

# Institutional Athena Swan 2023: Gender Equality Gold Award



## What is Athena Swan?

Athena Swan is [Advance HE's framework to improve gender equality within Higher Education](#). The University has been committed to the Charter since 2006 and as an institution we have held both Bronze and Silver status. In November 2023, following our recent submission, we were informed that the University of Nottingham was the first university to achieve Gold status.

## Gender equality, isn't that just about women?

Whilst the framework originally focused on women, it has evolved, like many areas of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to consider the barriers and challenges that are faced by all genders in Higher Education. Improving gender equality in our working and studying environments benefits everyone and it is truly intersectional.

## Why did we get Gold?

Fundamentally, the University of Nottingham achieved Gold status because we could clearly demonstrate our long-term commitment to EDI and gender equality, which has influenced change not only at the university, but at other universities and partner organisations. Significantly the submission illustrated how embedded within our [values](#) EDI and gender equality work is across the institution.

## What's in the submission?

The Athena Swan Gold submission is over 400 pages long and contains a summary about the University of Nottingham, details about our governance arrangements, including how the Institutional Self-Assessment Team (ISAT) oversaw the completion of the submission. The submission also has an update against the last action plan, to understand our performance, and sets out a [new action plan for 2024-2028](#). Finally, there is a significant amount of data which has been analysed to show our progress, and where there are areas that we still need to focus on as an institution.

## Without reading 400+ pages, what do I need to know?

The key factors that contributed to our Gold status are:

- Progress:** We have clear evidence of how we have progressed gender equality, especially with our senior representation as 50% of our executive team are now women, which is up from just 30% in 2012.
- Impact:** We can show the impact of foregrounding gender equality through the Athena Swan framework with initiatives like:
  - Recruitment:** Across all aspects of recruitment there is a greater gender balance.
  - Get Ready for Nottingham:** A course for new students and their supporters to engage with, and understand, UoN inclusive culture.
  - Career Development:** Supporting underrepresented leaders and managers' career development and progression across the University.
  - Let's be clear on consent:** A training course developed with the Students' Union for all new students.
  - Fellowships:** At least 50% of new fellows identify as female.
  - Support for paternal and carers leave returners:** The Adoption, Maternity, Shared Parental Leave Policies, and Paternity Leave arrangements have been improved.
  - Flexible working:** Consistent practice and awareness of options available for flexible working.
- Influence:** We have influenced other universities and industries to adopt our approaches using the Athena Swan framework. This is evident in our sector-leading [Technical Commitment](#), which has advised on best practice both at the University of Nottingham and for other institutions.
- Beacon:** We have demonstrated that the university is, and strives to remain, sector-leading as we continue to work to influence the diversification of the workforce across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
- Longitudinal:** We have evidence of the long-term impact of using the Athena Swan framework, there are many examples of this, but in terms of promotion, there is a more transparent, criteria-based, academic promotion process, which explicitly considers mitigation related to protected characteristics and the disproportionate legacy impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women.

## What does this all mean to me?

If you work, study or visit the UK campuses of the University of Nottingham, you will be benefiting from the Athena Swan framework. This might be that you have fairer pay, greater opportunities for promotion, and policies that support you to achieve a good work/life balance. In addition, there will be facilities and access to resources that ensure that you feel safe to be your authentic self at our campuses.

## What happens next?

We will work through the delivery of our 5-year Gold Action Plan to continue our commitment to gender equality and EDI at the University of Nottingham. Part of our future planning includes the Staff/Student Lifecycle, which we will align to our other EDI themed activity to ensure that we are working smarter and that we can capture intersectionality.

If you want to know more: please contact [steven.macnamara@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:steven.macnamara@nottingham.ac.uk)



University of Nottingham, Athena Swan Gold Submission (2023)

