

Supporting Athena SWAN in Health Sciences

Experiences of the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences,
Oxford Brookes University.



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SAT Chair 2014-2018



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Faculty of Health & Life Sciences



OXFORD SCHOOL OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY



SPORT, HEALTH SCIENCES AND SOCIAL WORK

3000 UG students (70% women)
900 PG taught (85% women)
100 research students (70% women)

250 academic staff (66% women)
120 professional & support staff (70% women)

Nursing
Midwifery
Physiotherapy
Social work
Psychology
Biology
Nutrition
Biomedical sciences
Environmental sciences
Sports science/coaching

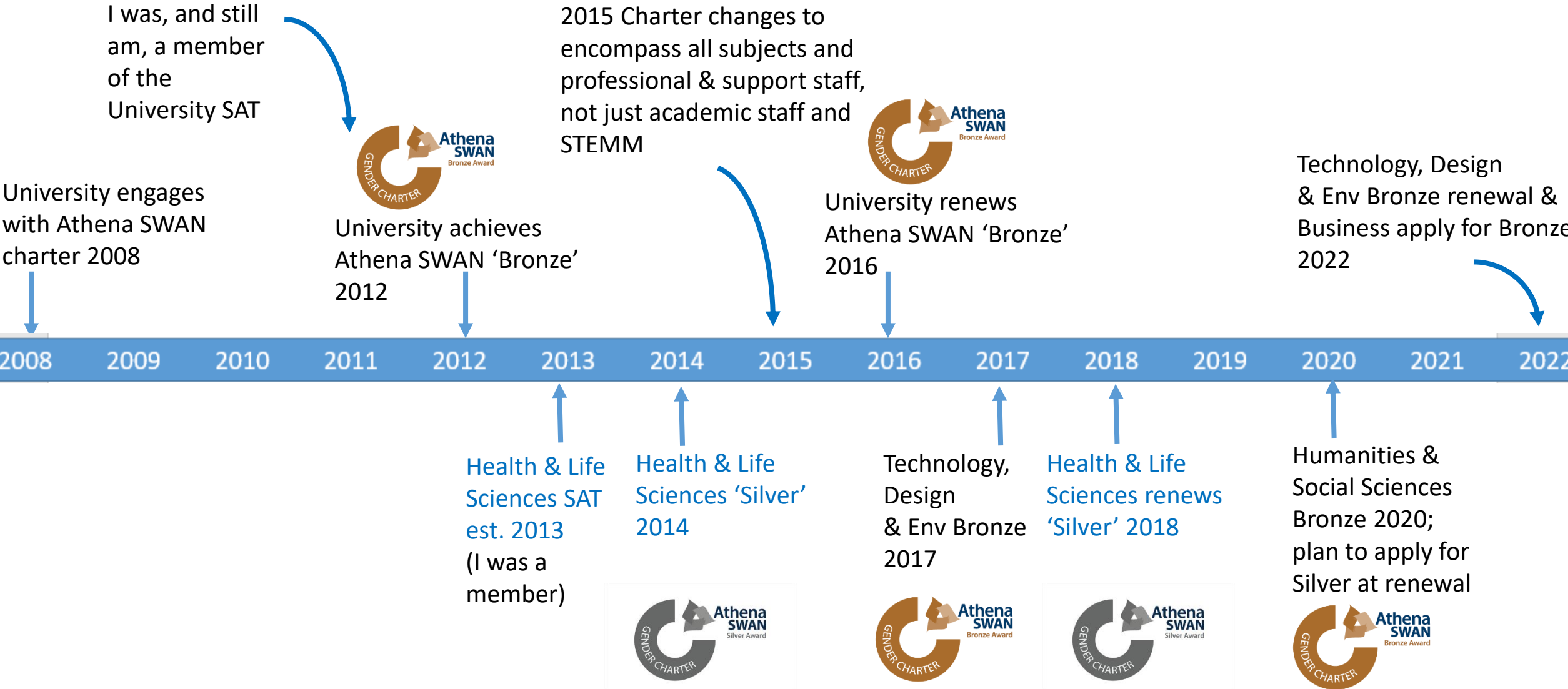


BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL SCIENCES



PSYCHOLOGY, HEALTH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Athena SWAN timeline



I was, and still am, a member of the University SAT



University achieves Athena SWAN 'Bronze' 2012

2015 Charter changes to encompass all subjects and professional & support staff, not just academic staff and STEMM



University renews Athena SWAN 'Bronze' 2016

Health & Life Sciences SAT est. 2013 (I was a member)



Health & Life Sciences 'Silver' 2014



Technology, Design & Env Bronze 2017



Health & Life Sciences renews 'Silver' 2018



Humanities & Social Sciences Bronze 2020; plan to apply for Silver at renewal

Technology, Design & Env Bronze renewal & Business apply for Bronze 2022

How did we achieve 'Silver' at first application?

Gender balance of the senior academic leadership team, professoriate and all decision making committees reflects that of the Faculty as a whole

Royalty income allowed a 10 year investment in PhD students and ECRs and supporting and developing career pipeline to permanent lectureships

All staff (researchers, academic and support) can apply for staff development funds to attend conferences, training courses or undertake part-time higher degrees (MSc or PhD).

Formal and informal mentoring for promotion, promotion discussed at PDR

Compassionate policies that work for staff with, and without families

Inspiring women
scientists of
the Alliance

University
Alliance

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

"Society can benefit most when the best people work in teams to tackle the challenges facing us. We need to be as inclusive as possible to ensure we achieve this."

Professor Linda King
Professor of Virology, PVC of Research & Global Partnerships



Case study 1 Helen

Joined the faculty in July 2000 as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Nutrition on a fixed-term (3 years) contract

2003 Lecturer in Nutrition, annually renewable contract

2007 permanent Senior Lecturer in Nutrition

2009 Deputy Director, Functional Food Centre

June 2009-December 2009 maternity leave

Returned at 0.8FTE, reduced to 0.4FTE, career break 2010-11

Returned 0.4FTE, increased to 0.6FTE, then 0.8FTE, annually reviewed at PDR



“The progression at the beginning of my career was steady as I had excellent support from my Line Manager. Since returning from maternity leave and my career break, my career progression has been slowed (due to my personal circumstances). However, with the continued support from my Line Manager and colleagues, my aim now is to work towards applying for promotion.”

Case study 2 Anne

2004-2008 PhD (plant science)

2008-10 post doc; move to 0.2FTE outreach & science communication

2010-2014 Research and Science Communication Fellow (0.5FTE research / 0.5FTE outreach)

2012 Society for Experimental Biology's President's Medal of Education and Public Affairs

2014 Aurora Leadership Training Programme for Women in Higher Education'

2015 Lecturer in Biology and Science Communication

“I strongly believe that creating my position has been an extremely progressive and forward looking decision by the Faculty (and in fact, many external people made this exact comment). I hope that other Universities will follow our lead and offer more flexible positions to researchers, so that they do not feel that they have to leave academia to achieve a fulfilling career”



The journey continues: challenges and lessons learned from our 2014 submission

- Huge relief / celebration at having achieved ‘Silver’
 - Loss of momentum
 - Transition to new SAT
-
- Recruitment of new SAT members
 - Workload / resources / time
 - Engaging men – in SAT and more generally



Data collection & analysis

- Inaccuracies in HR staff data – need to ‘clean’ it
- Faculty restructuring – how to represent data over time
- Lack of consistent records for some activities eg outreach and public engagement, flexible working

Evidencing 'impact'

- Many initiatives long-embedded, plus culture of Faculty well established
- Hard to demonstrate causality of actions

how to evidence that positive data reflects 'impact' of Athena SWAN activity?



Figure 4.8 Stills from our 'YouTube' video aimed at challenging preconceptions about nursing being a predominantly female occupation; this has been viewed >18,000 times since its launch in September 2015.



Figure 4.9 Images from current Departmental webpages, celebrating the ethnic diversity of our student population, plus a balance of men and women students

IMPACT

A 2014 AS action was to ensure that our marketing materials, webpages, staff/student presence at open days and outreach activities in schools reflect gender equality and diversity and promote the message that the Faculty is an inclusive environment nurturing undergraduates from all backgrounds (Figures 4.7-4.9).

This has impacted in an overall increase in the proportion of black/minority ethnic (BME) undergraduates since 2012/13, with significant increases in BMS, Nursing (especially) and PHPD.

IMPACT

Within BMS, the gender ratio does not differ from the benchmark (Chi-squared test, $P < 0.5$), but for HS, a growth area within Faculty (Section 5.1iv), and traditionally female-dominated subjects, there are more men than the benchmark (Chi-squared test, $P < 0.001$). Our initiatives to attract more male students, at every level, to these programmes, a 2014 AS action, described previously, are having an effect.

Helpful things

- Senior staff support and ‘buy in’ – eg personal, supportive letter from Dean
- Considering at an early stage what ‘evidence’ (qualitative and quantitative) we need for each section of the application – keeping an eye on what we have to present
- Having members of SAT with specific interests, expertise who can take forward projects
- Reviewing successful applications from other institutions to get ideas for presentation
- Acting as an Athena SWAN reviewer
- Getting constructive feedback on drafts from ‘critical friends’



Susan receiving the Faculty Athena SWAN award in 2018

Impact of the pandemic

Created both opportunities and setbacks

Less resourcing for some career development opportunities



Supporting technical / professional services staff

- Illustrating progression paths and developing role models
- Careers development discussed at PDR
- Staff development funds



Supporting gender minorities

Drivers for this are wider
workforce development and
student recruitment

Peer mentoring

Role modelling and celebrating
value

Caring – the ‘who cares?’ project

Flexible home working	Continued during pandemic?	Descriptors
value	yes	Better work life balance Flexible caring arrangements Lack of commuting / parking issues Focus / fewer distractions
Challenges	yes	Concurrent caring commitments Lack of communication Isolation / disconnectedness Absence of work life boundaries
Perception	no	2020 – mostly negative 2021 – mostly positive / accepted (individual and institution)

The menopause project

<https://menopauseintheworkplace.co.uk/>

A whole University Menopause Event

Chat Forum (Google Meet Room)
Menopause Café

Development of Web Pages

Production of Infographic and Poster Campaign

Creation of Organisational Menopause Policy

Embedding menopause within, and across the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Healthy Ageing Research Networks

Analysis of Existing Menopause-related Data (Staff and Athena Swan Survey and HLS Focus Groups)

Creating a Mentor Model - 'Eldership' and Peer Support

Creation of a Map of Inclusive Questions to Inform Practise

