

Top 10 tips for Athena SWAN Gold applications

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1. Leadership at multiple levels

- Departmental - Head of Department, Senior Management Team
- University – sharing experiences and practices with other Departments
- National –sector-wide engagement, e.g. sharing experiences and practices with other Universities, giving presentations, promotion of SWAN principles at conferences
- For example in the Cambridge Physics Gold Award submission Professor Dame Athene Donald, Professor Val Gibson, Mr David Peet were all speaking on a national level about Athena SWAN and Gender Equality

2. Comprehensive data analysis

- Go beyond superficial analysis of data requested
- Gain a deep understanding of issues and be able to clearly state reasons and progress
- For example in the Cambridge Physics Gold Award submission they looked at UK vs International PhD student applications as well as the overall numbers

3. Evidence of staff/student engagement

- Use survey results/focus groups/quotes to illustrate issues and impact of initiatives

4. Challenge the status quo

- Just because that's the way things have always been done or its too difficult or too much work to change the system doesn't mean you cant try
- For example in the Cambridge Physics Gold Award submission they redesigned the Physics undergraduate courses offered as part of the Natural Sciences degree which resulted in a higher proportion of women students intending to continue to study physics.

5. Demonstrate sustained activity over a period of time with a clear understanding of Departmental and subject-specific challenges

- In Cambridge Physics this was around 10 years of work with the Institute of Physics and then Athena SWAN



6. Evidence of the impact of initiatives

- Spend the time upfront to plan the collection of feedback and evaluation of initiatives and events
- Remember impact isn't just about changing the numbers of women in the Department since your last award
- For example in the Cambridge Physics Gold Award submission they had a series of initiatives to support Fellowship applications (workshops, mock interviews, mentoring) which resulted in an increase in the number of women holding fellowships

7. Innovation and ambition

- Make sure your action plan demonstrates ambition
- Try to include some innovative initiatives (not always easy when so many Universities are doing SWAN)
- For example in the Cambridge Physics Gold Award submission they pay for childcare for visiting interview candidates

8. Clear reporting on Silver Action Plan progress

- For example in the Cambridge Physics Gold Award submission they used a traffic light system for a visual illustration of actions completed, ongoing and not achieved/replaced

9. Beacon activity

- Need to demonstrate outward facing activities on a national level (beyond just departmental or university actions)
- For example in the Cambridge Physics Gold Award submission they cited that Dame Athene Donald, Professor Val Gibson, Mr David Peet were all speaking on a national level about Athena SWAN and Gender Equality with national awards in recognition of their contribution (L'Oreal/WISE).

10. Recognition that there is still progress to be made

- A gold award doesn't mean that a department is the perfect place to work but recognises the journey travelled & sustained activity/progress