



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London



November 2025

ATHENA SWAN GENDER EQUALITY STEERING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Athena SWAN Gender Equality Steering Group (GESG) is to oversee the effective implementation of St Mary's Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Action Plan and in doing so advance gender equality across the University. The GESG will have strategic ownership of our Athena SWAN Action Plan and, by extension, any Athena SWAN-related activities at the university. The GESG will also promote the principles of Athena SWAN's Transformed Charter:

1. Adopting robust, transparent and accountable processes for gender equality work, including:
 - a. Embedding diversity, equity and inclusion in our culture, decision-making and partnerships, and holding ourselves and others in our institution/institute/department accountable.
 - b. Undertaking evidence-based, transparent self-assessment processes to direct our priorities and interventions for gender equality and evaluating our progress to inform our continuous development.
 - c. Ensuring that gender equality work is distributed appropriately, is recognised and properly rewarded.
2. Addressing structural inequalities and social injustices that manifest as differential experiences and outcomes for staff and students.
3. Tackling behaviours and cultures that detract from the safety and collegiality of our work and study environments, including not tolerating gender-based violence, discrimination, bullying, harassment or exploitation.
4. Understanding and addressing intersectional inequalities.
5. Recognising that individuals can determine their own gender identity, and tackling the specific issues faced by trans and non-binary people.
6. Examining gendered occupational segregation, and elevating the status, voice and career opportunities of any identified under-valued and at-risk groups.
7. Mitigating the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks and supporting flexibility and the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance'.
8. Mitigating the gendered impact of short-term and casual contracts for staff seeking sustainable careers.

REMIT

The purpose of the Athena SWAN GESG and therein members of the Athena SWAN GESG, include:

- a. To oversee implementation of St Mary's Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Action Plan, in accordance with the Athena SWAN Charter and Principles. This includes advising academic and professional services staff outside of the GESG in removing any barriers to completing actions as outlined in the Action Plan.
- b. To track and monitor Athena SWAN actions in relation to adherence to timescales and success measures and report amendments and completions to the EDI Board.
- c. To advocate for the Athena SWAN process and gender equality throughout the university, raising awareness, inspiring engagement of staff and students, attending events and encouraging active participation in the principles of the Athena SWAN Charter.
- d. To review the Terms of Reference (including GESG membership) on an annual basis to ensure the implementation of the action plan is fit for purpose.

REPORTING

The Athena SWAN GESG will report to the EDI Board, who in turn reports to the University Executive Committee (UEC).

The GESG will also provide regular updates to be included in Equality Charter updates, communications and at VC reports.

DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of the Athena SWAN GESG may be tasked with reviewing sensitive personal data relating to protected characteristics, salary grade, personal leave, and promotion. Members are expected to retain the strictest confidentiality when engaging with such data, and to anonymise any data that is shared beyond the confines of the GESG.

Members are also expected to adhere to St Mary's [IT Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#) when handling all Athena SWAN-related data.

USE OF ONLINE COLLABORATION TOOLS

Members of the Athena SWAN GESG will have access to a shared group on Microsoft Teams, which members may use to collaborate and communicate between regularly scheduled meetings. The Teams collaboration tool may be used for the following purposes:

- a. To share high level planning documents, such as: meeting agendas and minutes, data trackers and project planners, GESG terms of reference, advocacy events, etc.
- b. To communicate as a large group, or in smaller workstream groups, to help drive collaboration and progress on Athena SWAN-related work.

- c. To foster community and collective ownership of the Athena SWAN action plan.

Members of the Athena SWAN GESG will share/store any necessary sensitive (personal) data via secure internal shared drives (i.e. HR S drive).

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Athena SWAN GESG is derived primarily by role, with roles selected in accordance with those who hold the majority of responsibility for actions within our St Mary’s Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Action Plan. There are several additional members who will represent various University areas or staff Networks. Those members will be selected by their area or network leader.

Membership will also be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the group reflects a diverse cross-section of individuals and experiences, as is outlined by the Charter.

Co-Chairs

The GESG will have two Co-Chairs, a gender mix is preferred. For overseeing the implementation of our St Mary’s Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Action Plan, the Co-Chairs of the GESG will be the HR Director and a member of academic staff with significant responsibility for research at St Mary’s. Aside from owning actions relating to their individual areas, Co-Chairs are responsible for ensuring actions owned by the GESG Co-Chairs, Athena SWAN SAT Chair, and SLT members unable to join committee meetings are implemented at pace.

Members

Role	Athena SWAN Action Plan Item(s) Owned (either by the individual or by the individual on behalf of members of their team)
HR Director (GESG Co-Chair; actions also listed for senior professional services staff members unable to join committee meetings)	1.0, 1.3, 1.31, 1.32, 1.7, 1.8, 3.2, 3.3, 3.40, 3.42, 3.5, 4.0, 4.12, 4.5, 4.51, 5.11, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 6.0, 6.01, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.3, 6.31, 6.4, 6.5, 6.51, 6.62, 6.63, 6.71, 6.91, 6.92, 6.93, 7.0, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.51, 7.7, 7.9
Member of academic staff with significant responsibility for research (GESG Co-Chair; actions also listed for senior academic staff members unable to join committee meetings)	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.31, 1.32, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 4.01, 4.03, 4.1, 6.0, 6.01, 6.3, 6.31, 6.6, 6.61, 6.63, 6.71, 7.6, 7.8
University Secretary and Director SPO	1.8, 2.5, 6.3, 6.6, 7.6, 7.61
Head of Learning & People Development	3.0, 3.01, 3.1, 3.2, 3.41, 3.7, 3.8, 3.81, 3.9, 4.21, 4.02, 4.2, 4.4, 5.5, 6.2, 7.3
Head of Academic Professional Development	2.4, 3.0, 3.41, 3.7
Head of Inclusion, Access and Widening Participation	2.1, 2.2, 2.3 2.6 1.81, 6.7, 6.71, 6.72, 6.8, 6.9, 6.94, 7.0
Manager of Doctoral School and REF	1.9, 1.91, 2.7, 3.6, 5.2

Head of UK Recruitment	2.8,
Head of External Relations	2.0
Race Equality Charter Co-Chair(s)	1.91, 3.61, 4.1
Provost Office University Academic Strategy Project Manager	1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.4, 4.01, 4.03, 4.1,6.61, present to support dissemination of information and embed actions across business areas
FSTHS Representative	N/A Present to support dissemination of information and embed actions across business areas
FABLET Representative	N/A Present to support dissemination of information and embed actions across business areas
SOM Representative	N/A Present to support dissemination of information and embed actions across business areas
Women's Network Representative	N/A Present to support dissemination of information and embed actions across business areas
Parents & Carers' Network Representative	5.1; present to support dissemination of information and embed actions across business areas
Ex officio: Notetaker	N/A

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The group will meet on a regular basis (every 5-6 weeks) for one hour, the notes of which will be maintained together with a live action tracker.