

Athena Swan Governance Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Athena Swan Governance Committee is to provide assurance, expert advice and guidance to the Advance HE Board, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and Peer Review Quality (PRQ) Committee on matters relating to the Athena Swan Charter.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 To provide a forum to discuss high level Athena Swan strategy consulting with the sector to ensure the charter remains fit for purpose.
- 2.2 To provide assurance to the Advance HE Board and EDI Committee (of which the Athena Swan Governance Committee Chair will be a member) as to the rigour, reliability and efficacy of Athena Swan.
- 2.3 To provide advice and guidance on the operation and evolution of Athena Swan to ensure that it effectively advances gender equality in the higher education and research sector.
- 2.4 To oversee the transformation of Athena Swan following the publication of the 2020 Independent Review including the ratification of the appointment of panellists and chairs.
- 2.5 To oversee and inform the development of Athena Swan application and peer-review processes assuring effective approaches to quality assurance and enhancement.
- 2.6 To work in partnership with Advance HE to raise the profile of the Charter
- 2.7 To oversee a full review of the Charter every five years.
- 2.8 To report regularly to the Advance HE Board, EDI and PRQ Committees on matters arising.

3. Membership

The Athena Swan Governance Committee will comprise expert representatives from Advance HE member institutions from across the higher education and research sector and other sectors with appropriate experience in relation to the leadership of gender equality:

- The Chair - senior representative from the higher education sector to provide strategic advice and an understanding of the views of senior leaders within member institutions.
- 11 further members ensuring representation as follows:
 - Senior sector representatives at PVC / Director or equivalent level with experience dealing with issues related to Athena Swan Awards.
 - Institutional / Departmental Athena Swan leads.

- Representatives from participating research institutes
- Expert representatives including those with board level experience of EDI from outside the higher education and research sector
- Representatives from the Research Funders e.g. UKRI and the Wellcome Trust
- HR Director or equivalent
- The appropriate Advance HE Director / Assistant Directors and / or Head

Membership of the group will be configured to reflect both individual diversity and the diversity of institutions, disciplines / professional area and UK nation perspectives where possible.

The Secretary to the Advisory Group will be drawn from the Advance HE staff. Additional staff members may also be invited to attend to support specific agenda items by agreement with the Chair.

The appointment of the Chair will be confirmed by the Advance HE EDI Committee. Members will be usually appointed for a three-year term of office with the possibility of renewal for a further term.

4. Meeting arrangements

The Committee will normally meet three times a year with digital engagement between the formal meetings.

The Chair of the Committee (or representative Committee member) will report to the Advance HE Board through a process of timed business at each Advance HE Board meeting.

All documents and discussions will be regarded as confidential. Members will be asked to declare any relevant academic or professional conflicts of interest.

A minimum of 6 Committee members and the chair will be required for quoracy.

An annual meeting will be convened, with digital engagement between meetings, to bring together the Athena Swan Governance Committee and Race Equality Charter Advisory Group to support cross-working and intersectional consideration in the charters.

The terms of this committee will be reviewed annually and revised in response to any contextual changes.

20th July 2020