7
I often feel I get the opportunity to learn about people from different races, ethnicities and cultures while working here	61% 410	60% 231	43% 7
I have experienced/witnessed bullying and/or harassment in my department in the past 12 months	17% 410	23% 231	29% 7

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I know how to report bullying and/or harassment	75% 410	77% 231	43% 7
Departmental management is active in tackling bullying & harassment, and I am satisfied with how it is addressed in my department.	51% 410	58% 231	0% 7
I feel comfortable calling out a person showing racist behaviours at the university? e.g., challenging as and when someone makes an inappropriate or racist joke, discriminates another person because of their race, etc.)	58% 410	69% 231	57% 7
I feel confident that leaders at the university will call out racially inappropriate behaviours	55% 410	67% 231	57% 7
My line manager supports my career development	71% 410	67% 231	43% 7
Decisions about appointments are made fairly	55% 410	56% 231	17% 7
Decisions about promotion/progression are made fairly	49% 410	53% 231	17% 7
I receive useful feedback on my career development through performance reviews	54% 410	51% 231	0% 7
My current workload is manageable	44% 410	46% 231	29% 7
My mental health and/or wellbeing are supported in my department	58% 410	53% 231	0% 7
I know where to seek support for mental health and/or wellbeing at work	75% 410	71% 231	29% 7
I feel confident asking for mental health and/or wellbeing support at work	53% 410	51% 231	0% 7
I feel comfortable in discussing race-related topics with colleagues within my department	57% 410	58% 231	29% 7
I understand what the University is doing to tackle racial inequality impacting people who work and study here	51% 410	51% 231	29% 7
I believe that social events/activities organised by the university are welcoming to everyone irrespective of race or ethnicity	75% 410	71% 231	57% 7
I can be myself around here.	64% 410	62% 231	0% 7

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	Leaders have a clear view of where the University of Wolverhampton is going and how to get there I can be myself around here	39% 410	37% 231	14% 7
	Leaders at the University of Wolverhampton keep people informed about what is happening	38% 410	43% 231	14% 7
	I would recommend the University of Wolverhampton as a great place to work.	49% 410	47% 231	14% 7