Athena SWAN Silver department award application

Name of university: The University of Nottingham
Department: School of Chemistry
Date of application: April 2013
Date of university Athena SWAN awards: Bronze 2006, 2009; Silver 2013
Contact for application: Professor Peter Sarre
Email: Peter.Sarre@Nottingham.ac.uk
Telephone: 0115 951 3460
School website address: http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/chemistry/

Research students in the School and the inner courtyard - designed over 50 years ago by Sir Basil Spence
1. **Letter of endorsement from the head of department**

An accompanying letter of endorsement from the head of department should explain how the SWAN action plan and activities in the department contribute to the overall department strategy and academic mission. The letter is an opportunity for the head of department to confirm their support for the application and to endorse and commend any women and STEMM activities that have made a significant contribution to the achievement of the departmental mission.

**Professor Mark S. Searle**  
*Head of the School of Chemistry*  
School of Chemistry,  
Centre for Biomolecular Sciences  
University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD, UK  
Tel: 0115 951 3567, Fax: 0115 84 68002,  
email: mark.searle@nottingham.ac.uk

---

Senior Policy Adviser (Athena SWAN)  
Equality Challenge Unit,  
Queen's House,  
55-56 Lincoln's Inn Fields,  
London WC2A 3LJ

I am delighted to endorse and give my strongest support to our Athena SWAN application. I recognize that the School will only reach its full potential across the full spectrum of its activities if it benefits from the skills and abilities of all staff and students, irrespective of gender, background and circumstances, and if it is an attractive working environment. Our engagement with the Athena Charter, and with the full breadth of equality and diversity issues in the workplace, has led to the implementation of a range of measures that are having a significant impact in enabling this cultural shift to gain momentum.

Female representation amongst academic staff within the School of Chemistry has historically been low, but the School has been working extremely hard in developing and implementing initiatives to rectify this. For most of the past twenty years, only one or two of our permanent research-active academic staff have been female. In recognition of this, and as a means of understanding the reasons for it, we established first a School-wide Equality and Diversity committee in 2010, followed by the Self Assessment Team (SAT) in 2012, with representation of staff (male and female) from a wide range of job families.

The deliberations of these committees have led to several positive outcomes. By way of a few examples, a forum for postdoctoral researchers has been established which is working with academic staff to implement wide ranging aspects of the 'Concordat to Support Career Development'. This includes a tailored new framework for activity performance review that recognises and values the contributions of all researchers and provides a framework for career development. Female postdoctoral researchers have played key leadership roles in developing the Forum as a vehicle for progress.
Much wider cultural changes in the School, through greater awareness of gender and equality issues, have been enhanced by 'Drama for Training' events that focused on the interpretation of language and workplace behaviour in a series of enacted scenarios. The continuing shift to a more inclusive culture within the School is having an impact on the recruitment of female scientists. I am delighted that our numbers have improved significantly in the past couple of years with Drs. Elena Bichoutskaia, Libby Gibson and Maria Gimenez-Lopez winning prestigious competitive research fellowships. The School will have its first female Head of Section (Physical Chemistry) this summer. Our application is receiving the strongest possible support from University Senior Management through Martin Schröder who is Head of Inorganic Chemistry and Dean of the Faculty, and a member of the University Athena SWAN Team which has led to a recent Silver award to the University.

These are just a few examples of implemented measures that are having an impact on recruitment and culture within the School. The new Head of School, Professor Jonathan Hirst, who will be in post in August 2013, shares my vision, is committed to the Action Plan, and will show this commitment through strong leadership and by giving it the same unequivocal support.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

25th April 2013

[500 words]
2. The self-assessment process (max 1000 words)

Describe the self-assessment process. This should include:

a) A description of the self assessment team: members’ roles (both within the department and as part of the team) and their experiences of work-life balance

b) An account of the self assessment process: details of the self assessment team meetings, including any consultation with staff or individuals outside of the university, and how these have fed into the submission

c) Plans for the future of the self assessment team, such as how often the team will continue to meet, any reporting mechanisms and in particular how the self assessment team intends to monitor implementation of the action plan.

(a) The Self-Assessment Team

Peter Sarre (SAT Chair) is Professor of Chemistry and Molecular Astrophysics and has been at the university since 1979. He has been Head of Teaching and of Physical Chemistry, a Course Director, and is currently Director of Postgraduate Studies, an Admissions Tutor and a member of Senate. Peter is in a dual-career marriage with two sons and shares caring responsibility for an elderly relative.

David Chambers-Asman is Director of Operations and Management. He completed all his studies, including PhD part-time, whilst working at Nottingham Trent University. David has two young children with whom he shares caring responsibilities with his wife, a full-time Chemical Registration Executive. He is a university dignity advisor, plays an active role in Equality and Diversity, and is Champion of Postdoctoral Training and Development.

Ross Denton is a Lecturer in Organic Chemistry. He took up this position in 2008 having previously carried out research at the Scripps Research Institute USA, and Cambridge and Nottingham Universities. Ross is a father of two and in a dual career marriage. Childcare responsibilities are split equally with his wife and have been helped substantially through the flexibility that is part of life in the School.

Elizabeth Gibson is a Dorothy Hodgkin Research Fellow in the School of Chemistry. She obtained her MChem and PhD degrees at the University of York. She then spent 3 years as a post-doc in Uppsala, Sweden. Elizabeth was awarded a University of Nottingham Anne McLaren Fellowship and a Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship in 2010 and now leads a research group who develop molecular devices for solar energy conversion.

Deborah Kays is a Lecturer in Inorganic Chemistry. She obtained her MChem and PhD degrees at Cardiff University, followed by a postdoctoral position. After a Junior Research Fellowship at the University of Oxford, Deborah joined the staff at Nottingham in 2007. A member of the School’s Equality and Diversity Committee, Deborah is in a dual career marriage and has a young daughter. She is currently working 0.9 FTE, sharing childcare responsibility with her husband.
Katharine Reid is Professor of Chemical Physics and has been employed at the University since 1992. She has chaired Teaching Committee, is deputy head of Physical Chemistry (to become Head shortly) and is a member of School Management Group. Katharine works full time and shares childcare 50/50 with her partner who is also an academic in the School. Following her maternity leave in 2001/2 they adapted their working hours in order to achieve a suitable work-life balance.

Mark Searle is Professor of Biological Chemistry at Nottingham (promoted 2003) and is the current Head of the School of Chemistry, serving two terms of office (2005-13). He has served on, and chaired, numerous School Committees and has wide experience of the role of women in the wider University environment and higher management. He has been very pro-active in pushing the equality and diversity agenda within the School at all levels.

Anna Slater is a postdoctoral researcher who joined Nottingham University as an undergraduate in 2002, obtaining her PhD in 2011. She moved to the University of Liverpool in March 2013 but has retained her role on the SAT. Anna’s husband is a postdoc at Nottingham; at present they have no children but are negotiating the balance between academic career progression and family life.

Emma Steeds is a final year PhD student in the School of Chemistry. She is the founder and first chair of the Ph.D. forum, set up to allow PhD students a voice and to have an impact on activities in the School. She has helped to organise events within the School, such as the Chemistry Careers day, and is currently considering careers in equality and diversity and widening participation.

(b) Self-Assessment Process

The Self Assessment Team (SAT) was formed in June 2012. Its formation was preceded by much activity of direct relevance to the Athena SWAN process. This includes a School survey of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers (2008), an invited Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) visit to report on implementation of our Good Practice policies (Nov 2009), establishment of our Equality and Diversity Committee in 2010, the 5-yearly university review of the School (2011) and Gender Equality and Staff Engagement Surveys (2012). These have provided a wealth of information on the School as benchmarks for the SAT. The Team has met formally 6 times and the minutes of its meetings are shared with all in the School. Each SAT member took responsibility for in-depth examination of a specific area, reporting for discussion at the SAT. Wider consultation has been undertaken with three Schools of Chemistry which hold Athena SWAN awards including valuable input from Professor Eleanor Campbell of Edinburgh University, at the ‘Going for Silver’ (2012) and RSC/Athena SWAN Good Practice (2013) meetings, and following a presentation by the SAT Chair to the School’s Strategic Advisory Board. The Team designed and implemented two surveys, organised Research Fellow forums, made presentations at PhD and postdoc forums, and consulted staff through Athena SWAN updates and at full staff meetings.
(c) Plans for the future of the self assessment team

In order to share good practice and to benefit from input from a wide range of staff on gender issues and workplace culture, implementation and monitoring of progress of the Action Plan will be undertaken by our Equality and Diversity (E&D) Committee. This Committee has a somewhat wider brief than the area addressed in the Athena SWAN process, however gender issues are central to its work. Appointments to this Committee are made formally by the School Management Group which is very conscious of the vital need to maintain its good membership balance which embraces academic, administrative and technical staff. Data from our workload model also informs this process. The postgraduate and postdoctoral forums will be invited to nominate representatives on an ongoing basis to handle turnover. The Committee will meet four times a year to monitor progress with timing to match the triannual full School staff meetings where an Equality and Diversity report is a standing agenda item. The Head of School and School Management Group, which meets monthly, will also monitor closely the implementation of the Plan. High visibility of gender issues is crucial to sustaining momentum and ‘Equality and Diversity’ will be introduced also as a standing item on other School Committees including the School’s Teaching and Learning and Research Committees and the Learning Community Forum.

[1061 words]
3. A picture of the department (max 2000 words)

3(a) Pen-picture of the Department

*Provide a pen-picture of the department to set the context for the application, outlining in particular any significant and relevant features.*

The University was first established as University College Nottingham in 1881. The Chair in Chemistry was one of the four foundation Chairs of the University and was subsequently endowed as the Sir Jesse Boot Chair in Chemistry in the expansion onto the current University Park site in 1928. The School of Chemistry is one of seven Schools within the Science Faculty with 36 academic staff and 5 Research Fellows on fixed term contracts. The research and teaching activities are underpinned by 30 support staff, 70 Post-Doctoral Researchers and 180 PhD students. Our intake of UG students in recent years has been particularly buoyant, largely ‘Chemistry with Industry’ degree students, but with an increasing cohort on our new Natural Sciences programme, which recruits a significantly above average number of female undergraduates (60%). The School has an enviable track record in outreach and public engagement led by our award-winning full-time female Outreach Officer (Sam Tang) and through the global success of our YouTube channel PeriodicVideos, which is one of the most popular chemistry work sites on the internet with c. 100,000 subscribers and ~ 25 million views.

The University, with 25,000 UG and 10,000 PGR/PGT students in Nottingham, has been the most successful global University to date establishing international campuses in Kuala Lumpur UNMC (Malaysia, 1999) and at Ningbo UNNC (China, 2004). In collaboration with the East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST) in Shanghai, a major new initiative has seen the launch of the Shanghai-Nottingham Advanced Academy (SNAA) with a particular focus on Chemistry-led 'Green Technologies'. Joint undergraduate, taught masters (new MSc in Green and Sustainable Chemistry, 2013) and PhD programmes have been developed, with the first cohort of PhD students registered in Sept 2013 on joint research programmes leading to the award of joint Nottingham-ECUST degrees.

The School of Chemistry has an outstanding record for world-leading research and engagement with industry. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise it was ranked second in the UK. The vitality of the School, in terms of the large number of PhD students and the quality of the research environment, was particularly noted by the RAE panel. The School’s over-arching strategic objectives over the last decade have been to strengthen internationally-leading interdisciplinary research within our four thematic areas, whilst attracting and nurturing Early Career Research staff to ensure the vitality and sustainability of our research and teaching environment. This approach to recruitment and career development, and providing a stimulating and attractive environment, has met with significant success with both male and female early career researchers winning competitive fellowships (Royal Society and EPSRC) and large ERC starter grants. Two male colleagues have been promoted to Chair positions in Nottingham in the most recent 2013 round, demonstrating the School's effective policy towards nurturing and promoting talented young researchers. Support and mentoring to facilitate the ascent of women through the same promotion hierarchy is a School priority.
The University Management Board consists of seven PVCs, of whom three are female, including newly appointed Deputy-Vice Chancellor Professor Karen Cox (2013), and strongly supports the Athena SWAN Agenda at the highest level with Nottingham the holder of four Departmental, one Faculty (Engineering) and university silver awards.

The School faces many ongoing challenges to build on and maintain its strong academic position. Above all we recognise that there is a need to address the gender balance amongst academic staff at all levels. We believe that this must begin by changing the career outlook of Postdoctoral Researchers as the pipeline for new academics. It is a School priority that the Athena Charter is fully and permanently embedded within the psyche of all those working in the School and this is strongly endorsed at every opportunity by the Head of School, School Management Group and through consultation with our external Strategic Advisory Board.

3(b) Student and Staff data — Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

**Student data**

(i) **Males and females on access or foundation courses** — comment on the data and describe any initiatives taken to attract women to the courses.

The School does not run access/foundation courses but is very active in the area of outreach as described on p.28.

(ii) **Male and Female Undergraduates** — full and part-time — comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the impact to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

![Figure 3.1 % Female undergraduates and total student number by year](image)

The percentage of female undergraduates on all courses in the School has remained reasonably constant over four years at c. 37%. This is slightly below the national average for chemistry which was 42% in 2011/12 (HESA). The School is seeking to
improve its position significantly towards its goal of 50% through engagement in outreach activity in local schools, its website, recruitment material to make better use of women as role models, and at its UCAS visit days through a strong participation of current female students. In a wider context the School’s permanent (female) staff Public Awareness Scientist, Dr. Sam Tang, runs postgraduate training modules in projecting science. **ACTION 1A**

(iii) **Postgraduate male and female numbers completing taught courses** – *full and part-time* – comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

Our two current taught Masters courses (Nanoscience and Chemistry with Entrepreneurship) have had low student numbers of typically 8 students total per year over the past 4 years. The F:M ratio and also the F:M completion performance over this period is 1.3:1 which, albeit based on small numbers, is encouraging and we intend to build on this in our new taught MSc in Sustainable Chemistry to be introduced in September 2013. This ratio is similar, based on far higher numbers, to our Natural Sciences degree where the F:M ratio for students taking chemistry is 1.5:1. This suggests that broader courses in general may be more appealing to female applicants. **ACTION 1B**

(iv) **Postgraduate (PGR) male and female numbers on research degrees** – *full and part-time* – comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

The F:M ratio shows a small increase over 4 years from 33% to 35% which is slightly lower than our own undergraduate female percentage of 37%. However, in comparing these figures it should be noted that the School recruits about two thirds of its postgraduate cohort from graduates of other UK and international universities. We are committed to making the School a very attractive working and social environment through partnership between staff and the postgraduate forum, introduction of a
School Research Showcase in June 2013 which focuses on all younger non-professorial researchers, and implementing clarity on work expectations; this includes the recently announced university guideline on postgraduate holiday entitlement (8 weeks), the drive and drafting of which came from the School. In particular we are working to ensure that our advertising and web presence projects a very welcoming approach to female applicants.

(v) Ratio of course applications to offers and acceptances by gender for undergraduate (UG), postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) degrees – comment on the differences between male and female application and success rates and describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and their effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

Undergraduate (UG) Data:
The total undergraduate intake number is healthy and has increased substantially in the past four years. Encouragingly, the percentage of females at entry was at its highest level in 2012 at 43% (see Fig. 3.3). Unfortunately gender-specific data on applications and offers has not been recorded systematically to date but will be in future - ACTION 1A. A factor of which we are aware is that, until the current round, we generally conducted one-to-one interviews which, given the staff gender profile, was usually with a male interviewer. Interviews for all courses were in general discontinued for the 2012/13 UCAS round and the offer process is now run centrally by the university admissions office combined with visit days to the university and School. We consider these to be significant steps forward which also allow staff time to focus on projection of the School on visit days, particularly as a female-student-friendly environment.

![UG % female and total entry](chart)

Figure 3.3 % female and total undergraduate entry for the past 4 years
PGT Data: The number of students on our PGT degrees is currently low but they are popular with female applicants with females in a majority.

**Figure 3.4 PGT applications, offers and entry for the past 4 years**
Figure 3.5 PGR applications, offers and entry for the past 4 years
The application/offer/entry data for PGR students over three years show a pattern with c. 36% of applications from women and c. 40% of the offers to women, but the entry % is significantly lower being c. 31% for the past two years. This highlights the need to improve our conversion rate in this competitive area. We will work hard on our current (p.20) and new (p.22) initiatives, which include a new School-wide research afternoon led by Katharine Reid with strong support from ChemSoc.

(vi) **Undergraduate degree classification by gender** – comment on any differences in degree attainment between males and females and describe what actions are being taken to address any imbalance.

![Figure 3.6](image)

Figure 3.6 % of females (LHS) and males (RHS) gaining a 1st, 2:1 etc. degree

The percentage of female students gaining 1st class honours over the past 3 years is consistently higher than that for males, being 1 in 3 females and 1 in 4 males. There is no significant gender difference when the percentages of 1sts and 2.1s are combined.

![Figure 3.7](image)

Figure 3.7 Prize winners in 2012 with staff and sponsors who presented the prizes.

We are proud of the achievements of all of our undergraduates and celebrate particularly the prize winners in the graduating class of 2012 (as shown) where females outnumbered males by almost three to one. Over the past three years female
students won 28 of the 51 prizes awarded (55%) which contrasts with c. 37% of students being female. The origin of the excellent performance of females at the highest level is not clear and this difference is not the case across all of the UK university sector. In the Action Plan we aim to identify the educational and/or cultural factors which result in this imbalance with a view to nurturing this excellence and improving the relative performance of male students. ACTION 1C

Staff data

(vii) Female:male ratio of academic staff and research staff – researcher, lecturer, senior lecturer, reader, professor (or equivalent). comment on any differences in numbers between males and females and say what action is being taken to address any underrepresentation at particular grades/levels

The total staff numbers and the percentage of female staff has remained fairly constant over four years.
The number of academic staff at more senior level (level 5-7) has decreased slightly over a four year period. However, most significantly, we are pleased with our success in attracting young talented female researchers to take up research fellowships at in the School including Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkin and our Nottingham openly advertised and competitive Anne McLaren fellowships. This has been aided greatly by our mentoring scheme during the application process. However, we recognise that the numbers fall short of the national average of 26% (HESA 2010/11) and that the School has only one colleague at professorial level (level 7), Professor Katharine Reid, who will be Head of Physical Chemistry from August 2013. The situation where we currently have one female professor, no female senior lecturers/readers and two female lecturers highlights a priority area for further progress as set out in the Action Plan.

![Figure 3.10. % Female Research staff in post: Level 4 - postdoctoral researcher](image)

The data for level 4 staff is fairly constant and is dominated by fixed term postdoctoral researcher staff. To avoid repetition we defer detailed comment on the data and current and planned action until section 4. pages 17, 18 and 25.

The overall picture, taking four-year means of our School of Chemistry data, results in the following percentage of females: Undergraduate 37%; Postgraduate 34%, postdoctoral researcher 30%; this gradual pipeline decrease is broadly in line with HESA 2008 data for chemistry nationally of 43.7%, 38.5% and 30.0%, respectively, as reported at the Athena SWAN meeting in December 2012. The single most important career transition point for the School is the stage following postdoctoral researcher where, currently, the four-year mean for all academic staff above postdoctoral researcher level is c. 15% female where this includes the recent success in attracting female research fellowship holders. In order to address this a number of initiatives have been implemented which focus on younger researcher development and workplace culture (see p.20).

---

1 [http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/content/going-silver-seminar](http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/content/going-silver-seminar)
(viii) **Turnover by grade and gender** – comment on any differences between men and women in turnover and say what is being done to address this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Level 4</th>
<th>Female Level 5</th>
<th>Female Level 6</th>
<th>Female Level 7</th>
<th>Male Level 4</th>
<th>Male Level 5</th>
<th>Male Level 6</th>
<th>Male Level 7</th>
<th>Female Total</th>
<th>Male Total</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. % Turnover of academic staff in the School. 17% in rows 2 and 3 represents one person.

The turnover of members of staff (Levels 5-7) over the three year period 2009-2012 was extremely low (see table 1) and this echoes the situation that has held over many years. By far the largest turnover is of level 4 fixed-term contract research staff. We have not found any statistically significant difference between male and female turnover being around ~ 40% turnover for both F and M in 2012, and F:M turnover at 11%:20% and 26%:5% for the two preceding years. From the Gender Equality Survey (2012) across the whole School (PhDs to professors) in answer to the question ‘I feel that my Department is a great place to work’ the F:M response was 71%:81% who agreed or strongly agreed; this indicates that there indeed exists a need for some cultural improvement. A similar question ‘I am happy working at the university’ in a University Academic Staff (only) Engagement Survey (2012) gave 74% with no significant F:M difference, compared with the Positive People average of 67%.

[2032 words]
4. Supporting and advancing women’s careers: (max 5000 words)

Key career transition points

a) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

(i) Job application and success rates by gender and grade — comment on any differences in recruitment between men and women at any level and say what action is being taken to address this.

Over the period 2009-2012 seven members of academic staff were appointed at level 5 (lecturer or equivalent) and none at higher level; there were no appointments at level 5-7 in 2012. Of the seven appointed six are male (three in 2009, three in 2010) and one is female (2011). The data are given in Fig. 4.1.

![Level 5 appointments 2009-2011](image)

**Figure 4.1. Appointments for level 5 positions. There were no positions in 2012**

Although the number of female staff is low, a very encouraging development is the growth over the period 2009-2011 in the number of women on prestigious external fellowships in the School (three currently on Dorothy Hodgkin or EPSRC Career Advancement Fellowships), which has recently been raising the percentage of women at this level. This is in part a consequence of our active search for potential candidates for fellowships and of mentoring them through the application process. **ACTION 2A.**

A far greater number of staff are appointed at level 4 (postdoctoral researcher or equivalent) but full data including gender and selection for interview are available only for 2012 (Fig. 4.2). It can be seen that women were very successful compared with male applicants in being shortlisted and interviewed for level 4 positions, but that this success fell off significantly when it came to appointments resulting in 8 male and 3 female appointments. This suggests there is a pressing need to review our
appointment process including staff awareness of unconscious bias and, where possible, inclusion of female representatives on interview panels. One year’s data is a small sample but 3 ex 11 appointments is not inconsistent with the 4-year average of 30% female postdocs. These recent data have revealed an area on which attention will be focussed and, we hope, one where change can result in more female postdocs.

**ACTION 2B.**

Ambitious plans over the next 3 years for an expansion in academic staffing of up to eight posts, in part linked to exciting new infrastructure developments around a GSK/HEFCE funded Carbon-Neutral Research Facility, will provide a tremendous opportunity to improve the staff gender balance, starting with two new Chair appointments in 2013.

![Level 4 appointments 2012](image)

**Figure 4.2 Applications, interviews and appointments for level 4 in 2012**

(ii) **Applications for promotion and success rates by gender and grade** – comment on whether these differ for men and women and if they do explain what action may be taken. Where the number of women is small applicants may comment on specific examples of where women have been through the promotion process. Explain how potential candidates are identified.

Very few academic staff have been promoted in recent years, and given the low number of female staff it is not surprising that no women feature in these promotions; the available data for three years are given in table 2. Promotion, in the first instance, is a University HR-driven process in which all staff receive guidelines and timelines for internal consultation and application, and can apply independently of the School if they wish. All staff are encouraged by the HoS to discuss their cases with line managers. The draft CVs of potential candidates are reviewed by the School Promotions Panel (HoS and Heads of the three Sections). All candidates are provided with feedback and those that are to be supported are mentored by senior colleagues prior to submission. A statement from the School regarding the number of candidates considered during their internal deliberations is submitted to HR, and all candidates receive a copy of the School’s letter of support. There is strong emphasis on the
quality rather than quantity of research activity (publications and grant income) in part to negate the impact of a career break or part-time working. The female staff who are currently at level 5 have been in post for a relatively short time and we do not believe that there is an issue with promotion in our School, but rather with appointment of staff.

| Promotions data |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| level 6          | level 7          |
| applications    | success         | applications    | success         |
| male            | female          | male            | female          |
| 2009            | 1 0             | 2 0             | 0 0             |
| 2011            | 2 0             | 0 0             | 0 0             |
| 2012            | 3 0             | 1 0             | 0 0             |

Table 2. Applications for promotion and successes to level 6 (Reader/Senior Lecturer) and 7 (Professor). Data are not available for 2010.

b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) Recruitment of staff – comment on how the department’s recruitment processes ensure that female candidates are attracted to apply, and how the department ensures its short listing, selection processes and criteria comply with the university’s equal opportunities policies

The School’s policy on attracting Research Fellows and applicants (internal and external) is highly successful as a direct consequence of the impact of an effective mentoring process. Candidates are invited to the school to meet the Heads of Sections, give a seminar, and discuss their application. In addition, the School Research Committee actively supports all researchers by setting up mock interviews with experienced panel members (women where possible), with feedback suggesting that this has had an impact, particularly with women, in winning awards and Fellowships. Advertisements for all School positions from studentship to professor carry the wording... ‘The School values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity’ to signal that we are keen to attract talent from the widest possible pool of candidates. In addition, for all academic staff appointments including two recently advertised Chairs, the advert states that…. ‘in the short-listing process the panel will focus primarily on the quality of the candidates’ research publications’ to convey our focus on quality rather than quantity which could be a significant factor if a candidate has had a career break. The School fully complies with all HR policies and seeks where possible to have a female panel member for interviews. ACTION 2B

(ii) Support for staff at key career transition points – having identified key areas of attrition of female staff in the department, comment on any interventions, programmes and activities that support women at the crucial stages, such as personal development training, opportunities for networking, mentoring programmes and leadership training. Identify which have been found to work best at the different career stages.

19
The SAT analysis revealed that the single largest area for concern is the transition from postdoctoral researcher to permanent academic staff member. The situation has not been helped in the past by an extremely low staff turnover rate which in a limited sense is a healthy sign but means almost no advertised positions.

A key challenge for the School is to attract and retain women on external fellowships, and to facilitate their progression in academic careers. The appointment of Dr Elena Bichoutskaia to a lectureship in 2011 was a very positive move to retain an excellent female scientist who holds currently an EPSRC Career Acceleration Fellowship. It is crucial that the School develops further an appealing working and cultural environment to ensure that female candidates for lectureships are well positioned to succeed at interview and that staff interviewers are fully aware of all factors including, particularly, unconscious bias. Although progression of women on level 5 to higher levels will impact on the low representation at levels 6 and 7 in the long term, the School is keen to be able to appoint women to positions at these higher levels in the shorter term. In creating an improvement in female progression at the key postdoc/academic career transition point, and also of relevance at other career development stages, we would highlight the following steps taken prior to this submission:

- Formation of the postdoctoral forum (led by postdocs) which includes presentations and Q&A discussion with members of School Research Committee on fellowship applications and other career development events
- Introduction of our annual RSC-sponsored Dan Eley postdoctoral research symposium
- Development and implementation (in consultation with the PD Forum) of a bespoke annual Personal Development and Performance Review (PDPR) process for all postdoctoral researchers
- Alignment of the PDPR process with the Researcher Concordat to provide (a) guidance from an independent member of academic staff on career development, and (b) a supervisor-led review of key research objectives.
- An independent process of dealing with issues and grievances through Dignity Advisors within the School.
- School bursaries for five female and male young postdoc and PhD researchers to participate in the inaugural Irène Joliot-Curie Conference (2012) on establishing an independent career in chemistry\(^2\).
- Five days per annum career development for all postdoctoral staff as standard
- Appointment of a postdoctoral researcher champion, Dr. David Chambers-Asman, who is a member of School Management Group
- Decision to share the coffee/tea social space in the School among all staff
- Financial support for a new ‘Chemistry Careers: Where next?’ event organised for young researchers and organised by the PhD and postdoctoral forums.
- A new School Research Showcase and social event to be held in June 2013 with talks from postgraduates, postdoctoral fellows and non-professorial staff.
- Invitation to Dr. Tricia Hunt (IC) to present a talk ‘Becoming a Lecturer’.

Future initiatives are included in Actions 2A-2D

\(^2\) [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/wcas/events/independentcareer](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/wcas/events/independentcareer)
Career development

a) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) Promotion and career development — comment on the appraisal and career development process, and promotion criteria and whether these take into consideration responsibilities for teaching, research, administration, pastoral work and outreach work; is quality of work emphasised over quantity of work?

The School implements fully the University Personal Development and Performance Review (PDPR) System (introduced in January 2013) which is intended to shift the focus away from pay progression to a process focussing equally on development, performance and reward. It is intended that training and development needs will be discussed as well as performance targets. The Review considers all aspects of performance in teaching, research, administration and citizenship (e.g. engagement in outreach and recruitment). Commitments are recorded as part of the School Workload model and discussed and updated at the annual review. A new facet is behavioural competence which is viewed as important in effecting cultural change within the School by focussing not only on what is achieved but the manner in which it is done. Each member of staff is provided with an annual written appraisal of their performance, contribution and development including a performance score (1-3). The new PDPR system is compulsory for all academic staff and researchers.

(ii) Induction and training — describe the support provided to new staff at all levels, as well as details of any gender equality training. To what extent are good employment practices in the institution, such as opportunities for networking, the flexible working policy, and professional and personal development opportunities promoted to staff from the outset?

Induction takes place on three levels: University, School/Section and Personal. University Welcome Events take place six times a year to inform new staff of University policy and processes, e.g. the annual PDPR review process and professional development opportunities. The Graduate School has developed a half-day induction event for research staff where the Equal Opportunities Policy is highlighted. On the University workspace there is strong emphasis on professional development opportunities, guidelines to flexible working, as well as links to various support networks.

Line managers are responsible for the local induction of new researchers (PhDs and Postdocs) within research groups, and to ensure consistency and sharing of good practice across the School an online Moodle induction course has been introduced. This contains a checklist against different activities relevant to the post, including safety induction, and must be signed off by the staff member and line manager on completion. Mentors are assigned to all new starters, in addition to line managers to provide additional professional and pastoral support and advice on funding sources,
application processes and the PGCHE. Generally mentors come from within the staff member’s own Section within the School. **ACTION 3A**

Professional Development is encouraged and facilitated through the School Staff Development Officer. Following a recommendation from the SAT, all researchers are now entitled to 5 days p.a. to pursue these activities. A two-day interactive course, which has a formal assessment component, is now a compulsory part of the induction training for new staff. In addition to university wide mechanisms for networking (which includes a women’s research network), there is the RSC-sponsored Dan Eley post-doc research symposium, where women speakers are featured prominently, and a School-wide Research Afternoon event in April for all students, researchers and staff. Inclusiveness amongst academic and support staff is encouraged through the School Away Day in May. **ACTIONS 3B-3E**

**(iii) Support for female students** – describe the support (formal and informal) provided for female students to enable them to make the transition to a sustainable academic career, particularly from postgraduate to researcher, such as mentoring, seminars and pastoral support and the right to request a female personal tutor. Comment on whether these activities are run by female staff and how this work is formally recognised by the department.

Support for UG students is provided by the Student Support Office. Undergraduates are allocated a personal tutor and a request for an alternate can be made. PhD students are allocated a main and second supervisor and there is additional support from Postgraduate student advisors and the Post-Graduate Students Association. Our very popular School 'ChemSoc' organises, with the strong support of the School, a buddy system for new undergraduate students who are paired with a second year undergraduate to provide a wider social and academic support mechanism. We propose to add contact details of male and female volunteers from graduate students and post-docs via the webspace to offer careers advice and support for students wishing to find out more about progressing to graduate studies and beyond. The Learning Community Forum meets three times a year to provide a ‘voice’ for undergraduates and postgraduates, with feedback from the academic Chair to the full Staff Meetings. There are also opportunities to discuss issues or attend presentations on careers advice through the PhD and Post-doc forums, where much leadership is currently coming from female researchers (see below), with presentations from women role models.

Each year, the School invites Nottingham alumni back for the popular and highly successful Chemistry Careers Evening to give often inspirational presentations about their career paths since graduation. There is a 50:50 split of females to males presenting at this event, which is open to all staff and students in the School.

Many academic staff take on undergraduate students to work in their laboratories on summer research projects, encouraged and funded by the School, Nuffield Foundation and Chemistry Alumni. This provides undergraduates with an opportunity to gain research experience, and is extremely popular (typically 20 UG per annum) with a high uptake from women. For example, the UKRC for SET Women organisation provided
funding for a summer position for Rebecca Blundell, which has led to two publications and registration for a PhD studentship in the School.

Our £10m Engineering & Science Learning Centre, opened in September 2011, provides a valuable hub for networking across both Faculties and as a centre for training and career development. It includes designated social space and facilities for postgraduate students.

The School provides opportunities for all postgraduates with aspirations for academic careers to gain teaching experience by contributing to laboratory demonstrating and workshops. There are university funding sources available to support young researchers in career development, such as Bridging the Gaps: Next Generation Feasibility Awards, Research Staff Travel Prize and the Early Career Research and Knowledge Transfer Award, and to participate in outreach activities which are particularly high profile in the School. ACTION 3F

Organisation and culture

a) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

(i) Male and female representation on committees – provide a breakdown by committee and explain any differences between male and female representation. Explain how potential members are identified.

The School of Chemistry has seven committees that guide the School’s decision making. These are:

Senior Management Group (the main decision making committee for the School)
Teaching and Learning Committee
Research Committee
Health and Safety Committee
Equality and Diversity Committee
Learning community Forum (previously the Student Staff Consultative Committee)
Senior Tutors Group

All committees have one or more member from each of the School’s three Sections. The responsibility of these people is to report to Section meetings and deliver feedback, views and opinions to the relevant committee. Fig. 4.3 gives an overview of the male and female composition of all committees.
Figure 4.3 % female representation on School committees for the past 4 years

All committees except the Senior Tutors group currently have female representation and this has steadily grown over the last four years to 33%. The gender balance on committees reflects the balance of staffing across the School as a whole.

The School Management Group, in consultation with other senior colleagues, undertakes committee membership selection, based upon match to the required skills set and experience, and taking into account current teaching and administrative workload. Membership and Chairs are for a fixed period (3 years). The procedure for selection of the School Management Group is undertaken by the Head of School in consultation with the current Heads of Section who identify the relevant staff based on experience and current roles within the School. Heads of Section are selected by the Head of School (3 year fixed term) on the basis of a consultation (but not election) process with all section staff and with candidates who wish to be considered. The procedure for the selection of the Head of School is carried out at PVC level by the University's Management Board (MB) which invites applications, followed by a broadly based consultation process with all academic staff.

In addition to the formal School committees the School has been pro-active in the formation of postgraduate (PhD) and postdoctoral research forums. The Chair and Deputy for each of these forums are selected by the relevant peer groups. Notably the past chairs and recently appointed new chairs are predominantly women.
(ii) Female: male ratio of academic and research staff on fixed-term contracts and open-ended (permanent) contracts – comment on any differences between male and female staff representation on fixed-term contracts and say what is being done to address them.

The average F:M ratio of fixed term contract staff (postdoctoral researchers) is approximately 1:2 (i.e. about 0.5). During the past three years the number of female postdocs was exactly constant at 32; the higher F:M ratio of 0.63 in 2010 and lower F:M ratio of 0.49 in 2012 arises from a reduction by c. 10% in 2010, and similar % increase in 2012, in the number of male postdocs. In section 4 a) (i) p.18 we identified a possible issue at the interview stage for 2012 which we are keen to address ACTION 2B.
b. For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) **Representation on decision-making committees** – comment on evidence of gender equality in the mechanism for selecting representatives. What evidence is there that women are encouraged to sit on a range of influential committees inside and outside the department? How is the issue of ‘committee overload’ addressed where there are small numbers of female staff?

![Figure 4.6. % female and male representation on decision-making committees.](image)

The School has four main decision making committees, with female representation on each. The chair of each committee reports to the School Management Group (SMG), informing the group on the decisions made by their committee. With only one female professor, commitment to a large number of key committees becomes a considerable workload issue. Katharine Reid is also a member of University Teaching and Learning Board and is deputy chair of the University WinSET committee. In future we will invite postdoctoral researchers and research fellows to join the Teaching and Learning Committee and Learning Community Forum, and to shadow Research Committee members **ACTION 4A**.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Section to ensure that the administrative load within an individual’s role is taken into account when allocating committee membership duties. Workload data is reviewed through the annual Personal Development and Performance Review process and Heads of Section use these data to allocate/reallocate duties, ensuring an even workload.

(ii) **Workload model** – describe the systems in place to ensure that workload allocations, including pastoral and administrative responsibilities (including the responsibility for work on women and science) are taken into account at appraisal and in promotion criteria. Comment on the rotation of responsibilities e.g. responsibilities with a heavy workload and those that are seen as good for an individual’s career.
The School has been proactive in implementing its own workload model in advance of a University-wide model to be launched in Sept 2013. The School model has three categories: (a) Teaching – lectures, setting and marking examinations, tutorials, laboratory demonstrating and the supervision of MSci project students, (b) Core Administration – management and membership of committees, staff administration (e.g. disability, staff development and outreach officers, publicity coordinators), examinations and coursework, safety issues and computing issues and (c) Other activities not covered by the above, which contribute to the research, teaching or outreach agenda of the School. Conducted on an annual basis, each member of staff receives, for each of the above, a total value in hours/year as well as the average School value for a Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor, for reference. These data are reviewed in the annual Personal Development and Planning Review and used by Heads of Section in order to allocate/reallocate duties and thus ensure an even workload. The School Management Group monitors the overall workload of individual members of staff annually in order to take into account part-time working and those returning from career breaks or maternity leave and to rotate demanding/time consuming administrative jobs; for example, committee chairs. Additional support, including reduced workload, administrative or postdoctoral assistance is available for staff returning from adoption, paternity or maternity leave. A staff member’s workload in addition to his/her research achievements feed into the annual appraisal and promotion process. The University is shortly to introduce an obligatory university-wide workload model and our initiative in establishing our own model means that adoption of the new model will be straightforward. ACTION 4B

(iii) Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings – provide evidence of consideration for those with family responsibilities, for example what the department considers to be core hours and whether there is a more flexible system in place.

With extremely rare exceptions, usually those involving external non-Nottingham input such as the annual undergraduate Chemistry Careers Evening when alumni are invited to talk, and the biannual School Strategic Advisory Board, meetings are now held within the hours of 10am – 3pm. It should also be emphasised that meetings are organised well in advance and this results in a very flexible scheme and addresses the problems described in Case Study 1 (p. 34). As part of the computer-based university central timetabling process, all staff are asked whether specific parts of the day or any half or full day should be kept free from teaching commitments; in practice the most common request is to avoid lectures or laboratory demonstrating starting before 10am or after 4pm, which is fully implemented. Working relationships within the School are very good and to our knowledge no colleague has found himself or herself in difficulty or feeling uncomfortable in e.g. swapping demonstrating commitments.

(iv) Culture – demonstrate how the department is female-friendly and inclusive. ‘Culture’ refers to the language, behaviours and other informal interactions that characterise the atmosphere of the department, and includes all staff and students.

With an academic staff of around 40 the School is relatively small and this helps to promote an informal and friendly working environment. The Head of School
encourages an open and transparent approach; for example, the minutes of all School committees (including the SMG) are disseminated to all staff via the School intranet. The Head of School is also available on a daily basis for informal discussions with staff in the School coffee room which is open to all staff. He welcomes feedback and suggestions from all staff within the School on all issues either directly or anonymously via a suggestion box located in the staff room.

The School is proud of its research achievements and publishes an annual report and as well as a monthly “Nottingham Journal of Chemistry” which includes reprints of all publications from staff. This publication, which is readily available in the staff room and in the School foyer, is read by staff, post- and undergraduates and any visitors to the School, and stimulates discussion, collegiality and greater interest in the work of all colleagues. This idea has now been adopted by other Schools across the faculty. A variety of events further strengthen the sense of community within the School. These include: our annual School Away Day and inaugural lectures given by recently promoted Professorial staff, and a monthly School-wide research colloquium. The first School Research Showcase event in June 2013 will focus on younger female and male non-professorial researchers including PhD students, and will include a School-wide social event with live music, hopefully out-of-doors in the School’s inner courtyard. The postgraduate and postdoctoral forums, as well as an active student Chemical Society which organizes a variety of social events, trips and lectures, have reinforced this sense of collegiality.

The School values its staff, undergraduates and postgraduates and the Equality and Diversity Committee is fully committed to maintain and enhance a workplace where all are treated fairly. ACTION 4C

(v) Outreach activities – comment on the level of participation by female and male staff in outreach activities with schools and colleges and other centres. Describe who the programmes are aimed at, and how this activity is formally recognised as part of the workload model and in appraisal and promotion processes.

The School’s outreach and widening participation agenda is high profile and multi-award winning, with over 100 events per annum, driven in particular by a number of talented full-time dedicated female staff. The School has an innovative and extensive programme of public engagement and schools outreach events in which female and male staff, postgraduate students and undergraduate students all actively and voluntarily participate. These contributions to 'citizenship' by academic staff are recognised as part of the annual review process (ACTION 4B). Activities are co-ordinated jointly by Dr June McCombie MBE (awarded in 2013 for contributions to widening participation in science) and Public Awareness Scientist Dr Samantha Tang.
The Royal Society of Chemistry chose to base the post of Regional Coordinator for the Midlands within the School, with Heidi Dobbs’ role involved in developing networks and resources across the region. The School maintains strong links with the Salter’s Institute, the Royal Society of Chemistry, the British Science Association, the Association for Science Education, and most importantly leads a Teachers Network Group which meets regularly at the School.

The School has continued to work with the video-journalist Brady Haran on its highly acclaimed YouTube channel, The Periodic Table of Videos, which can be seen at www.periodicvideos.com. In the past 12 months, the site has more than doubled its number of subscribers (passing 100,000 subscribers in August 2012) and has been exceeding one million viewers per month. The videos involve nine male and female members of academic staff, and senior technician Neil Barnes, and wherever possible the gender balance of the team is carefully considered as well as the availability of suitable role models for encouraging girls in SET.

Flexibility and managing career breaks

a) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

(i) Maternity return rate – comment on whether maternity return rate in the department has improved or deteriorated and any plans for further improvement. If the department is unable to provide a maternity return rate, please explain why.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Maternities</th>
<th>Return rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (with 2 indicating they will return in 2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Research and teaching staff taking and returning from maternity leave

In the last three years 5 members of staff have gone on maternity leave. A majority of these staff have returned from maternity leave, or have indicated that they will be returning in 2013. Currently, this data set is too small to indicate whether these numbers are an improvement or deterioration from previous years. To date we have not recorded maternity leave data for research students but will do so in future along with developing a clear policy. ACTION 4F

(ii) Paternity, adoption and parental leave uptake – comment on the uptake of paternity leave by grade and parental and adoption leave by gender and grade. Has this improved or deteriorated and what plans are there to improve further.

In the last three years three staff have applied for and taken official paternity leave – one at level 3 and two at level 4. Six members of academic staff have taken informal paternity leave (three of these at level 5 and three at level 6); these staff took advantage of the School’s flexible working policy in conjunction with discussions with their line managers so that their commitments are covered, meaning that they have
been able to be with their new families, whilst not formally taking time away from the School. There has been no recorded adoption or parental leave in the last three years. The School will continue to facilitate paternity leave, whether as a formal or informal arrangement to support their partners. **ACTION 4G**

(iii) **Numbers of applications and success rates for flexible working by gender and grade** – comment on any disparities. Where the number of women in the department is small applicants may wish to comment on specific examples.

The flexible working system for academic staff (there are no fixed hours of work) is informal, therefore there are no quantitative data for flexible working applications. The School has also accommodated the requests of staff to work part time following maternity leave; one (female) member of academic staff currently works part time (Level 5), working a 0.9 FTE.

b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) **Flexible working** – comment on the numbers of staff working flexibly and their grades and gender, whether there is a formal or informal system, the support and training provided for managers in promoting and managing flexible working arrangements, and how the department raises awareness of the options available.

All academic staff are encouraged to discuss informal flexible working arrangements at any time. However, as it is an informal system, there are no quantitative data for flexible working applications. The School is very amenable to staff working flexibly, with a number taking advantage to take their children to/from school, working from home etc. Although Line Managers do not currently receive formal training on promoting and managing flexible working arrangements they are encouraged to contact the School’s Director of Operations for guidance on implementing this. The flexible working options available are detailed on the School of Chemistry’s website (Workspace) which is accessible by all staff and students. **ACTION 4G&4H**

(ii) **Cover for maternity and adoption leave and support on return** – explain what the department does, beyond the university maternity policy package, to support female staff before they go on maternity leave, arrangements for covering work during absence, and to help them achieve a suitable work-life balance on their return.

**Postdoctoral Researchers:** Upon being informed the administration team at the School of Chemistry will liaise with the funding body responsible for the grant in order to establish the maternity provision for the PDRA in question. If this is not covered by the grant funder, the Head of School and Section Head will be consulted about the use of internal funds to cover the maternity leave. The School supports postdoctoral researchers in flexible and part time working on their return after maternity leave; this should be discussed with the line manager, who can be advised by the Director of Operations.
Academic Staff (Level 5-7): Prior to maternity leave the member of staff has a meeting with their Line Manager to establish timescales for taking leave, bearing in mind the flexibility built into University policies. The purpose of this meeting is to identify teaching and administrative roles that need cover during period of leave, and beyond, and where appropriate to identify suitable academic staff to cover roles and to arrange hand-over of responsibilities. The meeting will also establish appropriate cover of research responsibilities during the period of absence.

A return-to-work meeting with relevant Head of Section is held, coupled with regular follow-up meetings over six months to one year, as appropriate. Returning staff have been allocated reduced teaching and administrative loads to allow the member of staff to re-establish their research. The School recognises the importance of the initial months upon return to work and is implementing a six month research-only period immediately following maternity leave in order to allow the rapid reinvigoration of research. The School is flexible and supports all female staff members who are returning to work after taking maternity leave.

The School of Chemistry runs a “School of Chemistry Career Break Scheme” to provide research support to academic staff within the School to enhance their research activity and to facilitate rapid reinvigoration of their research output. Applications to the scheme are considered on a case by case basis. Under this new scheme a member of academic staff was awarded School funding to appoint a postdoctoral researcher for a year to support her group during maternity leave. **ACTION 4G**

[5026 words]
5. Any other comments: (max 500 words)

Please comment here on any other elements which are relevant to the application.

Culture in the School:

We have identified a set of important general Actions which are intended to enhance the sense of community. These are itemised in ACTIONS 5A-5E and include:

- School of Chemistry Summer social event (at weekend)
- Fortnightly ‘headline news’ bulletins on any topic - emailed to all in the School
- Use of Social Media to enhance sense of belonging - from UG to professor.
- Whole School meeting every 6 months

Surveys

The SAT had access to the results from pre-June 2012 Surveys (see p.5) and decided to conduct new 20-question surveys of PGR students and postdoctoral researchers. The response rates were very good being 42% and 45%, respectively, and indicate a high level of engagement. The surveys were organised and run by two members of the SAT, Anna Slater and Emma Steeds, and the results shared with all research students and staff. The surveys have since been used as a template by a number of other Schools. Areas explored included reason for taking up the position, level of job satisfaction, training opportunities and level of encouragement offered, induction, mentoring, awareness of equality and diversity issues, culture in the School, annual review, rights as a student/researcher, career information and the forums. The responses formed the basis of much of the discussion at the SAT and provided a stimulus for many of the actions in the Action Plan; one example of their impact is the need for enhanced mentoring and career development which has resulted in the new mentoring scheme and careers event ACTION 3A and School-sponsored participation in the Irène Joliot-Curie Conference. Surveys in 2014 and 2015 - which will apply to all students and staff - will provide a quantitative measure of progress ACTION 4D.

Future of the School and its culture

The School enjoys a very strong international reputation in research and teaching and with a carefully planned business and an improving social approach, will ensure this continues to the benefit of all. The School is committed to focusing its world class research expertise on aspects of the major challenges that affect us – healthcare, energy and sustainability. As part of this commitment we have entered into a collaborative partnership with GSK to deliver an ambitious Centre for Sustainable Chemistry to be housed in an iconic Carbon Neutral Laboratory (CNL), the first chemistry laboratory facility of its kind in the UK. The £18m CNL will have significant impact across the UK research base within academia and industry as an exemplar of how sustainable, energy-efficient chemistry research facilities can be constructed in the future. This will present a new challenge in terms of social cohesion across two sites but one that by implementing the Action Plan we can meet. It is hoped that a second new building will be constructed within a few years. There is very strong resolve across the School to build on our progress in Athena SWAN activity to date. We aim for a high standing in this area which is comparable to that which we achieve in research and teaching.
From the current to the future:

From the top......our traditional teaching and research chemistry building, the interdisciplinary Centre for Biomolecular Sciences in which chemistry students and staff carry out research, our new UG and PG student Engineering and Science Learning Centre, and the planned Carbon-Neutral Laboratory (CNL).
6. Case studies: impacting on individuals (max 1000 words)

Describe how the department’s SWAN activities have benefitted two individuals working in the department. One of these case studies should be a member of the self assessment team, the other someone else in the department.

Case study 1: Dr Deborah L. Kays (member of the self assessment team)

I was appointed as Lecturer in Inorganic Chemistry at the School of Chemistry, University of Nottingham, in September 2007. My husband and I had our baby in January 2012, and I took maternity leave from January-August of that year. I was the first member of the lecturing staff to go on maternity leave since 2001, so the procedures were not always clear, but I found the management at the School of Chemistry very supportive throughout.

During the maternity leave period I was able to take advantage of the newly installed “School of Chemistry Career Break Scheme”, which allowed me to apply for and secure a postdoctoral researcher (PDRA) to help run my research group for a year during my absence and the early period of my return. This PDRA has facilitated the continuing productivity of my research group during the maternity leave period by ensuring that my research projects kept a similar level of impetus to that prior to my maternity leave. I was comfortable in the knowledge that during the maternity leave period my research group was being looked after, by both my PDRA and also the member of academic staff assigned to supervise them. Along with this, my line manager ensured that I was not disturbed with admin and other non-critical business so that I could get on with bonding with my daughter. I found this invaluable, especially in the first few months of motherhood. I took advantage of KIT (Keeping in Touch) days to meet with my research group when necessary to keep them focussed. The presence of the PDRA during the first months of my return to work post maternity leave has also aided in the invigoration of my research by affording me more time to write research papers and grant proposals.

After my maternity leave I returned to work at 0.9 FTE, taking every other Friday off to be with my daughter. Since starting nursery in September, she has so far managed to pick up every bug possible, and I have felt much supported by the senior management during this time. I have taken advantage of flexible and home-working, along with compassionate leave in order to look after my daughter during her illnesses. I have encountered a few problems with scheduling of various things such as teaching and meetings (for example scheduling of lectures or workshops on my Fridays off or later in the afternoon when I pick my daughter up from nursery), but with the support of my line manager and the other staff these have been moved to accommodate my schedule. As with all academics, my work/life balance is still not ideal, but with the support of my colleagues in the School of Chemistry, I feel that I can have the best of both worlds – be a mother and a successful academic!

Case study 2: Dr Sihai Yang (Research Fellow)

Following graduation with a BSc degree in Chemistry from Peking University in 2007, I studied for a PhD in Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Nottingham funded by an EPSRC Dorothy Hodgkin Award. I was then awarded an EPSRC PhD Plus Research Fellowship in 2011 and have subsequently obtained Leverhulme Trust Early Career Research and Nottingham University Research Fellowships which extend my early career as a research fellow to 2017. The mentoring I received in the School was really helpful in securing these prestigious fellowships. My research interests lie in developing environmental-friendly strategies to capture harmful gas molecules at an economically viable cost.
My wife Dr Xue Han also started in Nottingham in 2007 and was a PhD research student under the supervision of Professor Martyn Poliakoff (2007-2010). She is now a postdoctoral research associate with Professor Mike George. We are both very keen to pursue academic research careers.

My wife and I had a baby in October 2012, and she is currently taking maternity leave. She informed her supervisor Professor Mike George in March 2012 about the pregnancy and wanted to discuss the upcoming work activities. Professor George was extremely delighted to hear the news and offered his very warmest congratulations and best wishes! My wife’s career as a green chemist working on the development of sustainable chemical processes is important to both of us and she was very keen to work in the School until taking maternity leave. The nature of her work meant this was not possible due to the potential chemical hazards within a synthetic laboratory. Professor George thought about this immediately and dismantled part of an instrumentation (laser) laboratory to create a more suitable working environment. Her research then focussed on the study of infrared spectroscopy of carbon dioxide/water systems without usage of any other chemicals. The work went extremely well and this temporary arrangement carried on for several months until my wife started her maternity leave. Mike George also thoughtfully helped to organise a party prior to her maternity leave, and this greatly reflected the warmest and strongest support to us from both the research group and the school.

We are having a great time during the maternity leave and are able to spend much time looking after our baby daughter. My wife enjoys seeing the growth of our daughter from day to day and is able to watch the every little milestone in the past half year. She is planning to come back to work shortly and we are currently organising childcare with the university nursery. Overall, we have felt incredibly supported by our colleagues, line managers and the school of chemistry.

[930 words]